Vocabulary: Comparing Climates (Customary)

Vocabulary

- Adaptation – a structure, behavior, or other trait that helps an organism to survive.
  - For example, spiny leaves are an adaptation of the cactus plant that prevents it from being eaten and reduces water loss in a hot desert environment.
- Climate – the general pattern of weather in a location over a long period of time.
  - Climate is the average weather over a long period, typically 30 years or more.
  - A location's climate is influenced by many factors, including latitude, elevation, distance from the ocean, shape of the land (such as the presence of nearby mountains), global winds, and ocean currents.
- Equator – an imaginary line drawn around the middle of Earth, halfway between the north and south poles.
- Hot desert climate – a climate with very little precipitation and very hot temperatures during at least part of the year.
  - Rainfall is generally less than 8 inches (200 mm) per year.
  - Temperatures above 104 °F (40 °C) are common in hot deserts.
- Humidity – the amount of water vapor in the air.
  - The *relative humidity* is the amount of water vapor in the air divided by the maximum amount of water vapor the air can hold.
- Latitude – angular distance north or south of the equator.
  - The latitude of the equator is 0°, the latitude of the North Pole is 90° N, and the latitude of the South Pole is 90° S.
- Precipitation – any form of water that falls to the ground.
  - Examples of precipitation include rain, snow, sleet, and hail.
- Temperature – the hotness or coldness of a substance, such as air or water.
- Tropical monsoon climate – a climate with warm temperatures throughout the year and distinct wet and dry seasons.
  - Temperatures average over 64 °F throughout the year.
  - The change from wet to dry seasons usually depends on a shift in wind patterns.
- Weather – the state of the atmosphere at a time and place.
  - Weather is described by temperature, wind speed, humidity, cloud cover, precipitation, and barometric pressure.