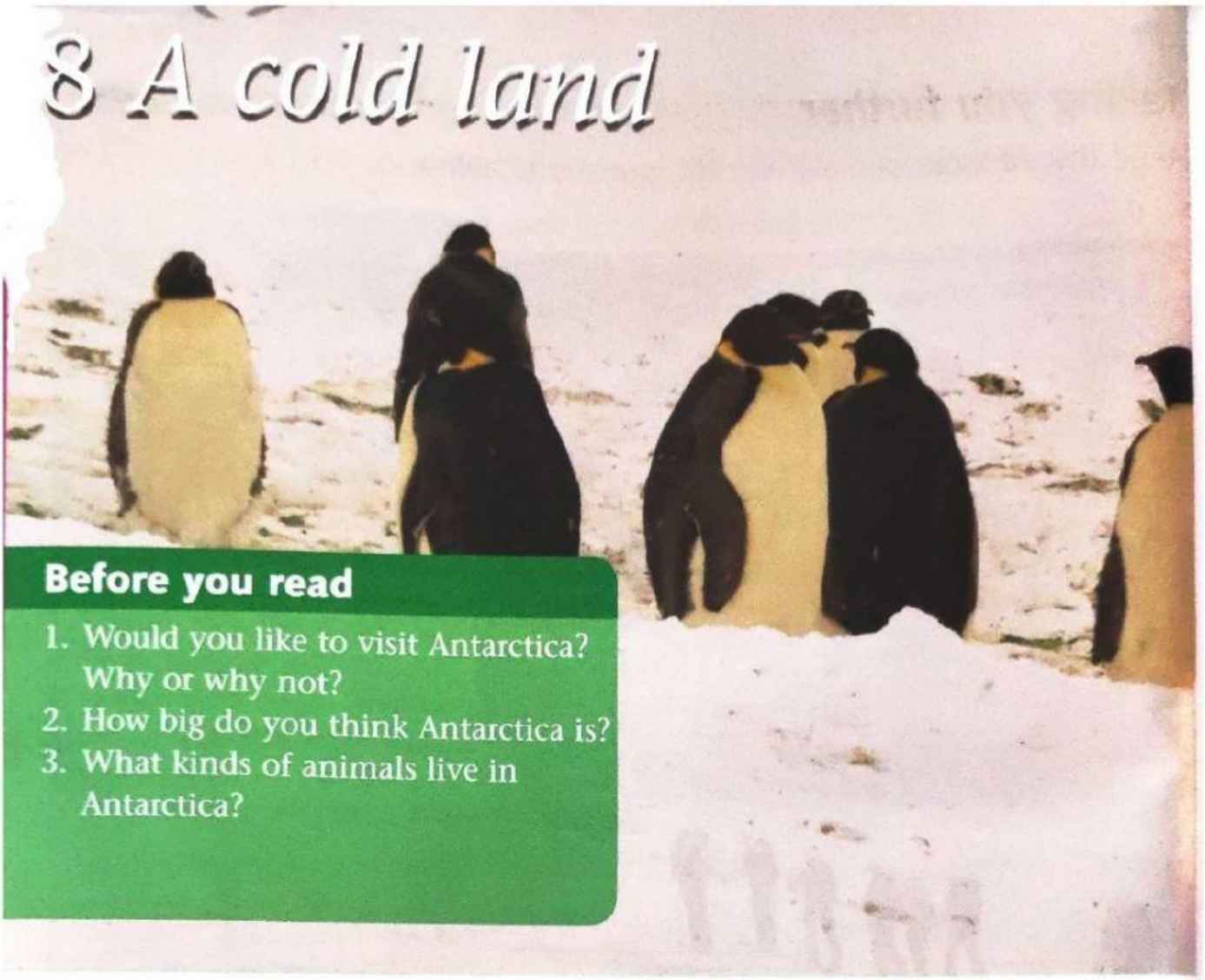
8 A cold land



Before you read

1. Would you like to visit Antarctica? Why or why not?
2. How big do you think Antarctica is?
3. What kinds of animals live in Antarctica?

Reading

1 Antarctica is the coldest place on Earth. It is almost completely covered with snow and ice. In some places the ice is almost 5 kilometres thick. There are no trees or bushes. Very small plants are the only things that grow there.

2 This beautiful white land is nearly as big as Europe and the USA put together. In winter it seems to double in size because ice forms in the sea around it. When the sea is frozen, it is very difficult for ships to reach Antarctica. The scientists who work there know they cannot leave until summer comes.

3 In summer the days are very long and the nights are very short. In winter it is dark most of the time. At the South Pole there is only one 'day' and one 'night' in the whole year. The sun does not go down from September to March, and then it is dark until the next September.

4 Only tiny animals like insects live in Antarctica. However the sea around it is full of life. Animals like seals and penguins come onto the land in the warmer months to rest and have their babies. When it starts to get cold again, most of them leave, but the emperor penguin stays. In the winter the mother lays one egg on the ice. She then passes it to the father who carries it on his feet, under a piece of skin. Here he keeps it warm in temperatures as low as –60°C!

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Vocabulary

A. Complete each sentence with the correct word or phrase.

penguins bushes seals put together seems to

1. Walruses, _____ and dolphins are all mammals that live in the sea.
2. _____ are amazing birds. They are slow on land, but they can swim very fast underwater.
3. Wow! This hall is bigger than three classrooms _____. It's huge!
4. _____ are low plants with lots of branches.
5. In the city the night sky _____ be orange. I think it's because of the street lights.

B. Choose the correct word or phrase with the same meaning as the blue words in each sentence.

very small animals with six legs turned into ice
become twice as big almost totally

1. The fire completely destroyed the house. There was nothing left.
2. It was very cold today. I went out to get my jeans off the washing line and they were frozen!
3. Did you see that huge dog? It was nearly as big as me!
4. I don't like camping outdoors. I can't stand insects!
5. My stomach seems to have doubled in size since I turned forty! I'd better go on a diet.

In other words

A. What is the main purpose of the passage? Circle 1, 2 or 3.

1. To describe the animals that live in Antarctica.
2. To describe what it is like to live in Antarctica.
3. To describe the seasons and the plants and animals in Antarctica.

B. Match each heading to the correct paragraph in the passage.

1. Paragraph _____ The longest day.
2. Paragraph _____ Antarctic animals.
3. Paragraph _____ The coldest place in the world.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

General understanding

Circle T for true or F for false for each of the following statements.

1. The ice in Antarctica can be almost 5 kilometres thick in some places. T / F
2. At the South Pole, there is only one day and one night each year. T / F
3. No insects live in Antarctica. T / F
4. Emperor penguins live in Antarctica all year. T / F

In detail

Write short answers to the following questions.

1. Where is the coldest place on Earth? _____
2. What kind of plants grow in Antarctica? _____
3. How big is Antarctica? _____
4. What happens to the size of Antarctica in winter? _____
5. What kinds of animals live in Antarctica? _____
6. Name two animals that live in the sea around Antarctica.

_____

In focus

Connect the phrases in column A with the phrases in column B to make complete sentences about Antarctica.

A	B
1. When the sea freezes in winter	by carrying it on his feet under a piece of skin.
2. Very small plants	know they cannot leave until summer comes.
3. There is only one 'day' and one 'night'	are the only things that grow in Antarctica.
4. The male emperor penguin keeps the egg warm in winter	Antarctica seems to double in size.
5. When the sea is frozen the scientists in Antarctica	at the South Pole.

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