

Name _____

Arctic Tundra

Learn facts about the Arctic tundra.

Read the passage and answer the questions.

The Arctic tundra is a biome found in northern Alaska, Canada, and Siberia. Here there are long, cold winters and short, cool summers. The average rainfall is fewer than ten inches per year, and it is very windy. Permafrost is unique to the tundra. This means that there is a layer of the ground that is always frozen, with no cracks or holes; nothing can get through it, not water or plants. The layer above the permafrost is called the active layer; it thaws during the summer. During the summer there is a lot of surface water in the Arctic tundra. This is caused when the snow and ice melt, and the water has nowhere to go because it cannot soak into the ground past the active layer. Another special thing about the Arctic tundra is the small amount of sunlight it gets. Because it is so far north, in the winter the sun doesn't come up for two months. In the summer there are times when the sun doesn't go down, but even then it doesn't get very high in the sky, so the light is not bright. There are not very many animals that can survive here year-round. Most birds and mammals only spend their summers in the Arctic tundra. The Arctic wolf and the brown bear are two that have adapted to live here year-round. Only plants with shallow root systems can grow in the tundra, but there is a very short season when plants can grow at all, and you will not find any trees here.

1. What is unique about the ground in the Arctic tundra? _____

2. Where might you find this type of biome? _____
3. Why is there so much surface water in the summer? _____

4. Name a kind of animal that can live in the Arctic tundra year round. _____

5. Why are there no large trees in the Arctic tundra? _____

