

Name _____



Polar Currents

Directions: Read the passage about the Southern Ocean. Then answer the questions that follow. Use complete sentences unless instructed otherwise.

The Southern Ocean

The Southern Ocean circles the entire continent of Antarctica, forming a powerful band of water that is colder, stormier, and wilder than any other ocean on Earth. Its swirling waves are pushed by the strongest winds on the planet, creating the Antarctic Circumpolar Current, a huge flow of water that moves unbroken around the globe. This ocean is home to many remarkable animals, including **emperor penguins**, **leopard seals**, and **blue whales**, all adapted to survive icy temperatures. Scientists study the Southern Ocean because its cold waters help control Earth's climate by absorbing heat and carbon from the atmosphere, making it one of the most important oceans for the health of the planet.

1. What continent does the Southern Ocean surround?
2. What makes the waves and waters of the Southern Ocean especially powerful?
3. Name two animals that live in the Southern Ocean.
4. Why do scientists consider the Southern Ocean important for Earth's climate?
5. In your own words, describe what makes the Southern Ocean different from other oceans.
6. What does the Antarctic Circumpolar Current do?
7. Why might studying the Southern Ocean help scientists understand global climate patterns?
8. If you were a researcher visiting the Southern Ocean, what would you want to study and why?