

Antarctica

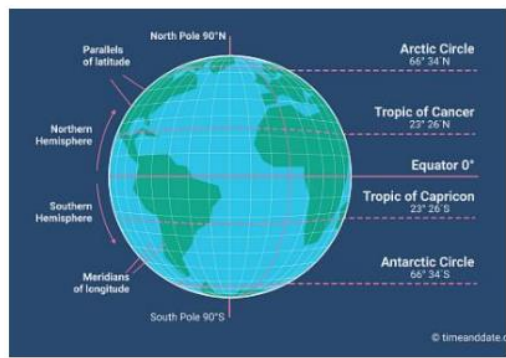
Knowledge Organiser

Antarctica is an icebound continent surrounding the South Pole. The ice forms glaciers that shed mighty icebergs into the Southern Ocean. Like the Arctic, Antarctica receives little sunlight: the Sun does not rise at all between late March and September. Even in summer, 85 per cent of the Sun's heat is reflected by the ice. So little snow falls each year that the mainland is effectively a cold desert where few animals can survive. But the waters are rich in nutrients, and both the ocean and its remote island groups teem with wildlife.

Location



Antarctica is the southernmost continent on Earth located in the southern hemisphere and is surrounded by the Southern Ocean. It covers a huge area, about 14 million square kilometres.



Key vocabulary

Continent	a very large landmass.
Expedition	a journey undertaken by a group of people with a particular purpose.
Ice Sheet	a layer of ice covering a large piece of land
Glacier	a river or large mass of ice formed by packed-down snow.
Desert	a region with very little rainfall
Hemisphere	a half of the Earth divided by the equator
Climate	the average weather over a period of time
Navigate	plan and direct the course of a ship
Longitude	The distance between the equator and a point north or south on the earth's surface. This distance is measured in degrees.
Latitude	The distance on the earth's surface east or west of an imaginary line on the globe that goes from the north pole to the south pole and passes through Greenwich, England. Longitude is usually measured in degrees.

Ernest Shackleton

Ernest Shackleton was a polar explorer. In 1914 Shackleton took a team of men on an expedition to Antarctica on a ship called the Endurance as he wanted to be the first to pass through the South Pole via Antarctica.



Climate

Cool summers High mountains – 2300m average Ice sheet covers 99% of the land Long cold winters Long dark nights (winter) South pole temperature: -62°C to -55 °C

Flora

Most of Antarctica's plants are found on the Antarctic peninsula. These include: mosses, lichens and 2 flowering plants (hairgrass and pearlwort).



Fauna



Elephant seal, Antarctic Fur Seal, Blue whale, Fin whale, Humpback whale and Sperm whale are found in the oceans and coast surrounding Antarctica. Antarctica is most famous for its penguins: the Chinstrap penguin, Adelie penguin, Emperor penguin, Gentoo penguin and Macaroni penguin