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Biomes

A biome is a large area of Earth that has a certain climate (temperature, amount of rain/snow), animals, plants, and soil. Each biome has certain animals and plants that are specially designed for them to survive.

The Earth is divided into five main biomes (aquatic, grassland, forest, desert, and tundra) as well as smaller biome types (freshwater, marine, savanna, tropical rainforest, and temperate rainforest).

Aquatic Biomes

Aquatic biomes include both freshwater and marine biomes. They make up about 70% of Earth's surface which makes aquatic biomes such an important part of Earth's biosphere. About 98% of the water on Earth is salty while only 2% is fresh. Aquatic biomes are home to many species including fish, algae, and many more.



Freshwater biomes include lakes, ponds, and wetlands and have very little salt. Humans use freshwater biomes for drinking water, watering their crops, as well as many industrial processes.

Marine biomes cover close to three-quarters of Earth's surface and include estuaries, oceans, and coral reefs. They're very important as the algae that grows in them provides Earth with a lot of

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Grasslands

Grasslands are areas where most of the vegetation is grass instead of large shrubs or trees. They are mostly warm and dry and are found on all continents except Antarctica.

There are two types of grasslands: savannas and temperate grasslands.



Savannas are found closer to the equator and can have a few scattered trees. They cover almost half of the continent of Africa, as well as parts of India, South America, and Australia.



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Animals that live in savannas include zebras, kangaroos, mice, giraffes, buffalo, squirrels, snakes, lions, and elements among others.

Temperate grasslands are fairly flat areas of grasses with few or no

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The temperature range is large with summer temperatures reaching 38 °C (100 °F) and winter temperatures getting as low as -40 °C (-40 °F). Temperate grasslands get less precipitation than savannas.

There are a lot of animals that live in temperate grasslands including zebras, rhinos, lions, deer, skunks, hawks, owls, grasshoppers, and spiders to name a few.

Forests

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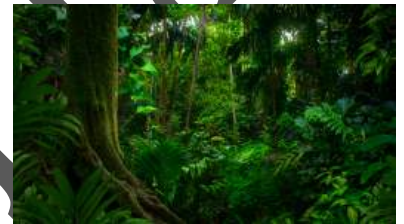
Earth's forests are divided into three main biomes based on their latitude (distance north or south from the equator)

1. Tropical forests
2. Temperate forests
3. Boreal forests

Tropical forests are found closest to the equator, are very dense with trees, and are home to many animal species. One square kilometer may contain as many as 100 different tree species.



They are warm, wet, humid, and never experience winter. They have two seasons, rainy and dry and receive more than 200 cm (79 inches) of rainfall per year.



Temperate forests are further from the equator than tropical but closer than boreal. They occur in eastern North America, northeastern Asia, and western and central Europe.



They experience all four seasons and have less biodiversity than tropical forests with only 3-4 species of tree per square kilometer compared to 100 in tropical forests. Temperate forests are home to many animals including skunks, mountain lions, deer, squirrels, bobcats, and black bears.



Temperate forests receive between 80 – 150 cm (30 – 60 inches) of precipitation per year which is spread evenly throughout the 12 months.

Boreal forests (also known as Taiga) are found at even higher latitudes and have the coldest and driest climate. They are found in Siberia, Eurasia, North America, and Scandinavia and are also the largest land biome.

Boreal forests contain mostly evergreen trees (trees that don't lose their leaves) and most of the precipitation that falls is snow due to the long winters.



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Deserts

Deserts cover about 20 percent of Earth's surface and receive less than 50 centimeters (20 inches) of rain per year!



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Hot deserts do not have much biodiversity as any animal or plant that lives there must be specially adapted to survive in the very dry environment. Nonmammalian vertebrates such as reptiles as well as mammals like kangaroo mice are well suited to these conditions.



Hot and dry deserts are warm throughout the year and very hot in the summer. Rainfall is low and happens in short bursts with some years receiving no rain at all!

Cold deserts are found in the Antarctic, Greenland and the Nearctic realm. They have short, moderately warm summers and long, cold winters. In the winter, the temperature is between -2 to 4 °C (28 to 54 °F) and they receive quite a bit of snow while in the summer, the temperature ranges between 21-26 °C (70 to 79 °F).

Tundra

Tundras have the most difficult conditions for life. Out of the five major biomes, they have the lowest temperatures -34 to 12 °C (-29 to 54 °F)

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Arctic tundras are located in the northern hemisphere and extend south to the boreal forests. They are cold, desert-like areas with very short growing seasons (50-60 days). The average winter temperature is -34 °C (-30 °F) and the average summer temperature is 3-12 °C (37-54 °F).

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Alpine tundra is located at high altitudes on mountains throughout the world where trees cannot grow. Animals living in the alpine tundra include mountain goats, sheep, elk, grouse birds, beetles, grasshoppers, and butterflies.

Any wildlife inhabiting the tundra must be adapted to its extreme conditions to survive (thick coats, layers of fat, camouflage, etc.). They have also evolved to breed early in life and raise their young quickly during the summer season.



Reading Comprehension Questions

1. In your own
2. Describe an
3. Compare the three types of forest biomes using a chart and at least two different headings.
4. Compare
5. Out of the five biomes described, which gets the least amount of precipitation? Which gets the most?

Extension Questions

6. Describe
7. Create a

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TIME SAMPLE