

WET AND DRY LANDS

WATER is needed by all living things. But different parts of the world receive different amounts of water.

Follow the Equator on these two maps: the dark blue colour (below) shows heavy rain. Thick tropical forest grows here (page 15).

Now find the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn: many parts are dry all year, and there are big deserts. Between the tropical forests and the deserts, there are 'savanna' areas, with tall grass and bushes: these areas have a wet and a dry season.

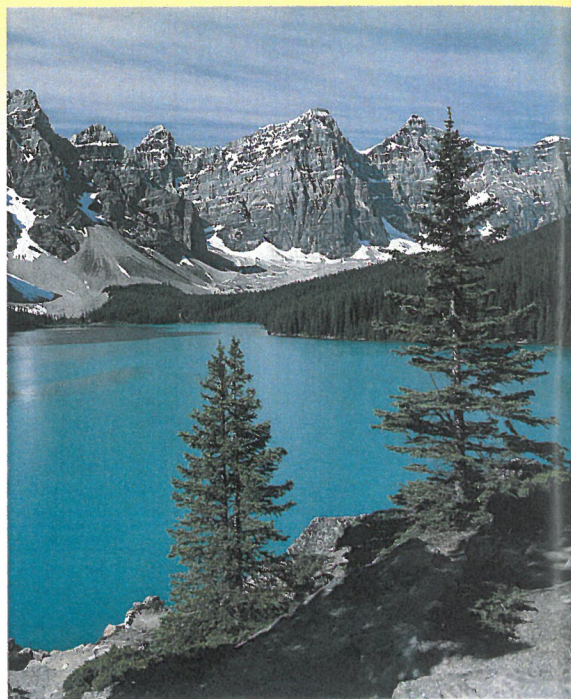
North of the Sahara Desert, near the Mediterranean Sea, it rains in winter. Summers are hot and dry.

In temperate lands, places near the oceans receive rain from the damp winds that blow from the sea all year. Trees grow well here. Far inland, it is much drier and there are vast grasslands, like the prairies of North America and the Russian steppes. In the centre of Asia, there is a desert with very cold winters.

Further north, temperate forests of pines and firs stretch right across North America, Europe and Asia.

In the far north, there is 'tundra', with no trees. The land is snow-covered for many months in winter, and marshy in the short summer.

Finally, Greenland and Antarctica are mostly snow and ice: find them on pages 88 and 89.



▲ **Forest and mountains in Alberta, Canada.** The coniferous trees can survive Canada's bitterly cold winters. In the high mountains, trees cannot grow: it is too cold and the soil is too thin. Can you see the forest across the lake?

