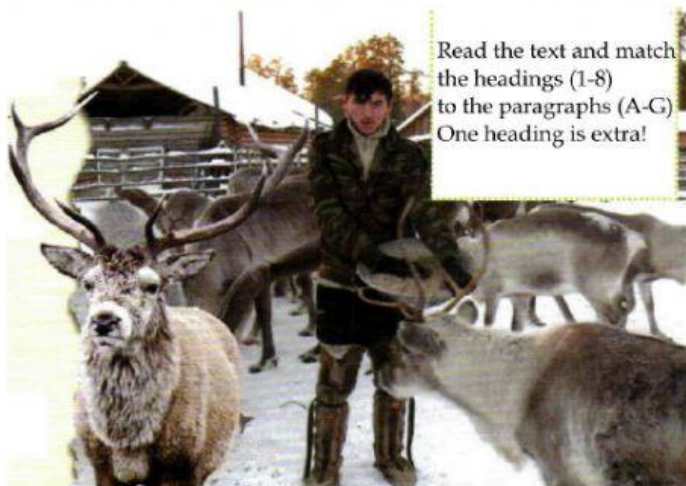




The Nenets Reindeer Herders



A	B	C	D	E	F	G

1. Working and relaxing
2. An extreme lifestyle
3. Never-ending work
4. Construction bringing challenges
5. Shifting seasons
6. The living space
7. Couldn't live without them
8. Not put off by the problems

- A.** There are few environments on earth more challenging than that which is home to the Nenets reindeer herders of the Yamal Peninsular in Western Siberia. These nomads, the last of their kind, move huge herds of reindeer over a thousand kilometres each year to keep one step ahead of the biting cold. They cross the world's fifth largest river, the River Ob, just as it is freezing and endure winter temperatures of -50°C. But to them this is all just part of a routine that they and their ancestors have been following for many hundreds of years.
- B.** The Nenets supplement their way of life with hunting and fishing, but they mostly owe their survival to the reindeer they herd. Herds range from 50 in small private herds to about 7,000 in the largest state farm. Apart from providing reindeer meat to sell, the animals are a source of food, shelter, clothing and transport.
- C.** The home of a Nenet family is called a 'chum', it's a teepee made of reindeer skins stretched over long wooden poles. Inside, there is an open fire in the centre for cooking and heating water. The chum and its site are split into male space and female space and there are many rules concerning each. Women, for example, are not allowed to step over any ropes whereas men should not touch any floorboards or tent poles!
- D.** The Nenets have a strong cultural identity and work ethic. The men mostly look after the reindeer, while the women control domestic issues. Most speak Russian as the children are sent to boarding schools, but when speaking amongst themselves they speak a language related to Estonian and Finnish.
- E.** It may sound like an idyllic life in beautiful surroundings, but the Nenets' age-old cycle is increasingly under threat. Under the Arctic tundra lie huge gas reserves (about a quarter of the reserves in the whole world!) which has brought development such as new roads, railways and pipelines. As a result, the reindeer pastures are shrinking.
- F.** Not only this, but climate change is causing problems, too. As winter arrives later now and leaves earlier, it can be difficult for the Nenets to cross areas of land that are only accessible in winter.
- G.** Despite all this, many Nenets choose to stay in the tundra as they can earn a better income than in the villages and they enjoy the freedom of the nomadic lifestyle. As a result, the population of the Nenets and their herds are still growing as they adapt to the new world around them.