

VEGETATION*

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1 GEOGRAPHY

2 Grade 5

3 CLIMATE AND VEGETATION REGIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA

4 Module 15

5 VEGETATION REGIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA

- The vegetation of a region is influenced by the temperature and rainfall of the region. As in the case of climatical regions, there are also different vegetation regions. People adapt to the vegetation that is found in their immediate environment. Farmers depend on the vegetation and climate when they have to choose a type of farming. Certain plants are better suited to a particular climate than others, while certain natural vegetation can serve as food for certain types of animals.

The following map shows the main vegetation regions in South Africa.

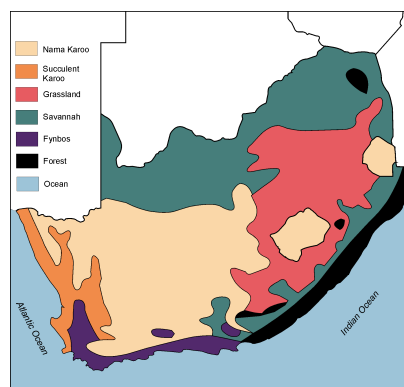


Figure 1

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Vegetation regions in South Africa Nama-Karoo

- very large region
- very dry
- summer rainfall region
- vegetation: small with woody stems and small leaves (needs little water)
- animals: springboks and other game (walk long distances in search of water)
- sheep and goats able to survive
- farms big enough for sufficient food and water
- economical: farmers
- water scarce – often boreholes

Succulent-Karoo

- along the West Coast
- summers very hot with little rain
- winter rain (sparse)
- mist from the sea supplies moisture for plants
- vegetation: water is stored in leaves and stems (succulents)
- soil not fertile and unsuitable for large scale farming
- economical: people depend on the sea as a source of income (fish)
- economical: floral abundance in spring (tourists an important source of income)

Grassland

- very large region (from Limpopo to Kalahari – includes Bushveld)
- vegetation: very large variety (grass, bush, trees)
- grass short and grows among trees
- trees hardy (umbrella shaped – offers shade to animals)
- animals: very wild (elephants, rhinoceros, giraffes, antelope)
- cattle in abundance – ideal grazing
- economical: many game farms (some for hunting, other for tourists)
- drawback: many tsetse-flies

5.1 ACTIVITY 1:

5.2 TO READ MORE ABOUT THE TSETSE-FLY AND THE HARMFUL INFLUENCE IT HAS ON THE PEOPLE AND ANIMALS IN A REGION

5.3 [LO 1.7]

Write a short paragraph on this topic.

Savannah

- large areas of the Free State, interior of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape
- summer rainfall – thunderstorms and hail
- winter – very cold with frost
- vegetation: few trees due to cold winters
- tall and short grass
- economical: farmers frequently plant maize in the place of the grass

Fynbos

- Mediterranean rainfall region
- summers – hot and dry (bore-holes for irrigation)
- winters – cold and wet
- vegetation: leaves small and fine – retains water in summer and does not freeze easily in winter
- evergreen
- economical: rich soil (fruit farming – mostly grapes)
- best wines produced in this region

Forests

- spread across South Africa (only 1% of the area of the country)
- Knysna, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga
- only where the rainfall is high
- Vegetation: trees not very high – attractive trees, ferns and orchids
- animals: beautiful birds
- danger: trees are uprooted for firewood, medicine, building material
- plantations foreign and a threat to our indigenous forests

5.4 ACTIVITY 2:

5.5 TO DEBATE A STATEMENT

5.6 [LO 1.2; 1.7]

Debate the following statement. Divide the class in two groups. One group debates in favour of the statement, and the other against the statement.

“FOREIGN PLANTATION MUST BE ENCOURAGED BECAUSE IT WILL CREATE JOB OPPORTUNITIES, AND IT WILL BE USEFUL TO THE INHABITANTS OF SOUTH AFRICA.”

Oceans

- of our most attractive plants below the surface of the sea
- west coast: bamboo forests (habitat for many marine species)
- economical: west coast water (natural source) = rich in plankton = abundant fish = many fishermen
- economical: east coast – coral reefs (home of many plant and fish species – tourists (scuba diving)
- economical: exotic foods such as mussels, oysters, crayfish, abalone (perlemoen) important source of income

5.7 ACTIVITY 3:

5.8 TO EXPLAIN ONE WAY OF CATCHING FISH

5.9 [LO 1.1; 1.7]

Investigate a method of catching fish and explain it to the class.

6 Assessment

LO 1

GEOGRAPHICAL ENQUIRY

The learner will be able to use enquiry skills to investigate geographical and environmental concepts and processes.

We know this when the learner:

1.1 with guidance, selects and uses sources of useful geographical information (including graphs, maps and fieldwork outside the classroom) [finds sources];

- distinguishes between facts and opinions [works with sources];
- categorises information [works with sources];
- draws sketch maps and/or plans from field observation and measurements [works with sources];

1.7 demonstrates knowledge and under-standing of the issue through projects, discussion, debate and charts [communicates the answer].

LO 2

GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

The learner will be able to demonstrate geographical and environmental knowledge and understanding.

We know this when the learner:

2.1 identifies and describes major physical features of South Africa, including those of the home province [people and places];

2.2 identifies links between natural resources and economic activities in South Africa [people and re-sources];

2.3 describes ways in which the physical environment influences human activity and how human activity is influenced by the physical environment [people and the environment].