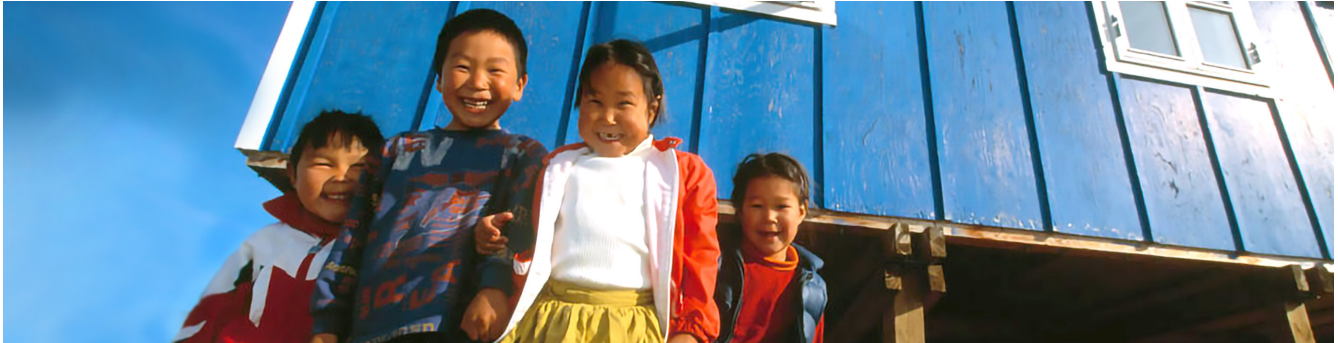




Discussion Questions



Have your learners use the information found in the Educator's Resource Guide to answer these questions about Arctic habitats, species, and people and the threats facing its ecosystem. For a more challenging option, advanced questions are included. Choose to have your learners submit their answers verbally, or as written responses on the back of the page(s) or on a separate sheet of paper, working individually or in groups.

1. The Arctic is located in the northernmost region on Earth. Its temperatures are often very cold, making it a unique environment in which animals live.

What are some examples of traits or behaviors (also called *adaptations*) of Arctic animals that help them survive in such a harsh environment?

Advanced: Consider the changes that are currently taking place in the region; how might these changes affect Arctic life in the future? What adaptations that Arctic animals currently need to survive might change as a result?

2. Water in the Arctic exists in many forms—as ocean water, glaciers, icebergs, and frozen sea ice.

How do each of these forms of water differ from one another?

Advanced: For what purpose does each form of water serve the biodiversity within the Arctic?

3. In addition to its habitats in and around water, the Arctic has a unique and diverse landscape.

What are three unique qualities that make the landscape in the Arctic different from other areas in the world? (Hint: Think about the ground, seasons, and types of habitats in the area.)

Advanced: How do the location and position of the Arctic affect these qualities and characteristics?

4. All living things in the Arctic are affected by climate change. Some species are directly affected by the warming temperatures. Other species are indirectly affected, meaning that they might feel the effects after their surroundings change.

Pick two species that call the Arctic home. How might rising temperatures affect these two species in *similar* and *different* ways?

Advanced: Thinking about relationships in nature, how would the decline of one of these species affect other species? How would that decline affect the ecosystem's overall health? (You may draw or write your answer.)





5. In addition to its unique wildlife, the Arctic is also home to around 4 million people. This includes approximately 400,000 Indigenous people whose families have lived in the Arctic for many generations.

How do you think life for humans living in the Arctic is different from your life? How are their lives similar to yours?

Advanced: As the Arctic environment continues changing as a result of climate change, what unique challenges might Indigenous people encounter? For example, how is melting ice changing their livelihood?

6. Threats such as shipping traffic, unsustainable fishing, and underwater noise pollution affect the Arctic and its biodiversity.

Explain how these threats might affect i. polar bears ii. fish iii. whales

Advanced: Other threats to the Arctic include dangerous actions by oil and gas companies. These companies continue to take an interest in the Arctic because of opportunities to drill and mine for its abundant natural resources. What kind of impacts result from such activities, and how might they affect Arctic wildlife and people?

7. Some people call the Arctic “ground zero for climate change” because temperatures are rising faster there and affecting the area more intensely than anywhere else in the world.

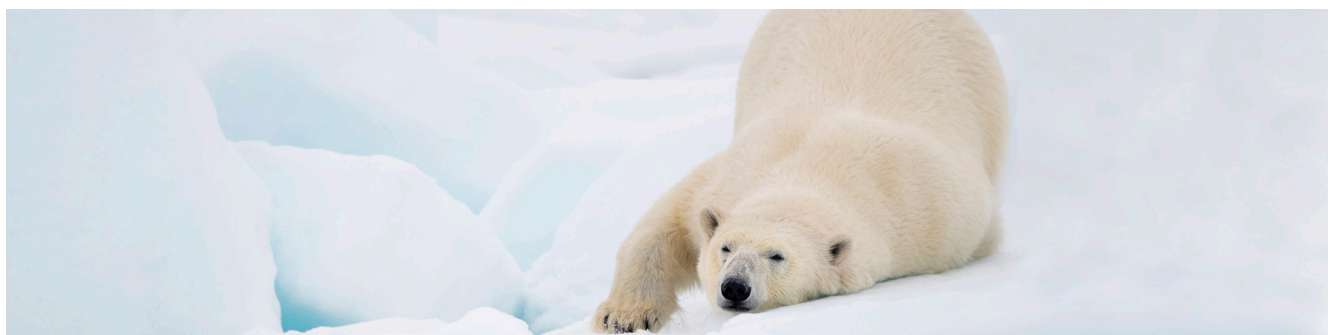
Explain why rising temperatures may affect life in the Arctic more than in other areas of the world.

Advanced: This rise in temperature can break down the protections that the Arctic ice provides, in turn affecting other Arctic resources that benefit people everywhere. How are humans around the world affected by the changes that are happening in the Arctic?

8. Even though the Arctic may seem far away from us, we are all connected to it. We benefit from the protection and resources it provides, and there are ways that we can help to protect it, no matter where we live.

Name two actions that you can take in your own community to help the Arctic.

Advanced: The Arctic Council is responsible for making rules and policies that protect this area. What policies would you plan to implement if you were in charge of protecting the Arctic?



Polar bear, Svalbard, Norway