

Natural Habitats and Conservation

- A** Natural habitats are the environments in which plants and animals live and grow without significant interference from humans. These habitats include forests, grasslands, deserts, wetlands, oceans and coral reefs. Each habitat provides the basic needs that living things require, such as food, water, shelter and space. In addition, habitats support biodiversity, which refers to the variety of species and the natural systems that keep ecosystems balanced. When habitats are healthy, they can continue to support life for many generations.
- B** Biodiversity is essential for the stability of ecosystems. Every species, no matter how small, has a role to play. For example, insects help pollinate plants, while predators keep the populations of other animals under control. However, many species around the world are now endangered. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), thousands of animals and plants face a high risk of extinction. Some well-known examples include the Amur leopard, which lives in the Russian Far East, and the mountain gorilla, found in the forests of Central Africa. The loss of these species would not only be a tragedy for nature but could also damage the ecosystems that humans depend on.
- C** Human activities are the main reason why natural habitats are under threat. Deforestation, caused by logging and the clearing of land for agriculture, destroys large areas of forests every year. This leads to the loss of vegetation and the displacement of wildlife. Pollution is another major problem. Chemicals from factories and plastic waste from cities often find their way into rivers and oceans, harming marine life and birds. Climate change also affects habitats. Rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns cause droughts, floods and stronger storms, which make it difficult for many species to adapt. As a result, ecosystems that once supported a wide range of life are becoming less stable.
- D** Conservation is the process of protecting and managing natural resources so that they can be used in a sustainable way. Many countries have created national parks and nature reserves, where certain areas are legally protected. In these places, hunting, mining and building are limited or not allowed. For example, Costa Rica has more than 25% of its land set aside as protected areas, which has helped to preserve forests and wildlife. Another important approach is habitat restoration. This involves repairing environments that have been damaged. Wetlands, for instance, are often restored by planting native trees and removing pollutants so that species can return.
- E** Sustainable development is also a key part of conservation. It means meeting the needs of people today without reducing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This can be achieved by using natural resources carefully and by developing clean energy such as solar or wind power. Sustainable farming methods, which reduce the use of chemicals and protect soil quality, also help to maintain healthy ecosystems while providing food for growing populations.
- F** Finally, the involvement of local communities is vital for successful conservation. People who live near natural areas often have valuable knowledge about the land and wildlife. When they are included in conservation projects, they are more likely to protect their environment. Community-based tourism, for example, provides jobs and income while encouraging visitors to respect nature. Education programmes in schools and local groups also raise awareness about the importance of protecting habitats. Conservation is not just the responsibility of governments or organisations; it requires the support and actions of all members of society.

Questions 1–15

Task 1: Matching Headings

Questions 1–5

Choose the correct heading for each paragraph (A–E) from the list of headings below.

Write the correct number, i–viii, in boxes 1–5.

List of Headings

- i. The importance of protecting natural areas for the future
- ii. Why different species are essential for healthy ecosystems
- iii. Community involvement in environmental protection
- iv. The meaning and value of natural habitats
- v. The effects of human activities on wildlife
- vi. International laws that completely prevent pollution
- vii. Practical methods for conserving natural environments
- viii. The history of climate change research

1. Paragraph A _____

2. Paragraph B _____

3. Paragraph C _____

4. Paragraph D _____

5. Paragraph E _____

Task 2: Multiple Choice

Questions 6–10

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

6. According to Paragraph A, natural habitats provide living things with

- A. opportunities for tourism
- B. food, water, shelter and space
- C. protection from all natural disasters
- D. only forests and wetlands

7. What example does the writer give to show the importance of biodiversity?

- A. Large mammals are more valuable than insects.
- B. Every species performs a different function in the ecosystem.
- C. Endangered species can easily adapt to climate change.
- D. Wildlife only survives in protected areas.

8. According to Paragraph C, one effect of climate change is that

- A. forests become larger each year.
- B. pollution in cities decreases.
- C. many species find it more difficult to adapt.
- D. agriculture completely stops.

9. Which conservation method is mentioned in Paragraph D?

- A. Building more factories
- B. Removing legal protection from forests
- C. Restoring damaged habitats
- D. Increasing urban development

10. According to Paragraph E, sustainable development aims to

- A. replace all natural resources with technology.
- B. satisfy today's needs while protecting future resources.
- C. increase industrial production at any cost.
- D. reduce the world's population.

Task 3: Summary Completion

Questions 11–15

Complete the summary below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

Natural habitats support many forms of life and help maintain 11. _____. However, activities such as deforestation and pollution have damaged many ecosystems and placed numerous species at risk of 12. _____. To address these problems, many countries establish protected areas and carry out habitat 13. _____. In addition, sustainable development encourages the careful use of natural 14. _____ so that future generations can also benefit. Finally, successful conservation depends on the active participation of local 15. _____.