

Glaciers

KEY WORDS

glacier	carved out valleys	plant	melts
masses of snow	flow	mummy	level of water



1 Do the quiz about glaciers. Underline the correct solution. Then listen and check.

- 1 Glaciers today are getting *smaller* / bigger.
- 2 We can call glaciers *lakes* / rivers of ice.
- 3 Very big glaciers can be 40 / 80 km long.
- 4 Glaciers cover about 2% / 10% of the Earth's land area.
- 5 Glaciers have 75% / 25% of the Earth's fresh water.
- 6 The Antarctic ice is about 4,000 / 400 metres thick in some places.
- 7 Most of the glaciers in the USA are in *California* / Alaska.
- 8 There are glaciers in *half of* / all the continents.

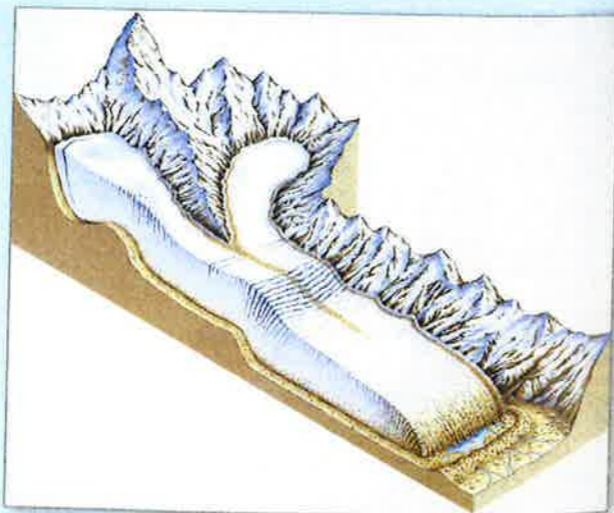
2 Read the text about glaciers.

What are glaciers? Glaciers are masses of snow that have become ice. Snow falls, stays on the ground for a long, long time. Over many years it turns into ice and that is a glacier.

Glaciers are great rivers of ice. The glaciers flow like very slow rivers. For millions of years, moving glaciers have formed mountains and carved out valleys. They continue to flow and form the landscape in many places.

But today there is a big problem. Glaciers are becoming smaller because the world is getting warmer. This is true everywhere in the world. An American professor found some plants near a glacier in Peru. The plants were about 5,000 years old. The ice of the glacier covered them 5,000 years ago, but when the glacier got smaller, the plants appeared again.

In 1991, hikers found a mummy in the Alps at 3,210 metres. It was a sensation because the man crossed the glacier about 5,300 years ago. Then snow and ice covered him for thousands of years. But as the weather got warmer and the ice melted, the famous *Iceman* appeared.



3 Compare the photos below.



The water of glaciers is very important. People need it for drinking and for watering their fields. But now, as the ice melts, glaciers all over the world will get smaller.

Perhaps the biggest problem is this: what is going to happen to all the ice in Greenland and the Antarctic when it gets warmer? When the huge masses of ice melt and flow into the ocean, then the level of the water of the ocean will go up. Cities near the sea will be in trouble. And people on islands that are only one or two metres above sea level are very worried today.

The leaders of Tuvalu – a tiny island country in the Pacific Ocean between Hawaii and Australia – want to leave their islands. During the twentieth century, the sea level rose by 20–30 centimetres. As the sea level has risen, the fields on Tuvalu have been flooded by salt water. This means that people do not have fresh water to drink any more and that they cannot water their vegetables in the fields.



Mini-project Rising sea levels

- 4 Check the Internet or in your library for facts and ideas about rising sea levels. Write an article for your school magazine about what might happen as a result.