
Chapter – 9 Geography

Life in the Temperate Grasslands

- Grassland is a region where grasses form the dominant type of plant life.
 - Depending upon the climate conditions, grasslands can be divided into two categories, the temperate grasslands and the tropical grasslands.
 - **The Prairies:**
 - (i) The temperate grasslands of North-America are known as the Prairies.
 - (ii) For the most part, Prairies are tree-less but, near the low-lying areas woodlands can be found. The prairies are bound by the Rocky Mountains in the West and the Great Lakes in the East.
 - (iii) Prairies cover major parts of USA and Canada.
 - **Climate:**
 - (i) Climate is of continental type with extreme temperature.
 - (ii) The annual rainfall is moderate and is ideal for the growth of grass.
 - **Flora and Fauna:**
 - (i) Prairies are practically tree-less but the places where water is available, trees such as willows, alders and poplars grow.
 - (ii) Places that receive rainfall of over 50 cm, are suitable for farming as the soil is fertile.
 - (iii) Large-scale cattle farms called ranches are looked after by the sturdy men called cowboys.
 - (iv) Bison or the American buffalo is the most important animal.
 - **The Velds:**
 - (i) The temperate grasslands of South Africa are called the velds.
 - (ii) Velds are rolling plateaus with varying heights ranging from 600 m to 1100 m.
 - (iii) It is bound by the Drakensburg Mountains on the east.
 - **Climate:**
 - (i) The velds have a mild climate due to the influence of the Indian Oceans.
 - (ii) Winters are cold and dry. Temperature varies between 5°C and 10°C and July is the coldest month.
 - (iii) The velds receive rainfall mainly in the summer months from November to February.
 - **Flora and Fauna:**
 - (i) Vegetation cover is sparse.
 - (ii) Red grass grows in bush velds.
 - **People:**
 - (i) Velds are known for cattle rearing and mining.
 - (ii) The main crops are maize, wheat, barley, oats and potatoes.
 - (iii) The velds have rich reserves of minerals.
 - (iv) Iron and steel industry has developed where coal and iron are present.
 - (v) Johannesburg is known as the gold capital of the world.
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