

GRASSLANDS

Video Exercise

1 Choose the statements that are mentioned in the video.

1. Grasslands are large open areas of grass with frequent presence of trees.
2. The Eurasian steppe is the largest temperate grassland in the world.
3. The Western Low Plain consists of savannas, shrublands, and steppes.
4. The levels of moisture in the Western Low Plain vary throughout the year.
5. Prairies in the region support livestock as well as crops planted by farmers.
6. Domesticated vegetation has displaced native annuals and perennial plants.

Reading

2A Read the encyclopedia article. Then, choose the correct answers.

3 Grasslands

Western Low Plain

The Western Low Plain is a **grassland** in the Northwest. It spans more than 20,000 square kilometers.

Geography and Climate

The Western Low Plain is classified as a **midlatitude grassland**. As such, its climate ranges from moderately arid to moderately humid. The region is a large biome consisting of **savannas**, shrublands, and **steppes**. The land supports few trees because the fertile soil is very **shallow**. Instead, **tufts** of grass make up most of the vegetation in the region.

The climate in the Western Low Plain is fairly consistent. Low levels of moisture are common throughout the year. However, there are occasionally long periods of no precipitation. During these times, uncontrolled grass fires are common. As a result, the few trees in the region must be **resistant** to fire.

Economy

Historically, the Western Low Plain was largely uninhabited by people. However, farming is increasing in the **prairies**. This has changed the landscape somewhat, as livestock **grazing** prevents tall grass growth.

Livestock isn't the only industry supported by the prairies. Some farmers plant crops as well, taking advantage of the year-round growing conditions. Native **annuals** and perennials have been displaced by **domesticated** vegetation, like wheat and corn. These activities have increased overall moisture, as **irrigation** brings in additional water.



irrigation

savanna

domesticated vegetation

grassland

tuft

grazing

1 What is the article mostly about?

- ☐ A the definitions of different types of grasslands
- ☐ B common species of wildlife in grasslands
- ☐ C how to prevent environmental destruction in a grassland
- ☐ D the qualities of a particular grassland region

2 What is true about trees in the Western Low Plain region?

- ☐ A They must be resistant to fire.
- ☐ B They are abundant in the steppe region.
- ☐ C They were removed to make space for farmland.
- ☐ D They are mostly domesticated species.

3 What area is experiencing an increase in agricultural development?

- ☐ A the savanna
- ☐ B the prairie
- ☐ C the shrubland
- ☐ D the steppe

2 B Read the webpage again. How does permafrost affect the growth of vegetation? Fill in the blanks.

The climate in the Western Low Plain _____ from _____ humid to moderately _____.

2 C Use the words below to complete the government report on local grasslands.

irrigation consists likely erosion midlatitude fertile further graze savannas increase

Western Low Plain

State of the Region

Annual Report

The Western Low Plain is a traditional _____ grassland region. It _____ of shrublands, _____, and a vast prairie.

Activity: Livestock _____ on the land while farmers cultivate crops. Domesticated plants are growing quite well due to the new _____ system.

Likely consequences: At present, the land is _____ and not overburdened. However, prolonged or increased grazing may cause soil _____.

Recommendations: Agricultural activity cannot _____ beyond its current state. The land can sustain today's farming, but it will _____ become overloaded if there is any _____ development.

Vocabulary

3 Match the words with the definitions (A-F).

steppe savanna prairie annual resistant grazing

A a grassland region in a temperate climate

B a plant that completes its entire life cycle in one year

C the process of moving gradually through an area of land to eat the vegetation

D a type of grassland in which trees are concentrated near bodies of water

E a type of grassland in which trees are sparse and scattered far apart

F to be unaffected by something

4 Read the sentence pairs. Choose which word or phrase best fits each blank.

grassland irrigation

1 A Agricultural lands require man-made , especially in dry regions.

B is good for agriculture because there are few trees.

midlatitude grasslands tufts

2 A In savannas, the grass is often grouped in .

B are characterized by moderately high precipitation.

domesticated shallow

3 A Many natural grasses have been replaced with vegetation.

B Trees do not grow well in soil.

Listening

5 Listen to a conversation between two students. Mark the following statements as *True* or *False*.

1 The woman identifies a grassland incorrectly.

True

False

2 The speakers live in a steppe region.

True

False

3 Domesticated crops grow poorly in the region.

True

False

6 Complete the conversation with the phrases given.

That keeps the ground moister than in a steppe climate, and allows richer grass growth.

We do have occasional periods of drought. It's primarily a prairie. The soil may be nutrient-rich, but it's very shallow.

They really shape the local economy. That's why so many farming corporations want land here. Right.

A: I'm glad we're learning about grasslands in class. After all, we live in a grassland region.

B: I know.

A: This fact didn't cross my mind. But of course, you're right. Livestock is a big deal around here.

B: Certainly.

A: I'm surprised our steppe land has such desirable growing conditions.

B: Actually, our grassland isn't a steppe.