

Biome 101

¹ On our planet Earth, we have several different types of environments. Each environment has its own unique climate, animals, and plants. We call each of these environments a biome or an ecosystem.

² How many biomes do we have? Well, when we look up the answer to that question in books or on the Internet, we may get confused. One book says that there are 5 biomes, another claims 15, and another states 9. So, exactly how many biomes do we have? Well, the answer to that question depends on how detailed your source of information classifies a biome. For example, one book may combine "oceans" and "freshwater" into one big category called "aquatic", while another may prefer to have "oceans" and "freshwater" listed as two separate biomes.

³ Here in this article, we say that there are 9 biomes on Earth. They are polar region (Arctic and Antarctica), coniferous forests, temperate forests, rain forests, deserts, oceans, freshwater (rivers, lakes, and wetlands), mountains, and grasslands.

⁴ While there is no visible boundary between two biomes, there is an invisible one - climate. A good example to illustrate what a significant role climate plays in shaping up biomes is to compare coniferous forests with rain forests. Coniferous forests, also known as taigas or boreal forests, are cold all year round. Animals living there are excellent survivors. Some (such as wolverines and brown bears) have thick fur coats to keep off the cold. Some (such as reindeer and Canada geese) travel to a warmer area before the winter comes.

⁵ Tropical rain forests, mostly located near the Equator, are hot and humid every day! The average temperature is 77 degrees Fahrenheit, and the average monthly rainfall is 4 inches. Warm climate and plentiful rains create a perfect environment for plants and animals to thrive. At least 50% of all the plant and animal species in the world are found in rain forests. Many of the world's most colorful and bizarre-looking animals (such as toucans, poison dart frogs, mandrills, and butterflies) establish their homes there. There are temperate rain forests, too. The western coast of the United States and Canada is home to a large temperate rain forest. These areas have wet and dry seasons and milder temperatures in both summer and winter.

⁶ Studying the characteristics of a biome and the wildlife inhabiting it is a lot of fun! As you learn more about each biome, you will come to understand, say, why giraffes have such long necks or how camels survive without water or food for weeks or even months!

Name _____

Science Pd _____

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<p>1. What is the most important characteristic of a biome?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Sun</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Plant</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Climate</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Soil</p>	<p>2. Not all rain forests are near the Equator.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p>
<p>3. Which of the following is not a biome listed in this article?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Cave</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Grassland</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Rain forest</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Ocean</p>	<p>4. What is the coniferous forest also known as?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Rain forest</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Taiga or Boreal forest</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Temperate forest</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Hardwood forest</p>
<p>5. Which of the following animals live in tropical rain forests?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Desert tortoise</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Poison dart frog</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Penguin</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Polar bear</p>	<p>6. Which of the following animals live in coniferous forests?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Bears</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Roadrunner</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Toucan</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Mandrill</p>

