

NAME: _____

WHERE LIFE IS REALLY HARD

Read the article. Then answer the questions

Where life is really hard

It's the end of the winter. Most people have been inside for weeks. They haven't seen the sun for a long time. But some men are outside. It's bitterly cold, with temperatures of around -45° Celsius, and the freezing wind makes the situation difficult for them to bear. These men are hunters, and the survival of the people they've left behind in the villages depends on how successful their hunt is.

Akycha is one of these men. He's been out hunting for more than a week now. While he's away from home, he stays overnight in a little igloo that he's made himself from ice and snow. The igloo protects him from the freezing wind. Inside, there's a little stove for cooking, and a small stone lamp which provides light. Together, they help to create a temperature of around 12° Celsius.

Right now, Akycha is several kilometres away from his igloo. He's riding his snowmobile along the coast, far out on the frozen sea. Suddenly, he can see something in the distance. He stops his snowmobile and checks through his binoculars. It's a seal. Holding a screen of white canvas in front of him in one hand, and his gun in the other, he moves forward, cautiously hiding behind the screen all the time so that the seal won't notice him. If he's lucky and his hunt goes well, the meat he brings home should last his family for several weeks.



Akycha and his people are part of the Inuit community. Most of them still live a very traditional life, a life that makes them dependent on hunting seals and whales. Some of them also live off the reindeer they keep.

The Inuit are indigenous people of the Arctic Circle, which means they've lived here for so long that they feel the land is theirs. The Arctic Circle is a huge land area that belongs to a number of northern countries: Russia, the USA, Canada, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland. The northern environment is an exceptional habitat. Temperatures are low during most of the year and summers are short, which means that plants can only grow for a few weeks every year. If the reindeer eat the moss that grows in a certain area, it can take up to 30 years for the plants to grow back. This is why Inuits who make a living from keeping and breeding reindeer have to be constantly on the move with their herds.

For most of us, life is less hard than it is for the Inuit people. But maybe we can learn something from them. Their traditional way of life is a model of living in partnership with nature, rather than exploiting and destroying it.

WHAT ARE WINTERS LIKE INSIDE THE ARTICLE CIRCLE?

HOW DOES AKYCHA SURVIVE WHEN HE'S OUT HUNTING?

WHAT DOES HE HUNT AND HOW DOES HE DO THIS?

WHY CAN'T THE INUIT WHO KEEP REINDEER STAY IN ONE PLACE FOR A LONG TIME?
