**Iceland – The Land of Ice and Fire** Background pattern

Description automatically generated

**Iceland is an island in the Atlantic Ocean.** All parts of the country are situated north of the Arctic Circle. The nearest countries to Iceland are the United Kingdom in the south-east and Norway in the east. The scenery in Iceland is not like the other Nordic countries. The country is barren, and Iceland has also been described as a land of opposites.

**Iceland is situated in an area where the crust of the earth is thin and the heat inside the earth can erupt to the surface through volcanoes and hot springs.** Iceland still has active volcanoes which erupt now and then. The best known is called Hekla. Map

Description automatically generated

The water in the hot springs is warm, sometimes even boiling. **There are about 800 hot springs in Iceland. Iceland also has geysers**. These are hot springs where the hot water erupts inside the earth and may shoot up as high as 20 – 40 metres.

A picture containing outdoor, nature, sky, spring

Description automatically generated

**Iceland uses the heat of the earth to produce heating and electricity.** Many Icelandic houses are heated by hot water from underground. The water is also used to heat up greenhouses.

In opposite to the volcanic eruptions, **Iceland is also covered with glaciers. Glaciers are areas of thick ice which do not melt, even in the summer.** The most well-known glacier is called Vatnajökull and 10% of the area of Iceland is covered with glaciers.

**Iceland has a cool and rainy maritime climate.** The country is windy due to its remote island location and there are only very few trees on the island. The most important industries in Iceland are fishing and tourism. Over 1 million people visit Iceland every year.

**Iceland is a republic** which means the country has a president who is elected to the position every four years. The parliament of Iceland is called **Althing** and it is oldest parliament in the world. The capital city is called **Reykjavik.** The Icelandic population is the smallest of the Nordic countries, about 356 000 people. Most people live on the coast and the country is the most sparsely populated country in Europe. Reykjavik – the capital of Iceland 