

The Amazing Arctic Fox

Genre: Nonfiction **Reading Level:** 490L

The Arctic fox is one of nature's most impressive survivors. This small animal lives in some of the coldest places on Earth, where temperatures can drop to negative sixty degrees Fahrenheit. Despite these harsh conditions, the Arctic fox has developed special features that help it thrive in its frozen home.

One of the fox's most useful adaptations is its thick, warm fur. In winter, the Arctic fox grows a heavy white coat that provides excellent insulation. This white color also serves as camouflage, helping the fox blend in with the snow and ice. When summer arrives, the fox sheds its white fur and grows a thinner brown or gray coat that matches the rocky, barren landscape.

Another helpful feature is the fox's small, rounded ears. Unlike foxes that live in warmer climates with large ears, the Arctic fox has short ears that reduce heat loss. Even its feet are specially designed for the cold. Thick fur covers the bottom of its paws, acting like natural snowshoes and protecting against frozen ground.

The Arctic fox is also an opportunistic eater, which means it will eat almost anything it can find. During summer, it hunts small animals like lemmings and birds. In winter, when food is scarce, the fox follows polar bears and feeds on leftover scraps from their meals. This flexibility helps the Arctic fox survive when other animals cannot.