

# The Tundra Biome

**Cross-Curricular Focus: Life Science**



The tundra is a very cold environment. It is so cold that snow covers the ground for most of the year. The winter season there is longer than it is in other places. No trees grow in the tundra biome. It does not sound like a very friendly place to live.

Some animals have adapted to live in extremely harsh environments. They live in places where you would not expect to find anything alive. Organisms that live under such difficult conditions are unusual. They may have changed something about their behavior. They may have some sort of physical characteristic that helps them survive.

Animals that live in the tundra need to keep as much heat as possible inside their bodies. The arctic fox is a tundra animal. Like many tundra animals, it has a thick fur coat to keep it warm. It has tiny ears that do not allow much heat to escape. The arctic fox is also a very short animal. This helps protect it from the cold wind.

Summers in the tundra biome are very short. During the summer season, small brownish plants grow very close to the ground. Many tundra animals have fur coats that change color to match the season. When the snow begins to melt, their white fur coats they had during the winter change. They become brown fur coats that look like the summer plants. In the winter, the coats turn white again. In this way, they blend into their surroundings. They hide from animals that may want to eat them.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage. Don't forget to go back to the passage whenever necessary to find or confirm your answers.

1) What makes the tundra a harsh environment?

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2) How do many tundra animals keep warm?

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3) How does having small ears help the arctic fox?

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4) What is interesting about the fur of some tundra animals?

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5) Which season is longer in the tundra, winter or summer?

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Name: **Key** \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage. Don't forget to go back to the passage whenever necessary to find or confirm your answers.

**Actual answers may vary.**

1) What makes the tundra a harsh environment?

**It is very cold and the winters are long. No trees grow in the tundra.**

2) How do many tundra animals keep warm?

**with a thick fur coat**

3) How does having small ears help the arctic fox?

**Its ears don't allow much heat to escape.**

4) What is interesting about the fur of some tundra animals?

**It changes colors in the winter and spring.**

5) Which season is longer in the tundra, winter or summer?

**winter**