

Life in the extreme

In the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, 2,816 kilometers from the coast of South Africa and 3,360 kilometers from South America, is the island of Tristan da Cunha. The most **remote** island in the world, it is only 98 square kilometers in size and home to fewer than 300 residents – all of whom share one of just seven different surnames. Despite being over 8,500 kilometers from London, Tristan da Cunha is in fact an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom, with English as its language and the British pound as its currency. The majority of its residents work in farming, fishing, and the small tourist industry, making the week-long boat journey to the nearest port at Cape Town when they need to visit the mainland. There are no restaurants on Tristan da Cunha, but you can get online at an Internet café or play a round of golf on the town's very own golf course!

La Rinconada is a gold mining town **situated** at more than 5,000 meters above sea level in Peru. Its population of 50,000 lives in average temperatures of 1.2 degrees Celsius. The living **conditions** are poor, with no running water and no sewage system. The miners work in small, **unregulated** mines that are often **unsafe**. For the children of La Rinconada, helping their parents earn a living by selling homemade produce and grinding rocks in search of gold takes priority over an education.

In winter, temperatures in the Russian town of Oymyakon drop down to over minus 50 degrees Celsius. It might come as a surprise, therefore, to learn that Oymyakon in fact means “unfrozen water”, due to the town's nearby hot thermal spring! Around 500 people live in this remote part of Siberia, 927 kilometers from the nearest city of Yakutsk. During the winter, Oymyakon sees only a few hours of daylight and planes are unable to **land** there because it is so cold. The houses are built on stilts to keep them above the frozen ground, and the residents' diet consists mainly of reindeer, fish, and ice cubes of horse blood with macaroni.

1 Look at the key words in bold in the text and match them to their synonyms.

- a arrive _____
- b located _____
- c dangerous _____
- d isolated _____
- e states _____
- f not controlled _____

2 Do the following issues affect Tristan da Cunha (T), La Rinconada (R), or Oymyakon (O)?**Write the letters in the spaces.**

- a** isolation _____
- b** low temperatures _____
- c** lack of sunlight _____
- d** limited variety of food _____
- e** high altitude _____
- f** few basic facilities _____

3 If you had to live in one of the three places, which would you choose? Why? Talk to a partner.