

IELTS READING: SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

MINI TEST 2

ALARMING RATE OF LOSS OF TROPICAL RAINFORESTS

A. Adults and children are frequently confronted with statements about the alarming rate of loss of tropical rainforests. For example, one graphic illustration to which children might readily relate is the estimate that rainforests are being destroyed at a rate equivalent to one thousand football fields every forty minutes – about the duration of a normal classroom period. In the face of the frequent and often vivid media coverage, it is likely that children will have formed ideas about rainforests – what and where they are, why they are important, what endangers them – independent of any formal tuition. It is also possible that some of these ideas will be mistaken. Many studies have shown that children harbour misconceptions about 'pure', curriculum science. These misconceptions do not remain isolated but become incorporated into a multifaceted, but organised, conceptual framework, making it and the component ideas, some of which are erroneous, more robust but also accessible to modification. These ideas may be developed by children absorbing ideas through the popular media. Sometimes this information may be erroneous. It seems schools may not be providing an opportunity for children to re-express their ideas and so have them tested and refined by teachers and their peers.

B. Despite the extensive coverage in the popular media of the destruction of rainforests, little formal information is available about children's ideas in this area. The aim of the present study is to start to provide such information, to help teachers design their educational strategies to build upon correct ideas and to displace misconceptions and to plan programmes in environmental studies in their schools. The study surveys children's scientific knowledge and attitudes to rainforests. Secondary school children were asked to complete a questionnaire containing five open-form questions. The most frequent responses to the first question were descriptions which are self-evident from the term 'rainforest'. Some children described them as damp, wet or hot. The second question concerned the geographical location of rainforests. The commonest responses were continents or countries: Africa (given by 43% of children), South America (30%), Brazil (25%). Some children also gave more general locations, such as being near the Equator.

Questions 1-3

Using NO MORE THAN FIVE WORDS, answer the following questions.

Write your answers in boxes 1-3 below.

1. What are the statements that adults and children often come across nowadays?

2. What is the rate equivalent at which rainforests are being destroyed?

3. What did children describe rainforests as?
