

Major Ecoregions of Africa

Places at different latitudes get different amounts of energy from the sun. This gives them different temperature, wind, and rain. Each climate has a distinctive set of plants, animals, rivers, and soils. This, in turn, has consequences for human life in different places.

	Rainforest	Savanna	Grassland	Desert
Approximate latitude	_____	_____	_____	_____
Length of rainy season	_____	_____	_____	_____
Typical plant cover	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____
Typical animals	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____
Rivers	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____
Soil characteristics	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____

Faced with different natural conditions, humans often developed different cultural ideas about how to live. Put on your “geothinking hat” and suggest appropriate words or phrases to write on each line below. You can use the same words on several lines if you think a particular idea fits equally well in several environments.

Plants used for food	_____	_____	_____	_____
Animals used for food	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____
Material to build houses	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____
Means of transportation (before cars and planes)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Major religion(s)	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____

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	Rainforest	Savanna	Grassland	Desert
Approximate latitude	0-5 degrees	5-15 degrees	15-20 degrees	20-30 degrees
Length of rainy season	10+ months	5-9 months	2-4 months	1 month or less
Typical plant cover	tall trees, vines, mushrooms	short trees and grasses	grasses	shrubs, cactus (none in middle)
Typical animals	birds, monkeys, insects, snakes	zebra, giraffe, lions, cheetah	impala, wildebeest	camels, lizards (none in middle)
Rivers	full, steady, usually clear	large floods in summer	summer floods, dry in winter	none, except from outside
Soil characteristics	leached, infertile	iron-rich, often hard	dark, fertile, often dry	thin, salty, rocky or sandy

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Animals used for food	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
Material to build houses	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
Means of transportation (before cars and planes)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Major religion(s)	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____

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Plants used for food	cassava, palm, tree fruits	sorghum (a tall grass)	millet (a short grass)	none
Animals used for food	monkeys birds	impala (deer)	cattle goats	camel milk and blood
Material to build houses	wood	sticks, grass	grass, stone, animal skins	stone dried mud
Means of transportation (before cars and planes)	boat, walking	walking	donkey	camel
Major religion(s)	Christianity, animism	animism, Islam	Islam, animism	Islam, animism
Examples . . .				
Export product	hardwoods, palm	lion, ivory	cattle, grain	salt
Early gods include . . .	tree spirits	lion	wind	sun
Price for bride	carved wood box	trophy animal	cattle	camel
Feared insect Disease	mosquito malaria ebola	tsetse fly, simulium fly sleeping sickness (trypanosomiasis) river blindness (onchocerciasis)		rat flea, sand fly leishmaniasis