

Antarctica The Ice-Capped Continent

Q1A

1. What is called 'the white continent' and why?

A:- A continent called Antarctica lies entirely in the southern hemisphere. It is a large continent of south polar region. This is the only continent which is completely frozen throughout the year. Therefore, it is called the 'The white continent'. The vast permanent icy cover is known as the 'continental ice cap'.

2. What are the two main divisions of Antarctica. Explain any one of them.

A:- The Transantarctic mountains cross the entire continent. This mountains divide Antarctica into two

parts - East Antarctica and West Antarctica.

East Antarctica: East Antarctica faces the Atlantic and Indian Ocean and covers more than half of the continent. Mountains, valleys and glaciers are found along the coast. A rift valley cuts into the coastline from the Indian Ocean. The central part is a plateau about 3000 metres above sea level. The eastern part of the continent is much wider than the western part. There are many glaciers in the continent. The Lambert glacier in East Antarctica is the world's largest ice sheet. This glacier is about 100 km wide, over 400 km long and about 2500 m deep. Another glacier called the Beardmore glacier is one of the largest valley glaciers in the world having length of 201 km and width of 40 km.

3. Explain the vegetations of Antarctica.

A:- Antarctica is a cold desert which cannot support normal and natural vegetation. A few plants grow in Antarctica because of the ice covered land and harsh climate. The most common plants are mosses and lichens. These plants cling to rocky areas, mostly along the coast. Some clumps of coarse grass and flowering plants are also found where the temperatures are milder.

4. Explain the animal life of Antarctica.

A:- The scanty vegetation is not enough to support animal life. Only a few insects and some tiny animals are found in Antarctica. The continent's largest land animal is a type of fly not more than 2cm long. There are penguins, seals and several sea birds which flock there during the summer season. Whales live in the surrounding sea. A small fish, called 'Krill' is found in plenty.

The international laws are there for forbidding the killing of whales.

5. There is a great difference between the temperature in coastal area and the centre of the continent - Give a geographical reason.

A:- Temperature ranges between -40°C and -75°C . Summer temperature on the coastal parts seldom rises above freezing point. In the interior parts the temperature remains between -28°C and -38°C .

6. None of Antarctica's mineral resources have been developed - Explain why.

A:- Most of Antarctica's minerals occur in amount too small to be mined profitably. Antarctica

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has deposits of coal, iron and copper. Petroleum may be present in the sea bed. None of Antarctica's mineral resources have been developed.