

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- How important is the preservation of areas of extreme natural beauty or ecological significance? Why?
- Do you know of an area that is protected because of its natural or ecological value? If yes, what is special about it? If no, is there an area which you feel should be protected? Why?

A Read this text about UNESCO World Heritage Sites and the statements following them. Match the statements (1-6) with the descriptions (A-D). Write your answers in the boxes. There is an example (0) at the beginning.



NATURE'S TREASURE TROVE

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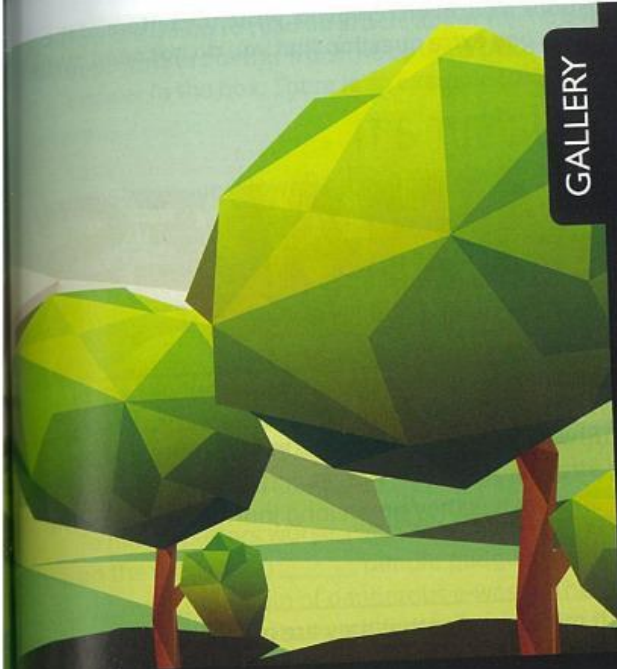
A UNESCO World Heritage Site is a place of great cultural or natural importance anywhere on the planet. As of 2013, there are 193 natural sites of amazing beauty and ecological significance listed, the preservation of which falls on each of our shoulders. Would you like to take a closer look at some of them?

A. The Great Barrier Reef, off the northeast coast of Australia, is famous for its breathtaking beauty and eye-catching colours. It covers around 345,000km² of sea and contains the world's largest collection of coral reefs. Coral is a substance that looks like a rock and is formed under the sea by many groups of tiny animals called polyps. When there are good conditions – lots of light, steady temperature and mild wave action – corals may grow up to 4.5 centimetres per year. Unfortunately, the whole system is very sensitive to human activity.

B. The Sangha Trinational protected area actually consists of three different national parks belonging to Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Congo. Most of the 7,500,000m² of land is unaffected by humans and features various plants and animals found in tropical forests, including Nile crocodiles, elephants, gorillas, chimpanzees and the fierce goliath tigerfish. Many of the species living there are endangered, as are some tree species, like the Mukulungu, which are cut down on a large scale elsewhere.

C. The Sichuan Giant Panda Sanctuaries in China actually include seven nature reserves and nine scenic parks in the Qionglai and Jiayin Mountains. It is believed that the forests themselves are more than 65 million years old. After the tropical rainforests, they are the most plant-rich areas in the world, as they are home to nearly 6,000 unique plant species. This is also where more than 30% of the world's pandas live, alongside other endangered animals such as the red panda, the snow leopard and the clouded leopard.

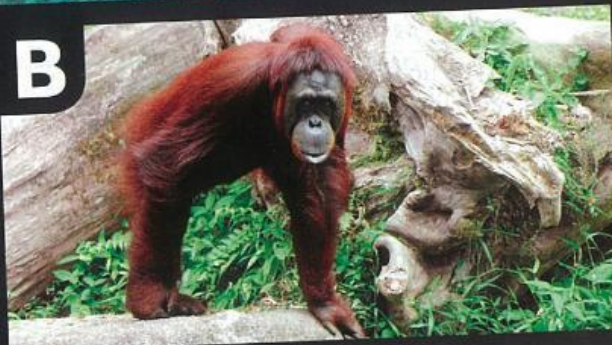
GALLERY



A



B



C



D



D. The Los Glaciares National Park in the south of Argentina owes its beauty to the mountains that surround numerous glacial lakes, including the 160km-long Lake Argentino. This is where three glaciers meet and the falling icebergs echo like thunder as they hit the waters below. What many find amazing is the chance to see the glaciers moving back and forth as the seasons change. Among other beautiful species, the park contains black-necked swans, Chilean flamingos and Andean condors (one of the largest birds in the world when it comes to size and length of wings).

This World Heritage Site...

0. is the second best place in the world to find a large variety of plant life.
1. can be very easily negatively affected by humans.
2. includes structures that are made of small organisms.
3. allows you to see the activity of huge blocks of ice.
4. contains endangered trees.
5. is home to frightening tropical fish.
6. is made up of sixteen different sites.

0	☒
1	☐
2	☐
3	☐
4	☐
5	☐
6	☐



B In the following interview with a marine scientist, the questions have been removed. Write the letters of the questions (A-J) next to the appropriate numbers (1-8). There is one extra question that you do not need. Write the letters in the boxes as in the example (O).



BLUE WHALES

- O. _____
Yes, they can be up to 30 metres long and weigh more than 200 tons. Did you know that a whale's tongue on its own weighs as much as an elephant?
1. _____
They have a diet of krill, which are tiny animals like shrimp. At some points in the year they consume up to 4 tons a day!
2. _____
Actually, they have a unique way of feeding. They take a huge amount of water into their mouth and then they push the water out through baleen plates, which are like a fine brush. The water is forced out while the krill stay behind and are swallowed by the whales.
3. _____
They are believed to live around 80 to 90 years. Although the oldest blue whale measured was estimated to be around 110 years.
4. _____
Scientists can find the approximate age of a blue whale after it dies, by counting how many layers of earplugs it has.
5. _____
Blue whales live in all seas. In the summer they often feed in polar waters and then as winter approaches they go on long journeys towards the Equator.
6. _____
It might appear that they are not as they are usually seen swimming alone or in pairs. However, we do see them swimming in small groups and of course they are well-known for their complex way of communicating with each other, suggesting that in fact they are.
7. _____
Well, whales can communicate with each other at distances of up to 1,000 miles. They are probably the loudest animals on the planet. They sing to communicate and to attract a mate.
8. _____
They have very few. Occasionally they may be attacked by sharks or killer whales. Of course, they are also injured or killed each year when large ships accidentally crash into them and whale hunting still happens in some parts of the world. Blue whales are considered to be an endangered species.

- A. What age do blue whales reach on average?
- B. How many whales do you believe there are in the world?
- C. Do they have huge teeth like sharks - is that how they catch their prey?
- D. Are they sociable creatures?
- E. Is it true that blue whales are the largest animals on Earth?
- F. How about predators, do they have any?
- G. How did they calculate its age?
- H. What do blue whales feed on?
- I. Can you tell us more about that?
- J. Where can blue whales be found?

0 E

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- What other sea creatures do you find fascinating? Why?
- Would you like to observe whales or other sea creatures from up close? Why? / Why not?