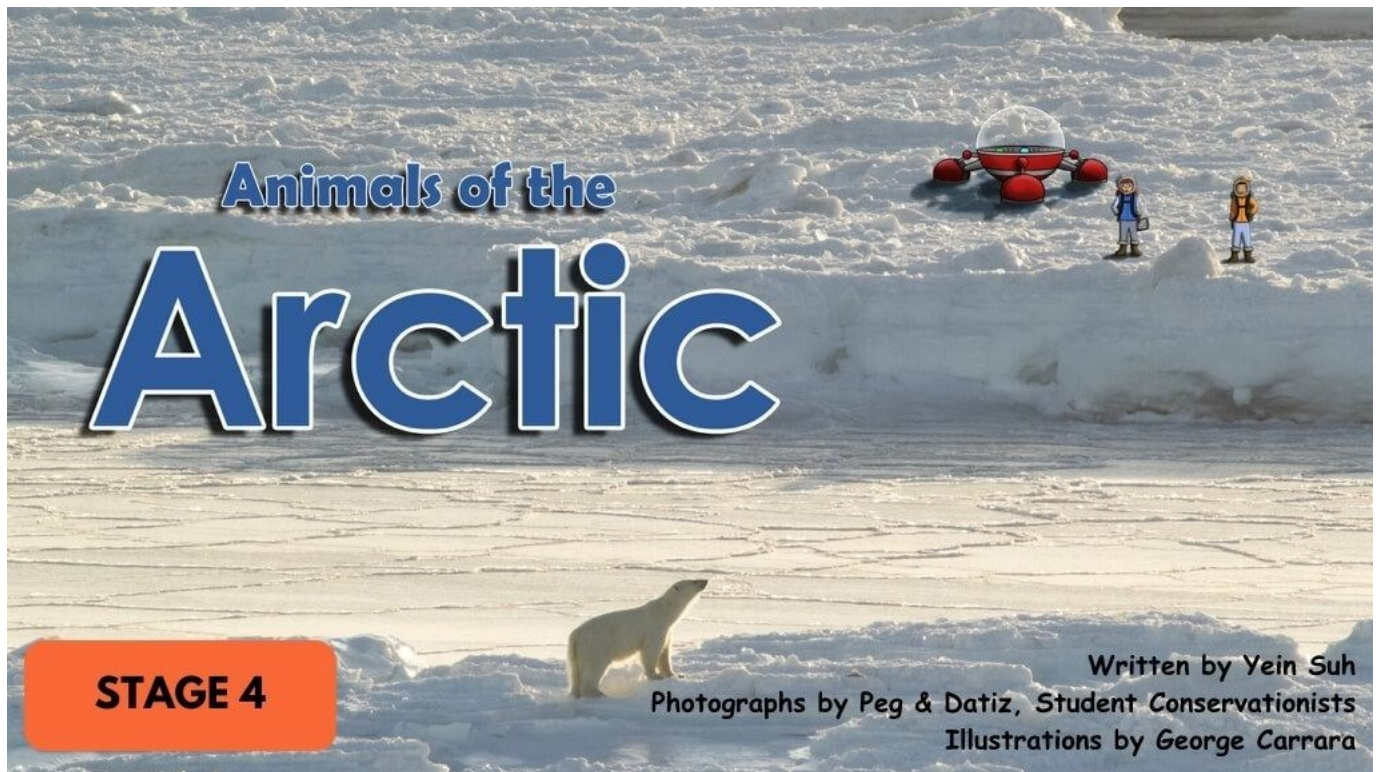




STAGE 4

Written by Yein Suh
Photographs by Peg & Datiz, Student Conservationists
Illustrations by George Carrara

Animals of the Arctic

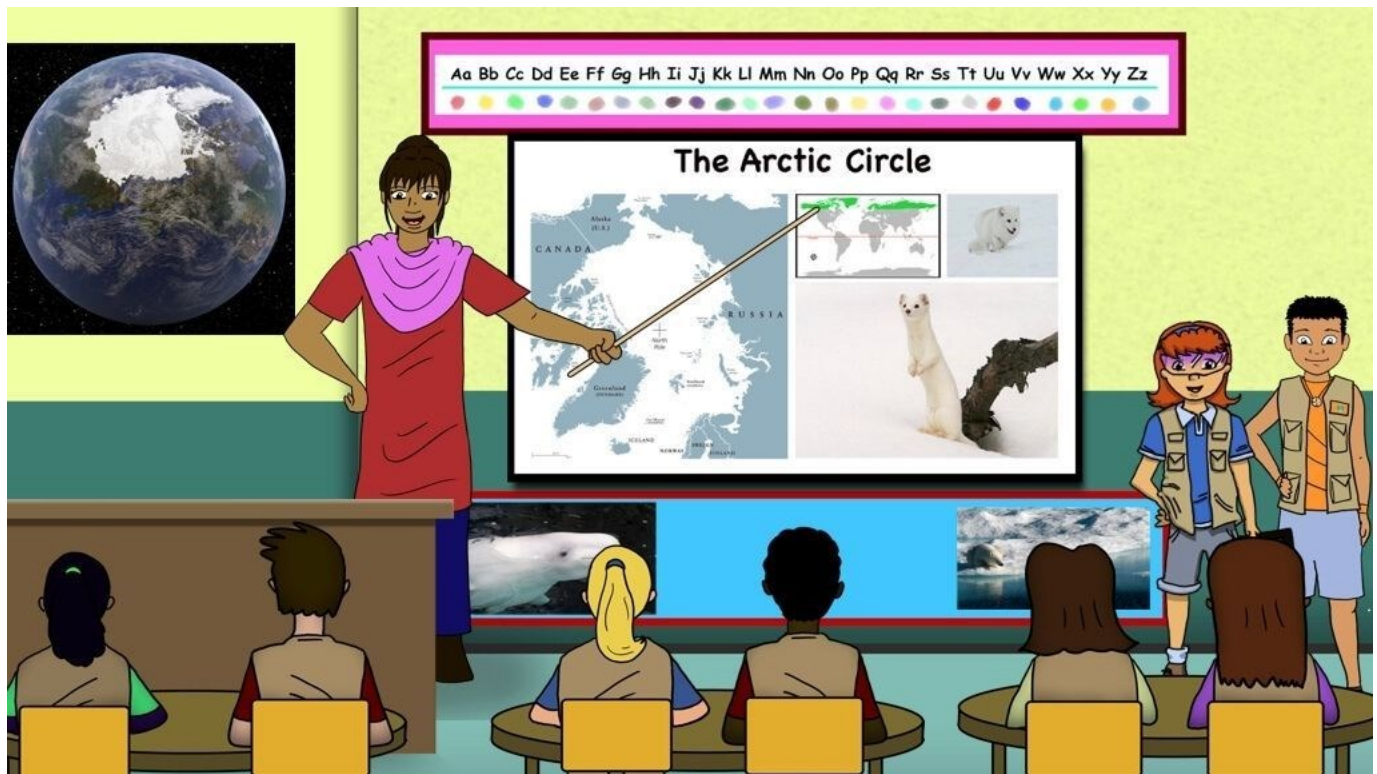


Datiz

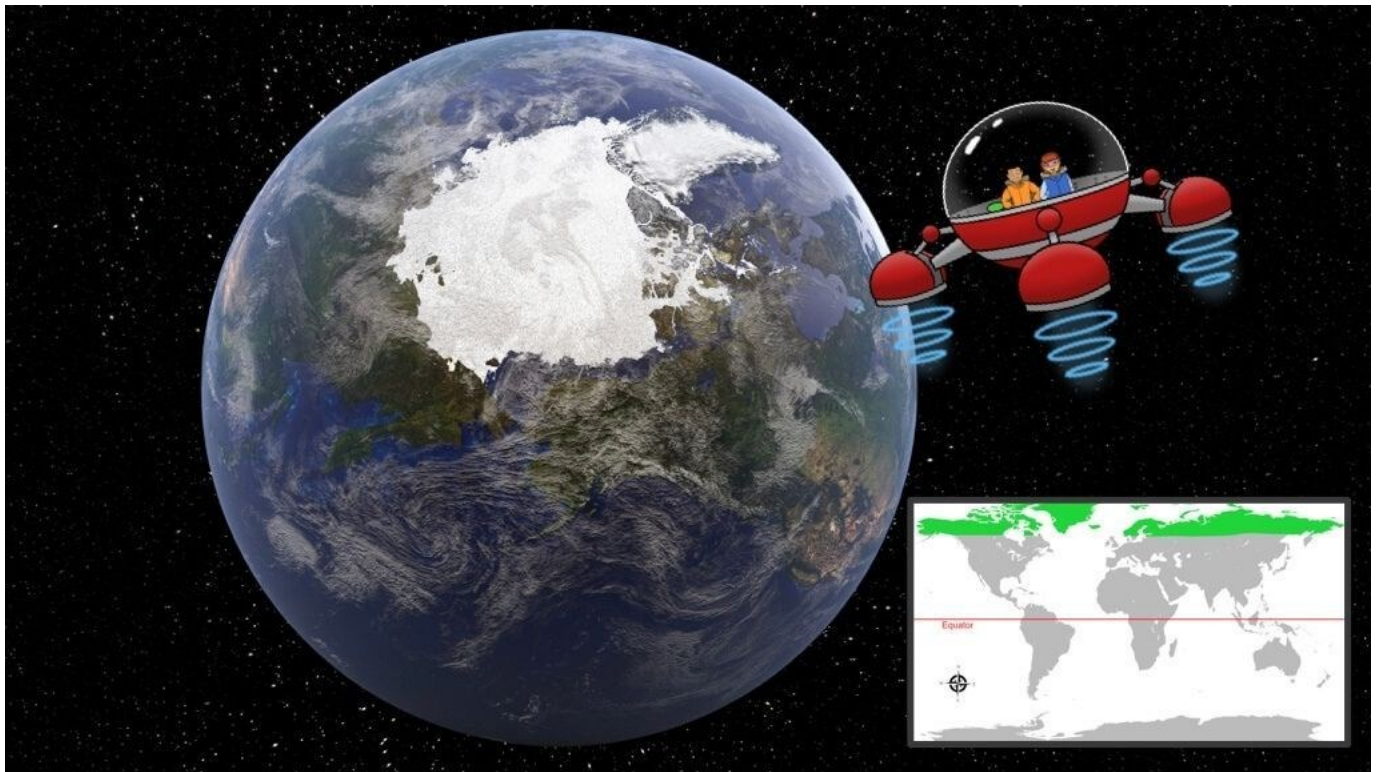


Peg

Characters



Ms. Lee teaches her class about the Arctic Circle. In the winter there are polar nights, when the sun does not rise for months at a time. Then in the summer there are midnight suns, when the sun does not set for months at a time. Ms. Lee also tells her class about the unique animals that live in the Arctic Circle. She talks about arctic hares, arctic foxes, arctic wolves, and polar bears.



Peg and Datz are excited about polar bears, because they are student conservationists. They go on a journey to the Arctic Circle to learn about polar bears.



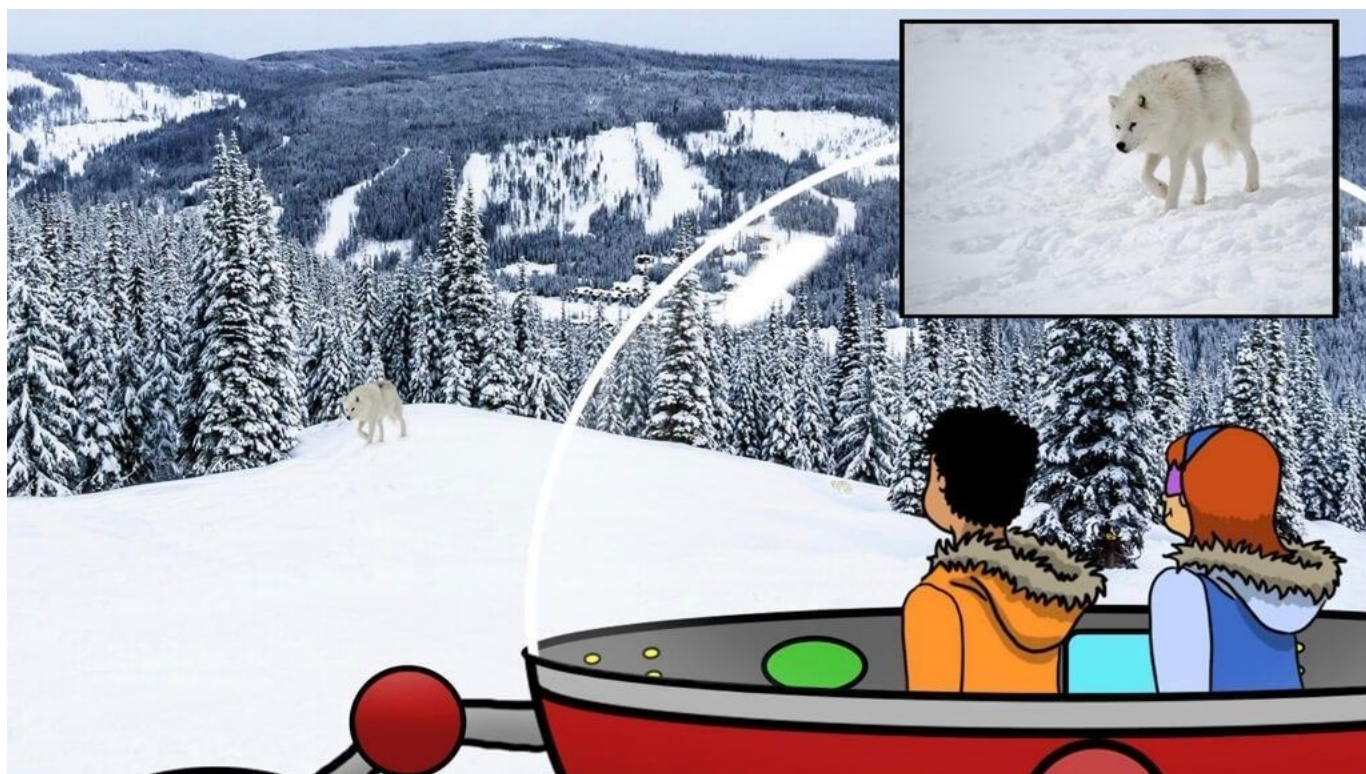
As soon as Peg and Datz step out of their ship they are surprised at how cold it is. Datz takes out the thermometer to measure the temperature. It says that it is -22°F (-30°C). Datz asks Peg, "How could any animal live where it's this cold?"



Just then, Peg sees something moving around near the rock. She says, "Datiz, look! I think I see a rabbit." But Datiz does not see anything. Peg points over by the rocks and says, "It's really well camouflaged. It must be an arctic hare." Datiz shouts, "Oh, I see it! Wow, it will be hard to find arctic animals if they are all this well camouflaged."



Peg and Datz continue walking through the cold. This time Datz finds an animal camouflaged in the snow. He asks, "Is that a polar bear?" Peg replies, "No, it's an arctic fox. It is much smaller than a polar bear."



Next, Peg finds another animal. "It's bigger than the arctic fox." She asks, "Is that a polar bear?" Datiz replies, "No. That is an arctic wolf. It is much smaller than a polar bear."



After that, Peg and Datz come out on the sea ice. Suddenly Peg sees a spout of water coming from the ocean. "What could be under the ice?" asks Peg. "I brought my arctic scuba gear! Let's take a look under the water!" exclaims Datz.



Datiz can't believe what he sees. "It's a beluga whale!" shouts Datiz. Datiz tells Peg, "They are one of my favorite types of whales. Belugas breathe air, and they sometimes get trapped in holes in the ice. Polar bears will then eat belugas that are trapped." Peg says, "We must be getting closer to the polar bears. Let's keep going."

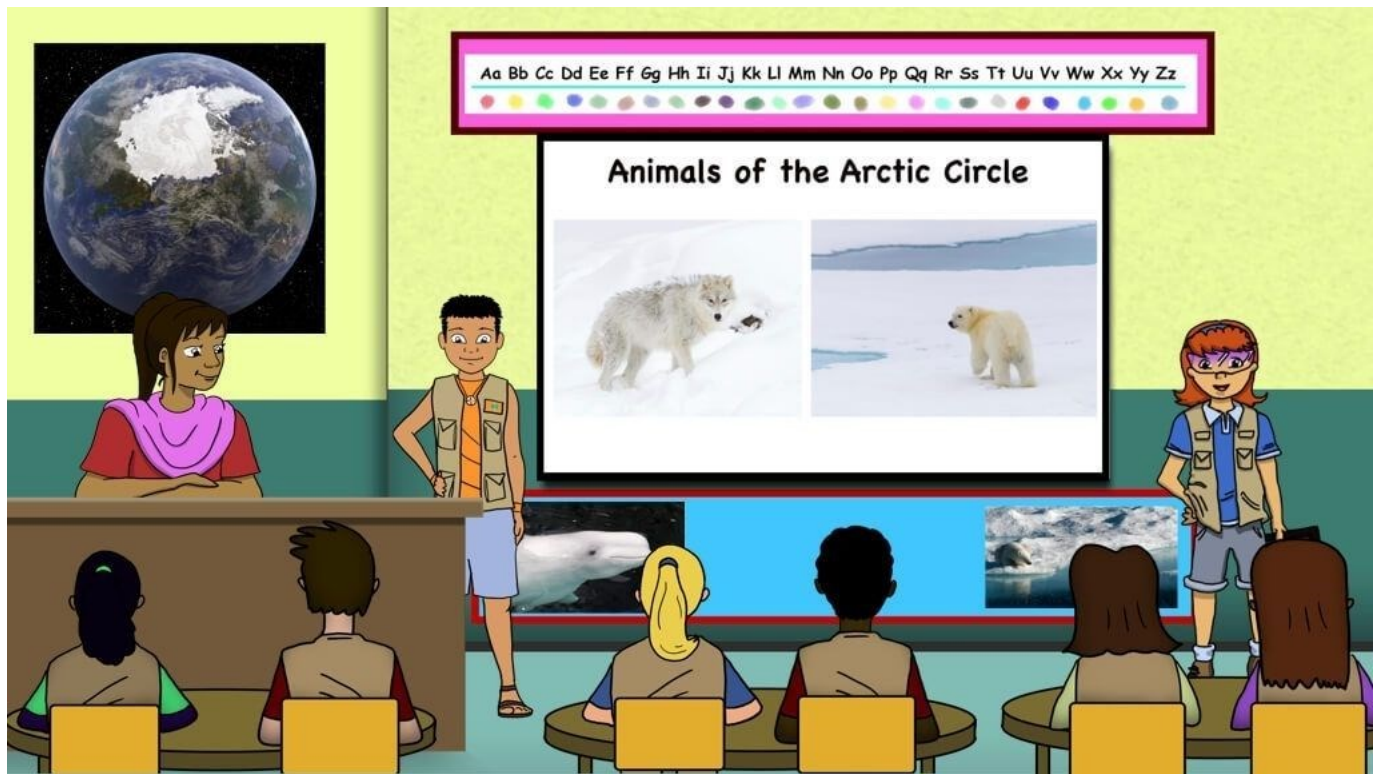


After coming out of the water, Peg and Datz continue on their journey to find the polar bears. Then in the distance, they spot a polar bear walking along the sea ice.

“Can you see the polar bear?” asks Peg.

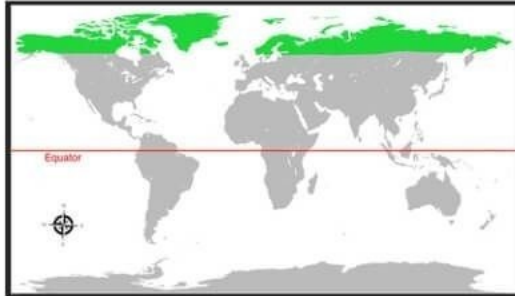


As Peg and Datz follow the polar bear, they observe that sometimes it has to swim between blocks of ice. Peg says to Datz, "Polar bears are excellent swimmers, but swimming is harder than walking. Every year the arctic gets warmer, and the sea ice melts earlier. That means the polar bears have to swim instead of walk. It's hard for them to find food." Peg and Datz are excited to teach their class about everything they learned about polar bears and the animals of the Arctic Circle.



After exploring the Arctic, Peg and Datz return to their class. They explain that the animals of the Arctic Circle can camouflage to hide in the white snow that covers their habitat. They learned that polar bears spend most of their time hunting for food, but now they have less time to hunt because the sea ice melts earlier each year. That means polar bears could become an endangered species soon. The students in Peg and Datz's class are excited to learn about the animals of the of the Arctic Circle. They want to help the animals with the problems caused by the changing climate.

Map of the Arctic Circle



Arctic Facts

- The name 'Arctic' comes from the Greek word that means '*near the bear*'.
- The North Pole and the region of Arctic Ocean surrounding it do not belong to any country by international law.
- The lowest temperature recorded in the Arctic is around -90°F (-68°C).
- The Arctic contains a variety of natural resources including oil, gas, fish, and diverse minerals.
- The periods of midnight suns and polar nights become longer as we approach the North Pole. The sun sets and rises once a year at the North Pole.
- Due to **global warming**, the Arctic region has shrunk over the years.
- Scientists have predicted that the Arctic ice in the summer might completely disappear by 2040.





Glossary

Arctic Circle (p. 2) an imaginary line drawn around the earth parallel to the equator marking the boundary of the Arctic.

Beluga (p. 9) a white, round-headed whale living in the Arctic Ocean.

Camouflage (p. 4) a way of hiding something by covering or coloring it so that it looks like its surroundings.

Climate (p. 13) the average weather in a specific place.

Endangered (p. 13) in a dangerous situation.

Global Warming (p 15) an increase in the world's temperatures.



Glossary

Habitat (p. 13) the natural environment of an animal or plant.

Polar Night (P.2) the time of the year when the sun does not rise in polar regions.

Midnight Sun (p.2) the sun as it is seen at midnight during summer in the Arctic regions.

Scuba Gear (p. 8) portable tools for underwater breathing, carried on the back.



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