Exploring Global Climates with Finn

Learning objective: To understand the difference between weather and climate and identify the features of global climate zones.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below. Ensure you use evidence from the text to support your answers.

Finn the dolphin has travelled across every ocean, mapping the world's vast geography. While swimming from the chilly Arctic waters to the warm, sun-drenched tropics near the Equator, Finn has learned that weather and climate are quite different. Weather describes what is happening outside right now, like a sudden rain shower or a gusty breeze. Climate, however, describes the long-term patterns of weather in a specific area, usually measured over thirty years or more.

Earth is divided into climate zones based on their distance from the Equator, known as latitude. Near the Equator, the climate is tropical; it is hot and humid with high levels of precipitation throughout the year. In contrast, polar regions near the North and South Poles have extremely cold climates where ice remains all year round. Between these two extremes lie temperate zones, like the United Kingdom, which experience distinct seasons with moderate temperatures. By observing these patterns, scientists like Finn can understand how our planet's atmosphere functions and why certain plants and animals thrive in specific corners of the globe.

Word bank: Climate · Meteorology · Atmosphere · Equator · Precipitation · Latitude · Tropical

1. According to the text, what is the main difference between weather and climate? (2 marks)

2. What is the relationship between latitude and the climate zones mentioned in the text? (2 marks)

3. Why might a scientist need to study weather patterns for thirty years to understand a region's climate? (2 marks)

4. Based on the passage, what type of climate would you expect to find in a region located exactly halfway between the Equator and the North Pole? (2 marks)

5. Do you think it is important for people to understand climate zones? Explain your reasoning. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a diagram of the Earth showing the three main climate zones: Tropical, Temperate, and Polar. Label each zone and draw one animal that might live in each area.

Extension challenge: Research a specific country within a temperate climate zone. Write a short paragraph explaining how its seasonal changes affect the daily life of the people living there.