

African Climates and Animals

by Sidan Jono



Genre	Build Background	Access Content	Extend Language
Expository Nonfiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African Climates • African Animals • The Water Cycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map • Definitions • Labels • Fact Box 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjectives with the Suffix -y • Pronouns • Words for Living Things

Scott Foresman Reading Street 6.5.3



scottforesman.com



African Climates and Animals

by Sidan Jono



Editorial Offices: Glenview, Illinois • Parsippany, New Jersey • New York, New York
Sales Offices: Needham, Massachusetts • Duluth, Georgia • Glenview, Illinois
Coppell, Texas • Sacramento, California • Mesa, Arizona



Climate Regions of Africa

Climate is the kind of weather a place has. In a place as large as Africa, there are different weather patterns in different regions. Weather patterns include the amount of rainfall and the temperatures of a region. In each area, the kinds of plants that grow depend on the climate.

Africa has four major climate regions. The climate regions of Africa include: deserts, grasslands, rain forests, and mountains. Each region has its own kinds of vegetation (plants), amounts of rainfall, and kinds of animals.

Certain animals have adapted, or changed, to find food and make homes in the different regions of Africa.

Did You Know? The Water Cycle

The water on the Earth is always moving. The sun shines on the lakes, rivers, and oceans, heating the water. When the water gets hot enough, it changes into a gas. The gas evaporates and is lighter than air, so it rises into the sky. It joins other water vapor (a gas), gets heavy, and falls to the Earth as rain or snow. Then the **cycle** repeats itself.

cycle: series of events that repeat over and over

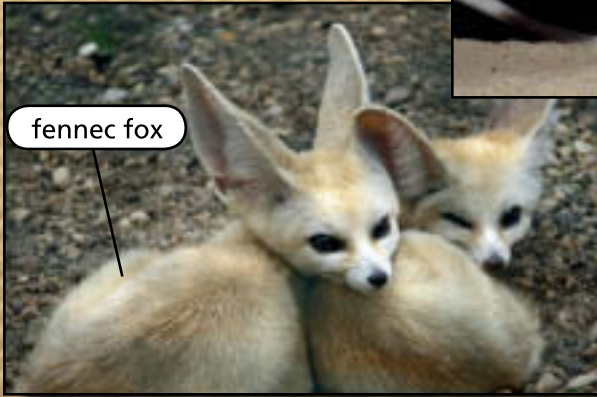
Different Animals Need Different Things

Africa is home to thousands of different kinds of animals. Each animal needs certain kinds of foods and certain kinds of places to live. Africa is a big **continent** with many different **regions**.

The African regions can support thousands of different kinds of animals. From mighty elephants to tiny bees, African animals live in a delicate balance with their environment and their neighbors. Humans can make the future better if we learn to respect this balance, the environment, and the amazing animals that live there.

continent: great mass of land on Earth

regions: parts or areas of a land



Deserts of Africa

Deserts are dry and almost bare expanses of land. The Sahara Desert, the largest desert in the world, covers most of North Africa. Almost nothing grows in this region. The plants in this region grow along the Nile River and in oases. Oases are ponds in the middle of deserts where plants grow and animals can eat and drink.

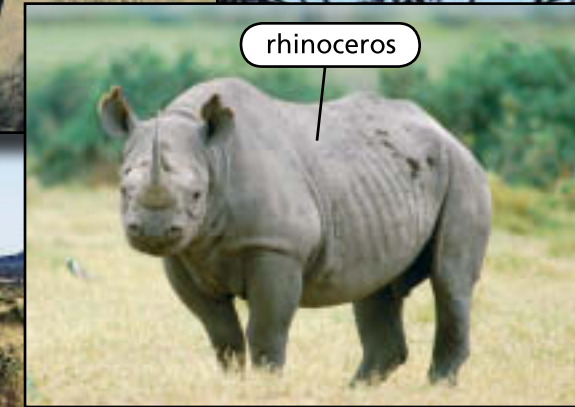
Desert Animals

Even though there is little vegetation and almost no water in the desert, animals do survive there. Some animals have special body features that allow them to survive. The fennec fox, a small fox, has huge ears. These big ears help the fox hear the footsteps of the animals that it hunts, such as jerboas. Jerboas are mouse-like animals that have strong legs to hop quickly away from their predators.

predators: animals that hunt other animals

The camel is an animal that can go many days without drinking water. That is one of the reasons why people use camels for transportation in the Sahara. Camels are also strong and can carry heavy loads.

In addition to being dry, the deserts of Africa have terrible sand storms. During these storms, wind blows so strongly that sand is lifted into the air. The sky becomes dark because of all the sand in the air. Desert animals must have special homes to survive these harsh conditions. Many animals dig into the ground to wait for the hot weather or storms to end. These animals come out to look for food or water at night.



African Grasslands

The African grasslands are called *savannahs*. They border the desert regions of Africa. Tall grasses, thorny bushes, and some trees cover the savannahs. The grass closest to the deserts is short—only ankle high. The lack of water keeps the grass short. The grass farthest from the deserts is tall—taller than the tallest humans!

The weather of the grasslands is hot, with a wet season and a dry season. The wet season can be very wet. But because it is so hot, the water evaporates, and the grasslands have water only in watering holes. These small ponds are visited by all of the savannah animals.

Extend Language Adjectives with the Suffix -y

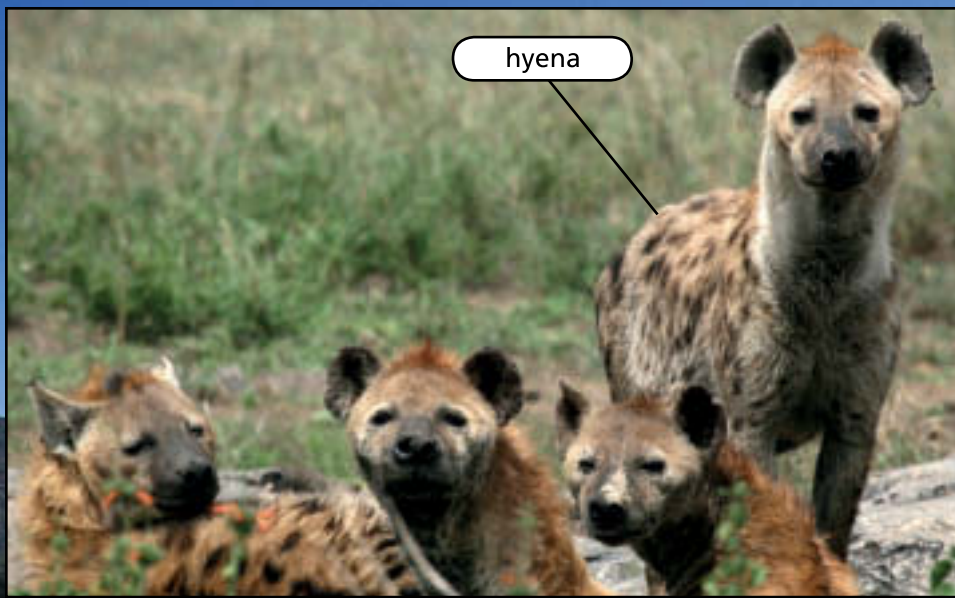
In English, some adjectives are formed by adding a -y to the end of a noun. For example, *thorny* is the adjective form of the word *thorn*. It means “having thorns.” What do you think *spiky* means? Can you find other adjectives that end in -y?

Animals of the Savannah

Some of the savannah animals are herbivores, or plant eaters. Others are carnivores, or meat eaters. Carnivores eat herbivores, often attacking the old or sick animals.

Elephants are the largest of all land animals. They travel in groups, or herds, looking for roots, grass, and leaves to eat. Because of their size, full-grown healthy elephants have few enemies.

Rhinoceroses and hippopotamuses are two other giant herbivores. They are not as big as elephants, but they are strong. Both animals are leathery and wrinkly. Rhinoceroses have horns on their heads, which they use to protect themselves from predators. Hippopotamuses spend most of their time in watering holes. Both animals eat grass and roots.



Smaller herbivores rely on their speed or their colors to escape predators. Ostriches are the world's largest birds. They do not fly, but they run very quickly. Ostriches can outrun many predators. Impalas and gazelles are deer-like animals that use their speed to escape predators. Herds of running deer or gazelles can also confuse a predator. This confusion allows an animal to escape a predator. Zebras are black and white, horse-like animals. Their stripes help them hide in the tall grass, often keeping them safe from enemies.

Carnivores have few enemies that hunt them. Lions live in groups called *prides*. They hunt and eat together. Adult lions have few enemies. Hyenas are dog-like hunters that attack lions to steal their food. But hyenas don't kill lions. Hyenas have a strong bite and live in large families. They hunt together to stay safe from enemies.

Cheetahs are thin, spotted cats. They are the fastest land animals in the world. Cheetahs can run short distances as fast as a car moves on a highway! This speed helps them catch most animals on the African grasslands. It also keeps them safe from enemies.



African Rain Forests

In the center of Africa, it is almost always hot and wet. This weather forms rain forests, which are the densest forests in Africa. In these forests, many animals struggle to survive. People are cutting down rain forest trees for wood or to clear the land. Some people hunt the rain forest animals for food. Many animals in this region are **endangered**.

Rain Forest Animals

Chimpanzees are among the smartest animals in the world. They are animals that make and use tools. Chimps use leaves as sponges for washing and drinking. They live in groups. Chimpanzees spend their days looking for food such as plants, insects, and small animals. At night they sleep in the tops of trees.

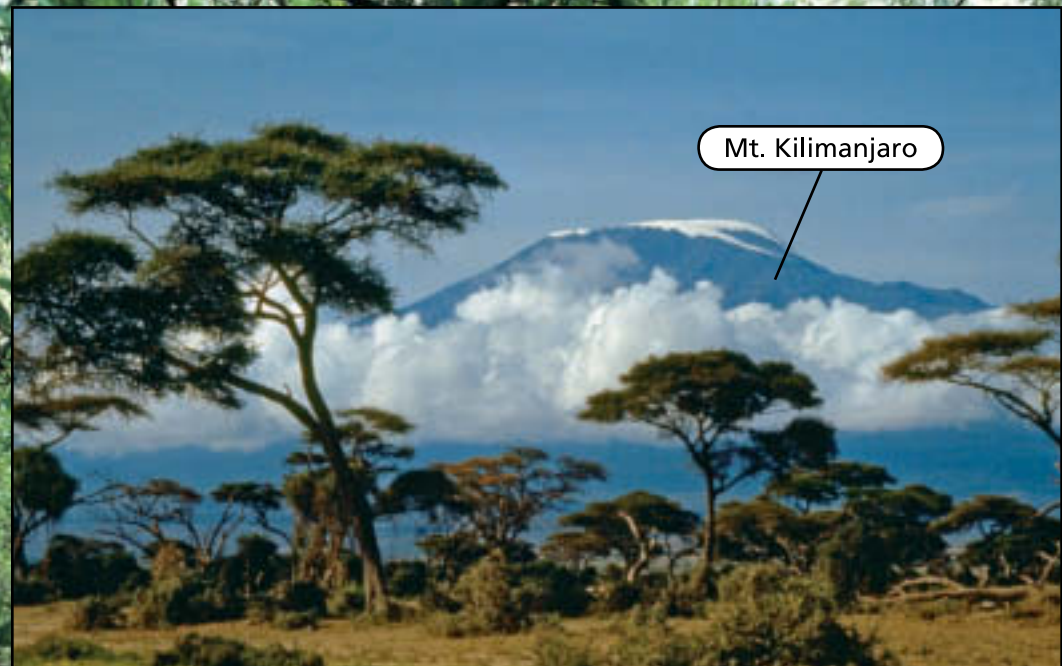
endangered: in danger of dying off completely



leopard



snake



Mt. Kilimanjaro

Leopards are large spotted cats that live in the rain forests. They hunt at night because they can see well in the dark. They sleep and eat in trees.

Many small animals live in the rain forest too. Frogs, snakes, bees, birds, monkeys, and even wild pigs all make their home in this kind of forest. Because of all the rain, there are many different kinds of plants. This allows many different kinds of animals to survive and live together in this region.

Extend Language Pronouns

Pronouns take the place of nouns in sentences. They often are used to avoid repeating the nouns. Read the paragraph above about leopards. Notice how the pronoun *they* replaces the word *leopards* in some sentences. This makes the passage seem less repetitive. As you read, look for the use of pronouns such as *they*, *we*, *he*, *she*, and *it*.

Mountain Regions

Africa has two very tall mountains. Mount Kilimanjaro is one of the tallest mountains in the world. It is about 19,340 feet (5,895 meters) tall! Mount Kenya is not as tall, but both mountains have **glaciers** on them.

Mountain Animals

Despite their height, these mountains are homes to many animals. Mountain goats are well adapted for jumping from rock to rock. They make their homes on the sides of the mountains. The goats eat the grasses that grow on the mountainsides.

Mountain gorillas live in the foothills, or lower mountains of Africa. They are the largest apes in the world. They eat mostly grass, fruit, and leaves. The mountain gorillas have one feared enemy—humans.

glaciers: large bodies of ice



The Responsibility of People

African animals have learned to adapt to the many regions and climates of Africa. They have special features that help them find food and keep them safe. Animals also must adapt to the changes people make to their environments.

Some people cut down parts of the forests and build on the savannahs, making the area where wild animals can live smaller. Cars and factories pollute the land and water. Others hunt the animals for food.

Many people are working to protect the African animals. They find other ways and materials for building, to protect the forests and savannahs. Some people work to lessen the amount of pollution made by cars and factories. Others try to encourage people to eat farm animals rather than wild animals.

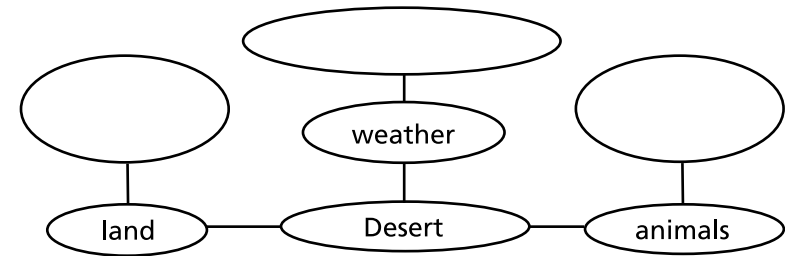
All people can work to protect African animals and their environment. We can learn to save land and lessen pollution. If we learn this, the amazing animals of Africa will survive.

Talk About It

1. What are the four major climate regions in Africa?
2. Different animals can live in different areas because the climates support life. What are some of the animals that live in each of these climate regions?

Write About It

3. On a separate sheet of paper, make a web about one of the climate regions. Write details about the land, weather, and animals of any region.



Extend Language

Three words identify people and animals by the kinds of thing they eat. **Carnivores** eat the meat of animals. **Herbivores** eat plants—mainly fruits, grasses, vegetables, or seeds. **Omnivores** eat both meat and plants. Most humans are omnivores. (Some people are vegetarians, eating only plants.) What are some kinds of meat and plant parts that humans eat?

Photographs

Every effort has been made to secure permission and provide appropriate credit for photographic material. The publisher deeply regrets any omission and pledges to correct errors called to its attention in subsequent editions.

Unless otherwise acknowledged, all photographs are the property of Pearson Education, Inc.

Photo locators denoted as follows: Top (T), Center (C), Bottom (B), Left (L), Right (R), Background (Bkgd)

Cover (Bkgd) ©Royalty-Free/Corbis, (C) Getty Images; 1 (Bkgd) ©Royalty-Free/Corbis, (C) Christian Lebon/Fotolia; 2 Digital Wisdom, Inc.; 4 (Bkgd) ©Royalty-Free/Corbis, (L) Federicofoto/Fotolia, (R) Mgekuijpers/Fotolia; 5 (Bkgd) ©Royalty-Free/Corbis, (C) Christian Lebon/Fotolia; 6 (Bkgd) ©Royalty-Free/Corbis, (T) Getty Images; 7 (Bkgd) ©Royalty-Free/Corbis, (TL, CR) Getty Images; 8 (Bkgd) ©Royalty-Free/Corbis, (C) Sam D’Cruz/Fotolia; 9 (TR, Bkgd) Getty Images, (L) Sam Dcruz/Shutterstock; 10 (TR, TL, Bkgd) Getty Images; 11 (Bkgd) Getty Images, (T) Michele Burgess/©Royalty-Free/Corbis; 12 Jake Lyell/Alamy Images.

ISBN: 0-328-14269-7

Copyright © Pearson Education, Inc.

All Rights Reserved. Printed in the United States of America.

This publication is protected by Copyright, and permission should be obtained from the publisher prior to any prohibited reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or likewise. For information regarding permission(s), write to: Permissions Department, Scott Foresman, 1900 East Lake Avenue, Glenview, Illinois 60025.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 V034 14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07 06 05