

INTRODUCTION

This book introduces topics related to global and social issues ranging from biodiversity to sustainable development. As you work with each of the sixteen topics, you will have opportunities not only to improve your English proficiency in reading, listening, writing and speaking, but also to develop your knowledge and understanding of the most important issues facing our world in the 21st century. In this book, I express my opinions freely. I hope you will express yours too. Please feel free to disagree with anything I have written.

Each of the 16 units consists of the following sections.

QUIZ/DISCUSSION/YOUR IDEAS

This section is intended as a warm-up activity. Please share and discuss your answers with other students. In some cases, you may need several minutes to prepare your answers.

LISTENING

You will probably need to listen to each conversation at least three times. The first time, just listen and try to understand the main points. Don't try to catch every word. The second time, listen and try to complete the outline. The third time, listen and check your answers. Then compare your answers with those of other students. Your teacher may then give you the correct answers.

READING

Try to focus on the content rather than the language. Read the whole passage to find out what it's about. Then read it again more carefully to get the main details. If you come across unfamiliar grammar, ask your teacher to explain it later. If you find a word you don't know, ask yourself if it's really important. If it is, try to guess what it means. If you can't guess the meaning, check the notes. If it isn't there, use your dictionary. When you are ready, try to answer the questions. Then ask your friends

the questions and compare their answers with yours.

WRITING

Read the relevant paragraphs of the reading passage and try to complete each sentence. Check your sentences for mistakes. When you have finished, read your summary aloud to a friend and listen to your friend's summary. If you are feeling confident, try to present your summary with your book closed!

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BIODIVERSITY

QUIZ

Try to match the pictures of animals with their home and their favorite food.

Ex. Polar bears



Example: Polar bears live in Alaska. They like to eat fish.

A. _____ live in _____. They like to eat _____.

B. _____ live in _____. They like to eat _____.

C. _____ live in _____. They like to eat _____.

D. _____ live in _____. They like to eat _____.

E. _____ live in _____. They like to eat _____.

ANIMAL : pandas penguins orang-utans llama koala bears

PLACE : China Peru Indonesia Australia Antarctica

FOOD : bananas grass fish bamboo eucalyptus leaves

LISTENING

Listen to the conversation and try to complete the outline.

The man has a _____.

The WWF is _____.

The WWF tries to protect _____.

Pandas are endangered because _____.

READING

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

How many different species are there on our planet? Nobody really knows, but estimates vary from 7 million to 100 million, of which only about 1.4 million have so far been identified. Most of these exist only in tropical rainforests, wetlands and coral reefs, and many are in danger of becoming extinct, as their habitats are destroyed by humans. Forests are burned by migrant farmers, and cut down by loggers. Wetlands are drained to create farmland. Coral reefs are blasted by fishermen using dynamite, and by workers constructing new harbors. In addition, global warming threatens to wipe out vast numbers of species which are unable to adapt to changing climate and conditions.

Under normal circumstances, we could expect up to ten species a year to become extinct. Yet the actual rate of extinctions is now thought to be more like ten species per day. Is this a problem? For the species concerned, it is. The last bear in Switzerland probably led a very lonely life until she was shot in September 1904. Others species have just as much right to exist as we do. However, the loss of biodiversity is a problem for humans too.



Among the thousands of species that will become extinct over the next few years will be medicinal plants that could cure diseases for which no cure currently exists, or with fewer of the side effects that current drugs have. Quinine, used to treat malaria, and the rosy periwinkle, the source of a cure for child

30 leukemia, both originated in tropical rainforests.

Wild species of food plants are also threatened. Many of these contain genes that could protect crops from the effects of global warming and from outbreaks of insect and fungal infestations. The world's population currently depends on just
35 three crops—rice, wheat and maize—for about half of its food supply. A crisis affecting any one of them could lead to widespread famine, as could the loss of the many insects that help the farmer, such as the bees that pollinate the crops and the worms that enrich the soil.

40 We depend not only on these countless species, but also on the fragile ecosystems in which they live. Rainforests help store carbon, the biggest cause of global warming. Wetlands help purify our polluted rivers. Coral reefs provide us with rich fishing resources. Without these natural assets, we would be in serious
45 trouble. Indeed, we would probably be headed for extinction ourselves.

Notes

conservation「保護、保存、保全」 endangered「絶滅の危機に瀕した」
wilderness「荒野、原生地域」 extinct「絶滅した」 species「[生物分類]種」
estimate「見積もり、推定値」 identify「確認する」 migrant farmer「移動耕作農民」
logger「木こり」 coral reef「サンゴ礁」 wipe out「絶滅させる」
biodiversity「生物多様性」 leukemia「白血病」 fungal infestation「カビの蔓延」
crisis「危機」 famine「飢きん」 fragile「こわれやすい、脆弱な」

1. Where do most of the world's species live?

2. Why are they in danger?

3. How fast are species dying out?

4. Why is the writer worried about the loss of plants like the rosy periwinkle?

5. Why are wild species of food plants so important?

6. How do insects contribute to our food supply?

7. How would the loss of rainforests affect our climate?

WRITING

Summarize what you have learned, using the following outline.

- ▶ Number of species

There are _____

- ▶ Habitats

Most of them live _____

- ▶ Threats

Many species may become extinct because _____

- ▶ Rate of extinction

The rate of _____

- ▶ Problems

The loss of plant species will affect us in two ways: _____

- ▶ The future

If this problem is not solved, _____

Now tell a partner what you have written.

GAME

The teacher will divide the class into teams. Each member will be given a word or picture to communicate to the other members of the team without saying it or showing it. The other members will try to guess it and write it down, using a bilingual dictionary if necessary. Each correct answer from each member will score one point.

Example: This is a large grey animal with big ears and a long nose. It lives in Africa. (What is the answer?)

