

How Does Climate Affect How People Live?

Climate is the average weather conditions of a region over a long period of time. A **climate map** is a type of special purpose map. It shows you the different climates in the world. The latitude, elevation (height from sea level), and distance from the ocean help determine a region's climate. Climate affects where people can live. It also affects what they can grow. People cannot live where there is no water or soil to grow food. There are six main climate zones in the world: tropical, dry, mild, continental, polar, and highland.



Mild Climate



- This climate has mild, rainy winters with cool to warm summers.
- Some regions near the Mediterranean Sea have hot, dry summers.
- Shrubs and short trees grow in this climate. Some of the trees are evergreens, but others lose their leaves in the dry season.



Tropical Climates



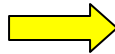
- Tropical areas are usually hot and wet all year.
- Some tropical areas may have a dry season.
- Thick forests with millions of plants grow here because of the warm temperatures and rain.
- Tropical rain forest receives up to 100 inches of rain a year.



Dry Climates



- True deserts are very dry and hot all year. They are usually hot during the day and very cold at night.
- Only a few plants called cacti can live in desert climates. Their roots are near the top of the soil to collect rainwater.
- Deserts receive less than 10 inches of rain a year.



Polar Climates



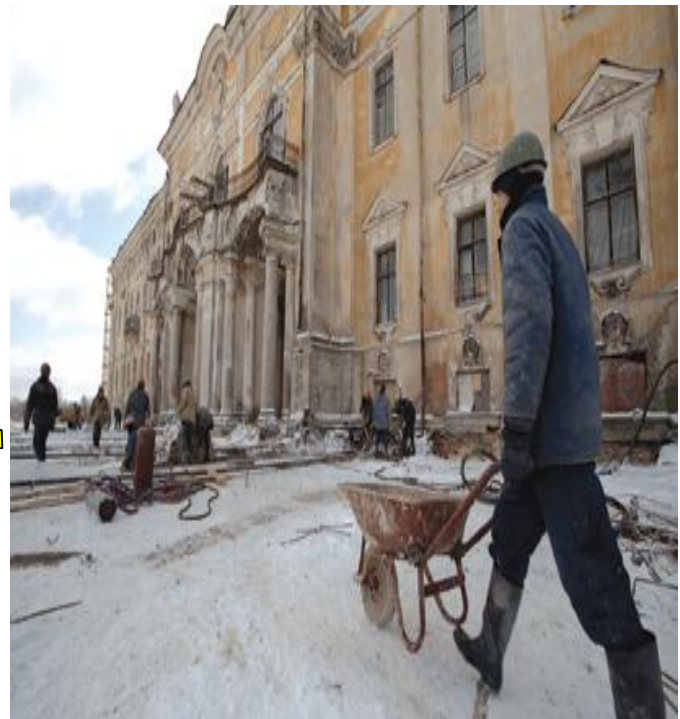
- Polar regions are very cold and dry.
- Tundra regions have short cool summers. A few grasses and low bushes grow here. There are no trees. They cannot set up roots in the frozen soil.
- Lichens (flat, mosslike growths) grow on rocks. They are the only plants that can live in the ice cap regions.



Continental Climates



- This area usually has wet, hot summers and cold, snowy winters.
- Summers are very short with long days of sunlight. Winters are long.
- Evergreens and trees that lose their leaves in the fall, called deciduous (di-sij-oo-uhss), grow in forests.
- In some regions, there are large areas of grasslands.



Highland Climates



- This climate has mild, rainy winters with cool to warm summers.
- Some regions near the Mediterranean have hot, dry summers.
- Shrubs and short trees grow in this climate. Some of the trees are evergreens, but others lose their leaves in the dry season.