3 READING

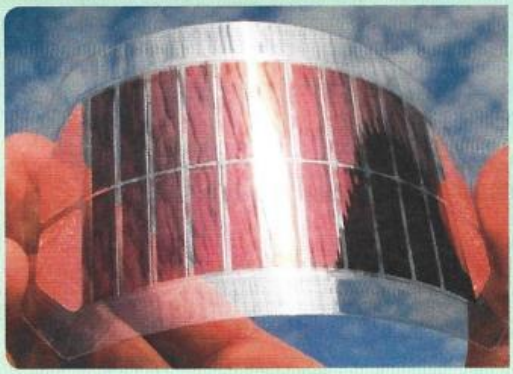
EXAM PREPARATION • Exercise 4: *Cambridge B1 Preliminary for Schools* Reading Part 3

ABOUT ARTICLES IMPACT ARCHIVE

The environment: It's not all bad news

We hear many worrying stories about the environment and how we need to change our habits to stop climate change. However, there are some good news stories out there that tell of a positive impact on the environment.

1 When beavers escaped from captivity and started a colony in an English river in 2008, many farmers were worried about the damage they would do. In fact, their presence has transformed the environment. The beavers created pools of water by constructing dams in streams. The pools have helped more plants to grow, provided new habitats for small animals and increased fish populations. Their dams have also slowed the water, which has helped to prevent flooding after heavy rain. They have also stopped dangerous chemicals from farms from polluting the river, making a huge difference to the water quality. Scientists believe bringing back animals such as beavers, wolves and bears will become an important part of environmental policy in many countries in the future.



2 Solar power is a great way to produce clean energy, but manufacturing the solar panels themselves is expensive and not very environmentally friendly. However, Australian scientists have developed a way to print solar cells directly onto flexible thin plastic sheets, which they believe is going to transform the way we think about solar power. These sheets can be produced cheaply and quickly, and scientists say they will be incorporated into the materials used to build homes. It's possible that soon we will be living in a house that generates the electricity we use every day. This will greatly speed up the production of sustainable energy and help countries to reach their clean energy targets.

3 Everyone knows how plastic waste damages our environment, and that despite many campaigns, it is going to be with us for many years to come. Fortunately, scientists in the UK may have found a way to tackle the huge mountains of plastic waste. The team at the University of Portsmouth used plastic-eating bacteria discovered in Japan in 2016 to create a 'super-enzyme', which can eat plastics and fabrics quickly and easily. Although some people say the only way to save the planet from the dangers of plastic is to reduce the amount we use, scientists hope that these new enzymes will be an effective way to reduce the amount of plastic waste that already exists. And that is certainly good news.

Glossary

dam – a barrier across a river that stops water from moving
super-enzyme – a powerful substance that helps a chemical change happen more quickly

An article

1 ★☆☆ Read the text. Match each story (1–3) to the correct subtitle (A–C).

1 ____ A Consuming waste

2 ____ B Nature knows best

3 ____ C Homes producing power

Skill UP!

When you come to an unknown word in a text, there are strategies to help you work out the meaning.

1 Identify the part of speech – noun, verb, adjective, etc.
2 Look for any clues in the word itself. Do you know any parts of it?
3 Look at the context – the words or sentences around the word.

2 ★☆☆ Read the *Skill UP!* Match the words from the text with the definitions.

1 ____ colony
2 ____ stream
3 ____ pollute
4 ____ policy
5 ____ material
6 ____ generate

A an agreed plan of action
B a group of plants or animals that live together in one place
C to add dirty or harmful substances to air, water or land
D a small river
E to produce
F a substance that something is made from

3 ★★☆ Read the questions and match them to the correct story (1, 2, or 3).

Which story ...

1 is about scientists improving on something they found in nature? 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐
2 is about scientists improving on an existing invention? 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐
3 is trying to solve a growing problem? 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐
4 mentions some positive things which no one expected to happen? 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐
5 is about an invention that could significantly reduce levels of greenhouse gases? 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐
6 begins with an accident? 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐

4 ★★☆ Read the text again. Choose the correct answers to complete the sentences.

1 Many of the environmental benefits have come from the beavers ...
- A building their homes on the water.
- B building barriers across the water.
- C hunting fish and smaller animals.
- D digging large holes.

2 In the future, it is possible that ...
- A buildings will have solar cells in their walls.
- B solar power will be the main source of electricity.
- C people will be able to print their own solar panels.
- D fewer buildings will be powered by the sun.

3 The super-enzyme developed in Portsmouth ...
- A can only eat things made from plastic.
- B cannot be used on things made from more than one material.
- C consumes plastic that nature cannot break down.
- D is based on a Japanese invention.

4 Campaigners believe that ...
- A it is more important to use less plastic than develop super-enzymes.
- B better recycling of plastic waste is the answer.
- C super-enzymes are the best thing we can do to beat the problem of plastic waste.
- D super-enzymes are unlikely to work.

5 ★★★ Answer the questions. Write complete sentences.

1 Which story did you find the most surprising? Which story do you think could have the biggest impact on the environment? Explain your answers.

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2 What wild animals still live in your country and what wild animals used to live there? Do you know what happened to them?

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