

Midnight Sun and Northern Lights

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It's midnight, but the sun is shining brightly. Where are you? You're in the Arctic, near the North Pole. During the arctic summer, the sun doesn't

set for months. Instead, it goes around the horizon. You could read outside at midnight.

The temperature stays warm, too, although not as warm as where you live. The average temperature in the summer near the North Pole is about 32 degrees, or freezing. That may sound cold to you, but it's warm in the Arctic. The ice on the Arctic Ocean even melts a little.

Winter is very different. The land of the midnight sun becomes the land of the midday night. The sun doesn't rise for months. The average temperature is well below zero.

People may find the polar nights long and cold, but polar bears love it. That's because their fur is hollow, so it traps their body's warmth. In addition, their skin is

black, which absorbs the sun's warmth. In fact, polar bears feel hot if the temperature rises above freezing.

The polar nights are long and dark, but sometimes there's a light show in the sky. The northern lights, which are called the aurora, are often green or pink. They seem to wave and dance in the sky. Auroras are caused by gas particles that were thrown off by the sun. These particles collide in Earth's atmosphere and make a beautiful show.

Few people live in the Arctic because it's so cold, but Canada, Greenland, Norway, Iceland, and Russia are good places to see the midnight sun and the aurora. In fact, Norway is often called the Land of the Midnight Sun.

As you travel south from the North Pole, there is less midnight sun and fewer northern lights. It gets warmer, too. Soon, the sun sets at a time you're used to. Also, you can wake up all year with the sun shining brightly.



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Write all these words in the right places to complete this puzzle, which tells some things you learned about the Arctic and the North Pole. You can reread the article before you begin, but don't look back at it while you are working. After you've completed the puzzle, read it to someone.



black	midnight	people	polar bears	skin
summer	warm	winter	zero	32

In the _____ season in the Arctic, the sun does not set. It is light outside even at _____. Summer temperatures get up to _____ degrees. This would be very cold in the rest of the world, but in the Arctic, people think it's quite _____!

In contrast, the sun does not shine in the Arctic during the _____ months. The temperature stays below _____ degrees. Most people don't like these freezing temperatures, but _____ love them. Polar bears' fur is white, but the _____ underneath their fur is _____. Their black skin absorbs the sun's light and keeps polar bears warm. The extreme cold is one reason few _____ live in the Arctic.

Comprehension Response Activities

FYI for Kids — Level 3



