Welcome to English!

**Part I**: **THE ARCTIC IS OUR HOME**

**Unit 1**

WHAT IS THE ARCTIC?

*What do you see in the picture?*

*Do you know the origin of the name “Arctic”?*

*How long do you think the Arctic Night lasts for in the Arctic?*

The Arctic surrounds the Earth’s North Pole, and includes the most northern parts of the Eurasian and North American continents, the whole Arctic Ocean with its islands and some parts of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Its area comprises about 17 million square miles (27 million square kilometers), so it is almost three times as large as the area of Europe. This vast territory stretches from the North Pole to the southern border of tundra. If you want to find the Arctic on a globe, look down at the top of it and you’ll see the Arctic Ocean in the centre, surrounded first by the seas with many islands, then by the continents. We can divide the Arctic into five parts according to their geographical location: European Arctic, Western Siberia, Eastern Siberia, Alaska and Canada’s North (and Greenland). There are four natural zones in the Arctic. These are ice zone, polar deserts, tundra and forest tundra.

The name “Arctic” comes from the Greek word *arctos*, which meansa bear. It is connected with stars: the North Star, situated almost exactly over the North Pole, belongs to the constellation the Little Dipper [the Latin: Ursa Minor]. It also gave the name to the other polar region of our planet – the Antarctic, which means situated opposite (anti-) the Arctic.

The most important peculiarities of Polar Regions are a cold, severe climate and ice. Ice and ice: ice on the ground and under the ground, ice on the water and even under the water. Glaciers don’t melt away each year. But the climate is getting warmer and quantity of ice decreases gradually as we move away from the Pole. Another peculiarity of the Arctic is the phenomena of the Arctic night and the Arctic day. In winter the sun hides behind the horizon for half a year, and in summer it doesn’t leave the sky for the other half of the year. This happens because of the axis of the revolving planet is inclined at its northern end towards the North Star. The latitude at which we can observe Arctic Day and Night forms the Arctic Circle.

The darkness of Arctic Night is weakened by the Northern Lights (also called the Aurora Borealis or just the Aurora) and it becomes as light as under a full Moon. It’s a wonderful sight, which astonishes people with its magic beauty. The Northern Lights have forms of arcs, rays, crowns, curtains and they glitter with different colors in the night sky. The Northern Lights are an optical phenomenon in the upper layers of atmosphere. It is caused by the excitement of atoms in the atmosphere at a height of 37-622 miles (60-1000 km.) from the ground. The Lights appear as a result of the interaction of space particles and the Earth’s magnetic field. It lasts from some minutes to some days.

The Arctic region is inhabited by many minorities: the Even, Evenki, Nenet, Khanty, Mansi, Chukchi, Nanai, Eskimos, Nivkhi, Yukagir. They are the indigenous populations here. Their numbers are not large. It’s clear that the local environment is not able to support a great number of people. Reindeer breeds and hunting have, however, been providing their existence for some millennia. Nowadays, the mode of life of the local population of the Arctic has partly changed, but it keeps its old cultural and economic traditions.

VOCABULARY

**Complete the definitions. Give the letter of the correct answer.**

1. Parts of land surrounded by water are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

a. islands b. Iceland c. peninsula

1. Another word for *earth* is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

a. planet b. ground c. sand

1. The nation which was the first to inhabit a certain territory is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_one.

a. Indigenous b. local c. foreign

1. Stars in the sky form figures, which are called\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

a. lights b. planets c. constellations

1. The word *to extend* is close to the word *to*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

a. stretch b. spread c. grow

1. A small indigenous population is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

a. minority b. nation c. nationality

COMPREHENSION

1. Looking for Main Ideas

**Answer the following questions**

1. Where is the Arctic situated on the Earth?
2. What is the origin of the name “Arctic”?
3. What phenomena can one observe in the Arctic?
4. Looking for details

**Give T if the sentence is true. Give F if the sentence is false.**

1. The Arctic’s area comprises 17 million square miles. It is three times as large as Europe.
2. The territory of the Arctic extends from the North Pole down to the northern border of tundra.
3. The name “Arctic” is connected with the constellation Ursa Minor or the Little Dipper as the North Star is included in this constellation.
4. The climate of the Arctic Ocean’s islands is warm and mild.
5. Arctic day and night last for some days, no more.
6. Reindeer breeding, hunting and fishing are the main trades of the Arctic minorities.

GRAMMAR

**Complete the sentences with correct article. Use *a* or *the*. If no article is necessary, write X.**

**Example:** \_\_\_\_The\_\_\_\_ Arctic Ocean is in \_\_\_\_the\_\_\_\_centre of \_\_X\_\_ Polar Circle.

1. There is \_\_\_\_\_\_ice everywhere in the Arctic.
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ice sheet covers \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Greenland; that’s why it is extremely cold there in \_\_\_\_ winter.
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Atlantic Ocean has an influence on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_climate of \_\_\_\_\_\_ Arctic islands.
4. \_\_\_\_\_Frederic Cook was \_\_\_\_\_first to reach North Pole in 1908.
5. In 1596, William Barents managed to discover \_\_\_\_\_\_Spits Bergen, but his ship was caught in \_\_\_\_ ice and he had to spend winter in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_cabin built with \_\_\_\_\_ship’s materials.
6. \_\_\_\_\_Evenkis are \_\_\_\_\_most numerous People among the Arctic Minorities.