

Antarctica: Frozen Desert

More than 2,000 years ago, early Greek geographers wrote about a giant continent at the bottom of the world. Although no one had actually seen it, they called it Anti-Arktikos, or “opposite of the Arctic.” Centuries passed, and no one found this “great southern continent.” In the 1800s, explorers finally reached the legendary land. Among them was American sea captain Nathaniel Palmer, who sighted Antarctica from his ship.

Most of Antarctica is a desert. This may seem strange, because we often think of deserts as hot places filled with sand. Almost all of Antarctica is covered with snow and ice, and the average annual temperature is far below freezing. But on the whole, Antarctica receives very little precipitation (rain or snow)—and this is what makes it a desert. Antarctica is the coldest, windiest, driest place on Earth, covered by thick sheets of blue-white ice and surrounded by fierce, freezing seas.

Plants and animals that live in Antarctica have to be tough. A few kinds of plants—some mosses, for example—grow in the 2 percent of Antarctic land that is free of ice. Some grow only during the summer months and only on the warmer parts of the continent. Animals that survive year-round on the mainland are small and stay close to the ground—tiny insects such as mites, and microscopic worms. Penguins and seals live on Antarctica only part of the year.

More than 3,000 people from around the world—scientists and people who help the scientists—work in Antarctica today. It is not a very easy place to live, but it is a perfect laboratory for scientific study. Astronomers like the cold, clean, dry air because it allows their telescopes to see clearly into deep space. Biologists study life on and around Antarctica to learn about how animals and plants adapt to extreme temperatures and harsh conditions.



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Strategy: Generating Main Idea Questions
Classifying Questions Chart

Student's Question:	Is this a main idea or a detail question?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Main Idea <input type="checkbox"/> Detail
	<input type="checkbox"/> Main Idea <input type="checkbox"/> Detail
	<input type="checkbox"/> Main Idea <input type="checkbox"/> Detail
	<input type="checkbox"/> Main Idea <input type="checkbox"/> Detail
	<input type="checkbox"/> Main Idea <input type="checkbox"/> Detail
	<input type="checkbox"/> Main Idea <input type="checkbox"/> Detail



DAR Levels 3-6

Strategy: Generating Main Idea Questions

Student: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Passage Title: _____ Passage Level: _____

Use the Classifying Questions Chart to record the questions the student asks and whether the student thinks each question is a main idea or a detail question.

Did the student have difficulty generating questions? Y or N

Explain:

Did the student have difficulty distinguishing between main ideas and details? Y or N

Explain:

<p>During this activity, the student seemed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Actively engaged <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat engaged <input type="checkbox"/> Passively cooperative <input type="checkbox"/> Not interested <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ 	<p>Additional Comments:</p>
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