



Polar Forest

What did scientists find out?

- Scientists looked at some soil from Antarctica.
- It gave them a lot of information about the climate 90 million years ago.

Photo: There was a forest in Antarctica 90 million years ago.

Forest Once Grew in Antarctica

Some scientists have **discovered** what the **climate** was like in Antarctica, when dinosaurs still roamed the Earth. They say the South Pole was very different from what it is today.

Scientists went to Antarctica. It's the continent in the far south of our planet, where the South Pole is. They dug into the ground. Then, they collected some soil **samples** and this gave them a lot of information.

The team says that there was a forest in Antarctica 90 million years ago. They say it was like some forests found in New Zealand.

Today, ice covers Antarctica and fewer plants grow there. Perhaps, the most famous animals to live there now are penguins. Seals and whales call it home too.

90 million years ago, the temperature would have been around 12°C.

This is very different to the weather at the South Pole today! It's very cold - it can be -60 °C in some places!

In the winter, there can be months where there is no sunlight at all in Antarctica. The

scientists say this happened 90 million years ago as well. However, the climate was so warm back then that plants could still "grow close to the South Pole."

In the past, dinosaur **fossils** have been found in Antarctica. Last year, scientists found a fossil of an *Elasmosaurus*. It was a huge sea reptile and it had a very long neck.

Today's story shows how our planet has changed over millions of years.

Glossary

discovered	To have found out something new.
climate	The weather in a particular place over a period of time.
samples	Taking a small amount from somewhere to tell you what it is like.
fossil	The remains of a prehistoric plant or animal, normally found inside a rock.

Questions

1. In which continent is the South Pole?

- ☐ Antarctica
- ☐ Asia
- ☐ Europe
- ☐ North America

2. How did the scientists find out about the climate 90 million years ago?

3. Compare and contrast the temperature in Antarctica today with what it was like 90 million years ago.

4. Some people might find this story surprising. Why might they think this?

5. Find and copy two facts about an Elasmosaurus.

- 1.

- 2.

6. Tick the headline that best summarises the story.

- ☐ The South Pole Was Very Different 90 Million Years Ago
- ☐ Penguin Fossil Found!
- ☐ Some Things Never Change!
- ☐ South Pole Use to Be Farther South

Answers

1. In which continent is the South Pole?

- ☒ **Antarctica**
- ☐ Asia
- ☐ Europe
- ☐ North America

2. How did the scientists find out about the climate 90 million years ago?

Accept any answer which refers to the following, e.g. The scientists dug into the soil. Then, they collected some samples and this gave them a lot of information.

3. Compare and contrast the temperature in Antarctica today with what it was like 90 million years ago.

90 million years ago, the temperature would have been around 12°C. This is very different to the weather at the South Pole today! It's very cold - it can be -60 °C in some places!

4. Some people might find this story surprising. Why might they think this?

Accept any answer which refers to the story, e.g. I think they might find this surprising because Antarctica is now covered in ice and fewer plants grow there.

5. Find and copy two facts about an Elasmosaurus.

Accept any two from the following: it was a huge sea reptile; it had a very long neck.

6. Tick the headline that best summarises the story.

- ☒ **The South Pole Was Very Different 90 Million Years Ago**
- ☐ Penguin Fossil Found!
- ☐ Some Things Never Change!
- ☐ South Pole Use to Be Farther South