

To: Mr.Sugden@EdinburghUniversityEmail.ac.uk

Subject: Primary 1 Antarctica Topic

From: Miss.Copeland@Royal.Mile.Primary.School.ac.uk

Send

Attach



Dear Mr Sugden,
For World Month our Primary 1 Class is studying Antarctica.
Could you visit our school and speak to our class about your trips to Antarctica?

We want to ask questions like...

“How many coats do you need to wear to stay warm?”

“Are there shops there?”

“How do they build houses there?”

“What animals live there?”

It would make us very happy if you could visit us.
Best wishes and many thanks,

Miss Copeland, P1 class teacher at Royal Mile Primary School

To: Miss.Copeland@Royal.Mile.Primary.School.ac.uk

Subject: Re: Primary 1 Antarctica Topic

From: Mr.Sugden@EdinburghUniversityEmail.ac.uk

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Dear Miss Copeland,

I have been to Antarctica on fifteen occasions and I have grandchildren who are fascinated by the continent. I cannot make your time-table and with today's virus news I don't think I should come in person.

But I wanted to say that I would be very willing to come to the school on another occasion, so please feel free to ask.

Yes, I can answer those questions!

1. We dress in several layers beneath a warm outer anorak. The anorak has fur around the hood. We wear two sets of gloves, a thin inner glove and an outer mitten, also insulated. The boots are insulated - so much so that when you take off your boots in the cold tent after a day out, your sweaty socks steam!

2. Yes there are shops at the US base at McMurdo. In summer some 900 people live there in what looks like a small town. There is a hotel, cafeteria and science laboratories. Most bases belonging to other countries have one main base and here most of your needs are provided. But you have to do your share of washing up, washing floors etc. You can buy extras like shampoo.

3. Houses built on rock were usually wooden - rather like houses in rural Scandinavia. Wood is a good insulator and the houses were warm and heated by electricity from a generator at the base. Some newer bases use moulded pre-fabricated buildings. One base, Halley Bay, consists of a line of such buildings and it looks as though it could be on Mars. A simple solution is to mount your house on a sledge, so you can move it. Some long-distance travel is by a tractor pulling a line of sledges, one or two of which will be cabooses for sleeping and living.

4. The coast of Antarctica is rich in wild life and all of it is dependent on the sea. There are whales, seals, penguins of many types. The penguins are unafraid of humans and walk up to your tent and look inside the door to see who is there! Unlike the Arctic, there are no polar bears or land animals such as foxes. Antarctica has been isolated from other continents since land mammals evolved some 50 million years ago. The number of animals around the coast is incredible. They feed over wide areas of the ocean but they must cluster on the limited bits of rock around the coast. Camping at the coast is fun but there is a lot of noise! In the interior of Antarctica there is virtually no life. On my last visit to mountains close to the South Pole, we saw one snow petrel in 3 months. Snow petrels need rock to nest on and they fly hundreds of kilometres inland to find a mountain sticking up through the ice sheet.

Good luck with the Antarctic continent!

With best wishes,

David Sugden

