

Read the text and choose the right part to answer the questions

1. What people live on the continent?
2. What is done to protect Antarctica's environment?
3. How was Antarctica discovered?
4. What would happen if Antarctica's temperature rose?
5. How has the continent changed over the years?
6. What are the colours of Antarctica's flag?
7. Why is Antarctica often called a dry land?

A. Antarctica has no government and no country owns this continent. It is the only region on earth which is not ruled by any nation. There are no local people in Antarctica. However, in the summer season, more than four thousand scientists from different countries come to study the mysterious region while one thousand stay there in the winter season. The scientific bases are the only 'settlements' with residents who stay for several months or a year.

B. Antarctica is a huge desert, despite the fact that it holds 70 percent of the world's fresh water. Usually, no more than six centimeters of rain fall per year. Most of this falls in the eastern part of the continent. These figures are comparable to those of the Sahara desert. Some parts of Antarctica have had no rain or snow for the last 2 million years.

C. You will be surprised to know that Antarctica was found just 200 years ago. The ancient Greeks did not mark Antarctica on their maps. It was only in 1820 that travellers found this icy, white continent. Actually, it happened by accident. The captain of the Imperial Russian Navy, Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen, was the first person who saw Antarctica from his ship. It was on 27th January 1820.

D. Antarctica contains about 90 percent of the world's ice. It also has 8 times more ice than the Arctic. If all of the Antarctic ice melted, the sea level around the world would rise about 70 meters. But the average temperature in Antarctica is -37°C and the ice is in no danger of melting so far. In fact, in most parts of the continent it never gets above freezing.

E. Since Antarctica is not a country, it has neither a state emblem nor an official flag. However, in 2002, a special flag was approved by the Antarctic Treaty Organization. The design of the flag was suggested by Graham Bartram who used the flag of the United Nations as its basic pattern. The white image of Antarctica on the blue background looks simple and elegant.

F. Fifty million years ago Antarctica had a mild climate, evergreen forests and many more kinds of animals than it has today. Due to continental drift, Antarctica moved from the equator to the South Pole, where it is today. Nowadays, Antarctica is the coldest continent on the planet and almost completely covered with a layer of ice. However, its wildlife is quite diverse: from emperor penguins and humpback whales to small bugs in the coastal areas.