

Project glossary

Geography vocabulary

Antarctic Circle

A line of latitude that lies 66.5°S of the equator. Everything south of this line is known as the Antarctic.

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Antarctica

A continent in the Antarctic region with a polar climate.

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Arctic Circle

A line of latitude that lies 66.5°N of the equator. Everything north of this line is known as the Arctic.

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Arctic region

An area in the Northern Hemisphere that includes parts of Canada, Alaska, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Greenland, Iceland and the Arctic Ocean.

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boreal forest

A large area of wetland covered in conifer trees found in countries that are in or near the Arctic Circle.

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carbon footprint

The amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere by one individual, one process or one company.

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climate

The usual weather conditions that occur in a place over a long period.

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climate change

The long-term change in expected weather patterns that contribute to the melting of polar ice caps, rising sea levels and extreme weather.

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crevasse

A deep crack in the thick ice of a glacier.

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equator

A line of latitude around the middle of the Earth at 0°.

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glacier

A river or mass of ice that is moving slowly and formed from compacted snow.

global warming

A gradual increase in world temperatures caused by gases such as carbon dioxide collecting in the air around the Earth and stopping heat from escaping into space.

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greenhouse effect

The trapping of heat from the Sun in the Earth’s atmosphere due to the presence of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide.

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horizon

The line where the sky appears to meet the Earth.

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ice field

A large area of connected glaciers.

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ice sheet

A mass of glacial ice that covers the ground, also known as a continental glacier.

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ice shelf

A floating sheet of ice attached to a land mass.

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iceberg

A large piece of frozen freshwater that has broken off a glacier, ice shelf or larger iceberg.

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indigenous

Occurring naturally or originating in a particular place.

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line of latitude

An imaginary line that runs horizontally around the Earth, measured in degrees north (°N) or south (°S) of the equator.

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line of longitude

An imaginary line that runs vertically from the North Pole to the South Pole, measured in degrees east (°E) or west (°W) of the Prime Meridian.

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native

Refers to the animals and plants that occur naturally in a place.

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North Pole

The most northern geographical point of the Earth.

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Northern Hemisphere

The part of the Earth that is to the north of the equator.

permafrost

A layer of soil that remains frozen all year round.

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polar day

Near constant daylight in the Arctic or Antarctic during the summer months when the Sun does not set below the horizon, also known as Midnight Sun.

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polar night

Near constant darkness in the Arctic or Antarctic during the winter months when the Sun does not rise above the horizon.

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precipitation

Water that falls from clouds in the sky as rain, snow, hail or sleet.

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Prime Meridian

The line of longitude that passes through Greenwich in England and marks 0° longitude, from which all other longitudes are measured.

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South Pole

The most southern geographical point of the Earth.

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Southern Hemisphere

The part of the Earth that is to the south of the equator.

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topography

The physical appearance of the natural features of an area of land, especially the shape of its surface.

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tourism

An industry that involves people travelling for recreation and leisure.

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Tropic of Cancer

A line of latitude that runs around the Earth at 23.5°N of the equator.

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Tropic of Capricorn

A line of latitude that runs around the Earth at 23.5°S of the equator.

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tundra

An area of land where it is too cold for trees to grow and the ground below the surface is permanently frozen.

Science vocabulary

amphibian

A cold-blooded vertebrate that lives on land and in water.

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behavioural adaptation

Changes in the way a living thing behaves, such as hibernation, that confers an advantage in their habitat.

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bird

A warm-blooded vertebrate with feathers, wings and a beak.

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characteristic

A quality or physical feature of a living thing.

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classification

The arrangement of all living things into groups based on their shared characteristics.

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classification key

A set of questions that help to identify a living thing and decide to which group it belongs.

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evolution

The process by which complex living things developed from simple life forms during the history of Earth.

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fish

A cold-blooded vertebrate that lives in water and is covered in scales. Most fish have fins for movement and gills for breathing.

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invertebrate

An animal without a backbone.

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mammal

A vertebrate animal that is warm blooded, gives birth to live young, has fur or hair and breathes air with lungs. Females produce milk to feed their offspring.

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physical adaptation

Changes to a living thing's physical features, such as fur, that confer an advantage in their habitat.

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reptile

A cold-blooded vertebrate that lays soft-shelled eggs, has skin covered in scales and breathes with lungs.

thermal insulator

A material that does not allow heat to pass through.

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vertebrate

An animal that has a backbone.