

Chapter 16

Use with Section 1

ENRICHMENT

● What is climate?

Compare the Climate

You know that latitude is one of the most important factors that affects climate. The tropical climate in places near the equator is very different from the temperate climate of the United States.

Most places near the equator have about the same weather all year. Warm, moist air masses bring hot weather, high humidity, and daily rains to these tropical areas. Temperatures hardly vary from the average of 26°C. Annual rainfall is usually at least 150 centimeters. A great variety of trees grow in the wet conditions of the tropical rain forests. Many grow as tall as 60 meters and form a dense canopy. The ground is dark and shady with little undergrowth. Dense impenetrable jungle with thick undergrowth is found only along riverbanks and

other places where the sun reaches. Vast areas of rain forests have been cleared for timber, agriculture, and mining.

The temperate climate is typical of many parts of the United States. It includes a wider variety of conditions than the tropical climate does. The weather can change every day as winds carry a series of low-pressure and high-pressure systems through an area. Generally, low-pressure systems bring wet weather, and high-pressure systems bring clear weather. Temperate climates have winters one to five months long in which plants are dormant. Winter temperatures are below 6°C, the temperature needed for plants to grow. Temperate regions cover only 7 percent of the world's land, but more than 40 percent of Earth's people live in them.

In each space below, identify which climate is being described. Explain your answer using the information provided above.

1. It rains hard here every afternoon. _____

2. There are no leaves on the trees and the plants in the garden look dead. _____

3. If you don't like the weather, wait a day or two and it will change. _____

4. There is a greater variety of plants growing here naturally than anywhere else. _____

5. This climate is always the same. _____

6. High- and low-pressure systems follow each other throughout the year. _____

