Pandas in Peril

(Taken from IGCSE Supplementary Materials, year 9, CfBT)

Pandas are only found in south-west China. Today, there are only about 1,500 pandas left in the wild, and about 150 in zoos. The main problem is that their habitat is becoming smaller. And there are fewer bamboo plants for them to eat. Also, pandas breed very slowly: in the wild, the female panda gives birth only once every two years, and usually only has one cub at a time. Some pandas also die accidentally in traps set for other animals, and a few are killed by poachers.

China is now trying hard to protect its shrinking panda population. The government has set up 32 panda reserves in the south-west provinces, including Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu. Logging of the bamboo forests in these areas is not allowed. The government is replanting large areas of bamboo. It has also passed laws against activities which harm pandas, such as hunting and poaching. Forest rangers go out on patrol to make sure the laws are obeyed.

Other countries are helping to protect pandas, too. Adult pandas are sent to zoos in cities around the world where they can breed in safety. For example, breeding programmes have been carried out at zoos in London, Sydney and Washington. The zoos keep a central panda register, so if, for example, a zoo in Sydney has a lonely female panda, that zoo can "borrow" a male panda from another zoo. In addition, international organisations, such as the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), are researching the best ways of protecting pandas.

If these programmes are successful, these cute black and white creatures may still be roaming through the bamboo forests of China at the end of this century. If not, they may soon become extinct and the world will be a poorer place in their absence.

What country do pandas live in? Your answer _____

a. Japan **b. China** **c. Russia** **d. a, b and c**

You are entering a speech contest at your school and you need to prepare notes for your speech.

Reasons why there are so few pandas left in the wild:

- *Their habitat is becoming smaller and there are fewer bamboo plants for them to eat*
- _____
- _____
- _____

How pandas are being protected in China:

- _____
- _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS