

Exploring the Polar Regions

Learning objective: To identify and describe the characteristics of the Arctic and Antarctic regions.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions that follow. Use full sentences in your answers.

Finn the dolphin has travelled to the very top and bottom of the world to study the polar regions. At the North Pole, in the Arctic, Finn found a frozen ocean surrounded by land. He noticed that the ground is often permafrost, which means it stays frozen all year round. He spotted a polar bear searching for seals across the snowy tundra.

Next, Finn swam south to the Antarctic. He discovered that this region is the opposite: it is a giant continent of land covered in a thick sheet of ice, surrounded by a freezing ocean. He watched groups of emperor penguins huddling together to stay warm against the biting wind.

Although both poles are freezing and icy, Finn learned they are very different. The Arctic is an ocean surrounded by land, while the Antarctic is land surrounded by ocean. Both regions are vital for the Earth's climate, acting like giant mirrors that reflect sunlight back into space to keep our planet cool.

Word bank: permafrost · tundra · glacier · ecosystem · hemisphere

1. What is permafrost, according to the text? (1 mark)

2. Which animal did Finn see in the Antarctic? (1 mark)

3. Why do you think the emperor penguins huddle together? (2 marks)

4. How is the geography of the Arctic different from the geography of the Antarctic? (2 marks)

5. Do you think it would be difficult for a human to live in the polar regions? Give a reason for your answer using evidence from the text. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture showing the difference between the Arctic (with a polar bear) and the Antarctic (with penguins).



Extension challenge: Research one way that climate change is affecting the ice in the polar regions and write a short paragraph about it.