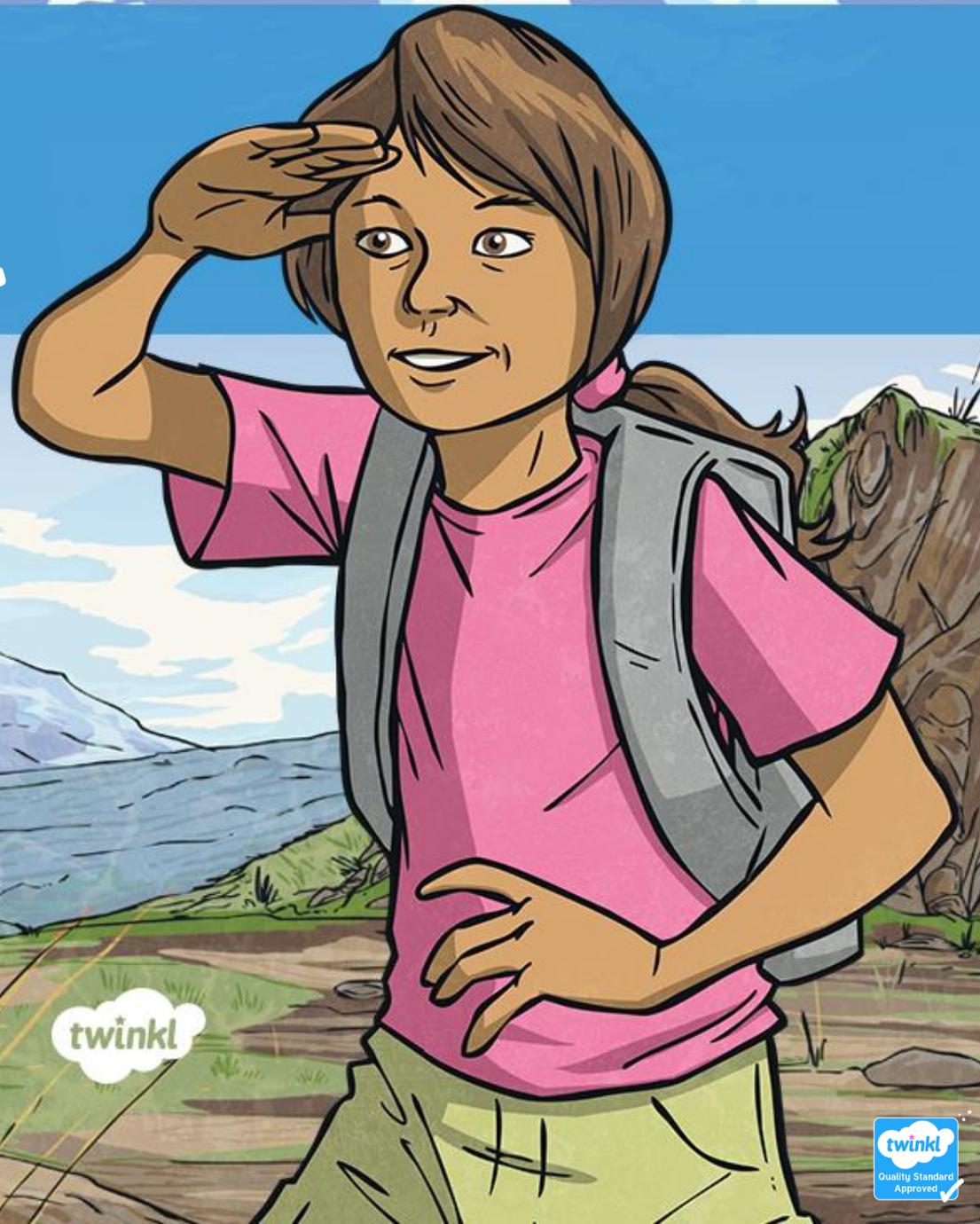


All About Iceland



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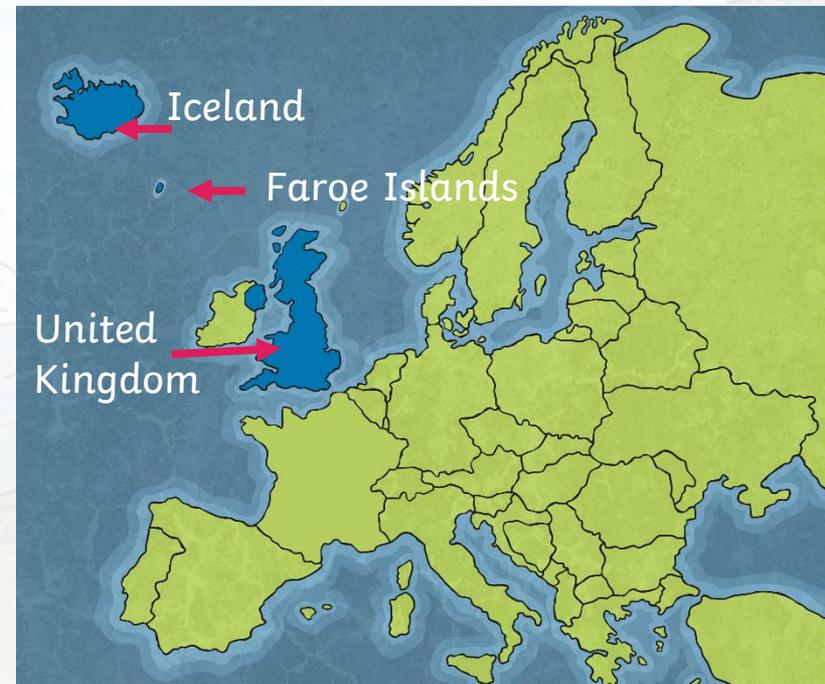
WALT identify the features of a volcanic island.

Where Is Iceland?

Iceland is an island near the Arctic Circle in the North Atlantic Ocean. The country nearest to Iceland is Greenland, followed by the Faroe Islands and then Scotland.

It is 40 000 square miles, which is about the same size as Portugal. However, 80% of the country is not inhabited, with Iceland having a population of only 320 000 people, half of which live in the capital city.

The capital city is Reykjavik. It would take five hours to fly from Reykjavik to New York and three hours to fly to London.

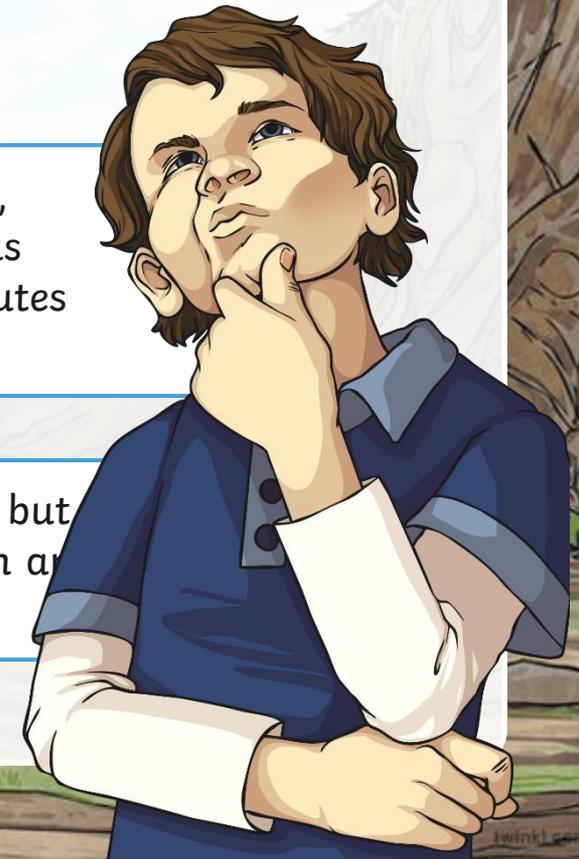


The History of Iceland

Iceland was the last European country in which people settled. Vikings arrived in the 9th century and found an uninhabited country. Norsemen from Scandinavia and the Celts from the British Isles brought pigs, cows, sheep and goats and began a life of farming and fishing.

Iceland formed the oldest parliament in the world in AD930, called 'Althingi' which means the 'National Assembly'. It was made from local groups who discussed, and sorted out, disputes between people.

Iceland has been ruled by Norway and Denmark in the past but now self-governed (in charge of its own laws and rules) with an elected President who is head of state.



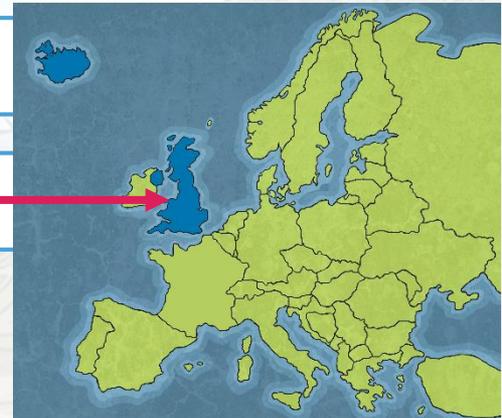
Land of Ice and Fire

Iceland is known as the Land of Ice and Fire. This is because it has the largest glaciers in Europe and some of the most active volcanoes in the world. The country is famous for its geothermal lagoons and natural hot springs. Geothermal energy heats 90% of buildings in Iceland and most of the swimming pools.

Iceland



United Kingdom



Did you know?

Geothermal energy is heat created from deep inside Earth so it is a clean, natural source of energy.

Mývatn Nature Baths in Iceland



Natural Wonders

Iceland is known for its geysers, waterfalls and black-sand beaches. The high level of silicates (a type of salt) and minerals in the water are known to be good for the skin and many people bathe in the warm waters.

Fresh water rivers flow through Iceland and it is recommended that people drink directly from the rivers, as the water is so pure and clean. The hot geysers regularly erupt, sending volumes of hot water into the air.



Geysers and hot springs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUruvQysM4A>



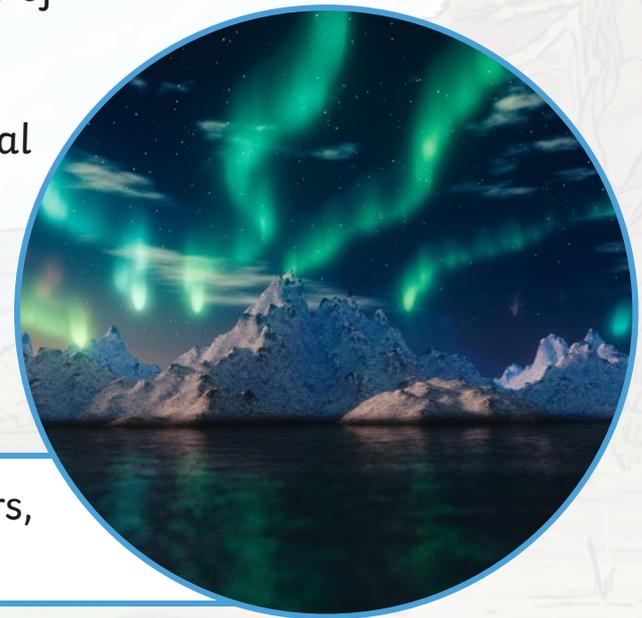
Close to Nature

Due to the location of Iceland, it is an isolated country with extremes in nature. In the summer, Iceland experiences 24 hours of daylight. Imagine being in bed when it is light outside for the whole night!

However, in the winter, there are only a few hours of daylight.

Despite the dark winters, Iceland enjoys the natural phenomenon of the Northern Lights – Aurora Borealis. This is when electrically charged particles from the Sun enter the atmosphere above the magnetic poles. In Iceland's case, this is above the North Pole.

The particles cause the sky to turn different colours, from greens and purples to yellows and violet.



Europe's Largest Ice Sheet

Vatnajökull is Europe's largest ice sheet. Its name means 'water glacier'.

It is 8100 km² (3100 square miles) in size.

Beneath the ice sheet are numerous volcanoes which can erupt at any time.



Did you know?

Vatnajökull was used in a scene in the James Bond film, *A View to a Kill* in 1985.

Volcanoes

Iceland sits on two tectonic plates (the jigsaw pieces of Earth's crust). These shift and cause earthquakes and volcanoes to form. There are about 130 volcanoes in Iceland, some of which are still active. The black-sand beaches are caused by the volcanic minerals and lava fragments from the volcanoes.



Southern black-sand beach



Iceland's most famous volcano, Eyjafjallajökull, erupted in 2010 causing a massive ash cloud which disrupted European flights for many days.



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