

READING

(20 minutes)

READING PASSAGE 1

You should spend about 10 minutes on Questions 1–4, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.

A giant panda at a zoo in the United States has given birth to twin cubs

Keepers at the Smithsonian National Zoo in Washington DC only discovered Mei Xiang was pregnant during an ultrasound scan last week. The zoo said both cubs appeared healthy. Giant pandas are one of the most endangered species in the world and are notoriously hard to breed in captivity.

The National Zoo is one of only four zoos in the US to have pandas, which are on loan from China. Mei Xiang, who has two other offspring, is one of the zoo's star attractions and a Panda Cam on her enclosure crashed within seconds of the birth of the first cub being announced because of the volume of interest.

Female pandas are able to conceive for only two or three days a year, leading to a very low reproduction rate. Mei Xiang was artificially inseminated with sperm from the zoo's resident male Tian Tian and a panda named Hui Hui from Wolong, China. It will not be known for a while which is the father, or what sex the cubs are.

It has previously taken months before Mei Xiang's cubs have been introduced to the public. AP news agency reports that her first cub, Tai Shan, was born in 2005 and returned to China in 2010; her second cub, Bao Bao, is two years old on Sunday and still lives at the zoo. The panda population is threatened by habitat loss as land is increasingly inhabited by humans, with about 1,800 pandas left in the wild in China. However, the number living in the wild in China has gone up over the last 10 years.

Complete the sentences below.

*Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage for each answer.*

1. Mei Xiang pregnancy was discovered with an last week.
2. Pandas from the USA National Zoo are from China.
3. Due to the short conceiving period, pandas have a low
4. Pandas are in danger because their lands are increasingly

READING PASSAGE 2

You should spend about 10 minutes on Questions 5–8, which are based on Reading Passage 2 below.

August 1985: The worst month for air disasters

There are many grim landmarks in the history of aviation. One in particular stands out. Three decades ago, 720 travellers and crew lost their lives on board commercial aircraft in a single month - more than in any other before or since.

The deaths occurred in four separate accidents in August 1985. Each disaster had quite different causes. The aircraft involved ranged from a 747 with hundreds on board to a tiny twin engine turboprop carrying just eight people.

There was Japan Airlines flight 123, the worst single-aircraft accident in history, in which 520 of 524 on board were killed. A further 137 died when Delta flight 191 flew into heavy winds as it approached Dallas-Fort Worth International. A fire on board British Airtours flight 28M at Manchester Airport led to 55 deaths. And all those on board the smallest aircraft, Bar Harbor Airlines flight 1808, lost their lives as it flew into a small airport in Maine, USA.

Each, in their own way, had a lasting legacy, whether in the memories of those left bereaved or in changes in technology and procedure introduced as a direct result. The worst death toll was on Japan Airlines Flight 123, a Boeing 747, which was route from Tokyo to Osaka on 12 August 1985 when the airtight bulkhead between its cabin and tail tore was opened. The change in pressure blew off the vertical stabilizer, or tail fin. It also destroyed the hydraulic systems. The plane lurched up and down.

Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**

5. When did the 720 travellers die?

- A. Thirteen decades ago.
- B. A decade ago.
- C. 30 years ago.
- D. There is no information about it.

6. Twin engine turboprop could carry:

- A. Eight people.
- B. Four people.

- C. Two people.
 - D. Only a pilot.
7. The worst accident in history, according to the paragraph, was:
- A. Flight 123.
 - B. Delta flight 191.
 - C. British Airtours flight 28M.
 - D. Bar Harbor Airlines flight 1808.
8. Why did the Japan Airlines Flight 123 crash?
- A. The plane lurched up and down.
 - B. Destruction of the hydraulic systems.
 - C. The airtight bulkhead between its cabin and tail tore was opened.
 - D. It is unknown.