

What is life like in the Alps?

The Alps are a large mountain range in the middle of Europe. They are spread over **eight countries**: France, Monaco, Italy, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Germany and Slovenia.

The Alps are **fold mountains**. This means that they formed when two large **tectonic plates** slowly collided, pushing up the ground over tens of millions of years. This created some of the highest peaks in Europe. The highest mountain in the Alps is **Mont Blanc**.

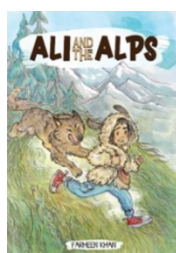
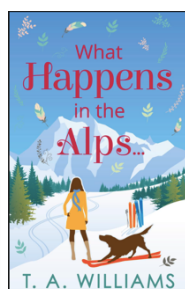
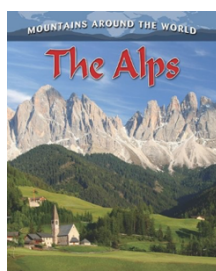
The tops of the mountains are covered in **snow** and **glaciers**, which are large blocks of ice. Different types of animals and plants live in **different climate zones**. Some are not found anywhere else in the world, such as ibex goats.

Many river sources are in the Alps. When snow and ice melt in the spring and summer, they supply water to the rivers and lakes at the foot of the mountains. **Dams** have been built to hold this water in order to create **hydroelectric power** for nearby towns and cities. Austria's **Kaprun power plants** produce 700 kWh of power a year and make an important contribution to the country's power supply.

Where are the Alps located?



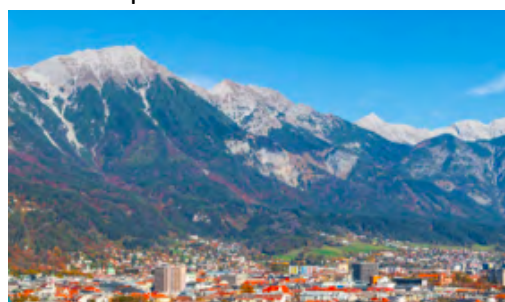
Books about the Alps



Climate

The **weather** in the Alps is affected by different temperatures of air coming from the north, west and south. These conditions create different types of **climate**, depending on height - the higher up the mountains, the colder it gets.

Most of the alps have a **mountain** climate. It is much colder than the surrounding climate due to the height of the mountains. Lower regions of the Alps have a temperate climate.



Popular things to do

Tourism is the main industry in the Alps. Around 30 million people visit the Alps each year, enjoying activities such as:

- skiing and snowboarding
- walking
- sightseeing
- trail running
- mountain biking
- paragliding



Key Vocabulary

Leisure - the use of free time for enjoyment

Tourist - a person who travels to a place for pleasure

Tourism - travel for pleasure in which people visit places of interest