

Earth's Biomes

By Cindy Grigg

¹ There are places on earth that are unlike others. Each type of place is called a biome. A biome is a large area having a different climate and particular types of plant and animal life. There are several different types of biomes. There are deserts where there is little rainfall. There are rainforests where it rains up to one hundred fifty inches per year. The plants and animals that live in these places are very different from each other.



² Physical things such as climate and geography determine what things can live in an area. Climate is the general weather of an area over a long period of time, including its seasonal changes. The climate of an area largely depends on its location on Earth. Areas close to the equator receive more direct sunlight than areas close to the poles. Therefore, areas closer to the equator are warmer year-round. Areas nearer the poles have warm, short summers and cold winters. Sometimes geography determines how much or how little rainfall an area will receive.

³ Biomes also have certain kinds of plants and animals that live there. That's because the climate mostly determines what plants can grow in an area. Certain animals who like to eat those kinds of plants will live in that area. The plants and animals that live in a certain type of biome are suited to living in that environment.

⁴ As usual, when people try to sort things into categories, they have different ways of doing so. With biomes, scientists have different ways of categorizing them. As a result, you may see different numbers of biomes given and even different names. To make it even more confusing, biomes are often given local names. For example, a temperate grassland or shrubland biome is known as a steppe in central Asia, a savanna or veldt in southern Africa, a prairie in North America, pampas in South America, and outback or scrub in Australia.

⁵ Some of the more common land biomes are deserts, tropical rain forests, coniferous forests, deciduous forests, grasslands, tundra, taiga, polar, and chaparral or scrub. Every biome is home to a special group of plants. The plants are well suited to living in that climate and to growing in the soil found there. Every biome is also home to a special group of animals. In one way or another, the animals depend on the plants to survive. All the plants and animals in a biome form a community. In that community, every living thing depends on other community members to survive. A biome's climate, soil, plants, and animals are all connected this way.

Name _____

Date _____

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<p>1. What is a biome?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A A large area having a different climate and particular types of plant and animal life</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B An individual organism and the food it eats</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C A colony of one type of organism living in a particular place</p>	<p>2. What two physical things determine what can live in an area?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Available food and water</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Climate and geography</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Soil and rock content</p>
<p>3. _____ mostly determines what plants can grow in an area.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Climate</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Soil</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Geography</p>	<p>4. All the plants and animals in a biome form a:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Species</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Community</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Population</p>
<p>5. A temperate grassland biome is known by what other name in the United States?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Tundra</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Prairie</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Savanna</p>	<p>6. Why do particular plants grow in a particular biome?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A They are suited to living in that environment.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Someone planted them there.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Geography determines what plants live there.</p>

