

Part 2

Read the text below and choose the best answer **A, B, C** or **D** for **Questions 1 to 6**.

Plants of Arabia

There are estimated to be around 400,000 different species of plant in the world surviving in many different types of environment, all of which should be studied in their context. Some countries, such as those in South America are extremely diverse, having as many as 130,000 species. Perhaps surprising, there are as many as 678 types of plant in the United Arab Emirates which have adapted well to the extreme desert conditions.

Before visiting the UAE, I had little understanding of the various plant species in this region. I thought that the only tree which grew here was the date palm. I had seen pictures of the oleander but had never seen it in real life before. Much to my surprise, I found that there is a much wider variety including the incredible desert hyacinth and the beautiful purple heart plant.

When I was living in Spain, I saw the desert rose grown in plant pots in gardens. I also saw the purple heart on balconies. In fact, these plants, unlike the desert hyacinth, which grows in the salty sands of the coast, and the oleander, which grows in the mountains, can be grown almost anywhere in the world.

During my time in the emirates, I saw the oleander for the first time. It is a small shrub which can be found all over the country. When it is young, it has light green leaves and, when mature, it is a dull dark green grey. Although it is highly poisonous, surprisingly, for a toxic plant, it is extremely attractive.

The appearance of each of these plants is distinct. The date palm grows to about 30 metres tall and has leaves as long as six metres. This can be contrasted with the small leaves of the purple heart which, amazingly, actually has green leaves when grown in the shade. On the other hand, the desert hyacinth has long overlapping brown leaves which point upwards, whilst the desert rose has leather-like leaves.

I feel very fortunate to have seen all of these plants in the Arabian Peninsula. As a young scientist, to my mind, it is essential to study these different types of wildlife, especially in their native habitat. In this way, we can build knowledge which assists scientists and conservationists globally.

Reading

1. In the first paragraph, the writer's main topic is ____.
A the lack of plants in the UAE
B how plants adapt to different climates
C the wide range of plants around the world
D the importance of understanding plant species
2. Which did the writer previously believe was the only plant in the UAE?
A date palm
B desert rose
C purple heart
D desert hyacinth
3. Where did the writer see the desert rose growing before visiting the UAE?
A on the coast
B on balconies
C in the mountains
D in private gardens
4. What does the writer say is most interesting thing about the oleander plant?
A It is colourful.
B It is beautiful.
C It is enormous.
D It is dangerous.
5. According to the writer, what is the most interesting thing about the purple heart?
A It has huge leaves.
B It has green leaves.
C It has brown leaves.
D It has leather-like leaves.
6. What is the main topic of the last paragraph?
A why it is important to visit the Middle East
B why it is important to protect the environment
C why it is important to protect these species in the UAE
D why it is important to understand different species of plant