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Extinction of animals



Let's Think

1. Do you know the meaning of 'extinction'?
2. Can you name some animals which are extinct, or nearly extinct?

You are Keith. You are reading a letter to the editor in the newspaper about extinction of animals.

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to Jerry Lau's letter dated 11th July, 20XX suggesting that 'Human beings should be held responsible for the extinction of animals'. I totally agree with his stance and would like to express my opinions.

- 5 Many forests in the world have been logged because land and resources are scarce as a result of the ever-expanding world population. Deforestation destroys animals' habitats and puts them on the verge of extinction. In Hong Kong, there have been news reports about the sudden presence of boars wandering in the city. The reason for it is obvious—their habitat has been raided. Therefore, with deforestation going on in
- 10 many different regions, it is not difficult to understand why more and more animals in other parts of the world are losing their habitats, and are critically endangered.

- In addition, many species have become extinct owing to man's vanity. It is common to see posts on the Internet showing horrible photos of animals that are gasping their last breaths, including sharks with their fins cut, elephants with their tusks
- 15 removed, as well as tigers being poached for their skins. Besides the great pain, they are vulnerable to extinction as their populations are declining.

- To conclude, human beings are the culprit of any species' extinction. It's time for businesses to put aside their vanity and to stop economic activities that cause harm to animals' habitats. In my opinion, they have to be reduced without delay before
- 20 more species go extinct.

Yours faithfully,
Joanna Wong

(251 words)

Part A

Answer the following questions using the information from the letter to the editor. Choose the **BEST** answer and blacken **ONE** circle only.

- The main purpose of the letter is _____.
 A. to express one's view on a discussed issue
 B. to inform the public about a problem
 C. to argue with people with different stances
 D. to complain about a discussed issue
- In line 5, the word 'logged' can best be replaced by '_____'.
 A. planted
 B. felled
 C. rebuilt
 D. kept
- Boars are mentioned in the letter to the editor as an example of _____.
 A. a species with an expanding population
 B. a species whose habitat has been disrupted
 C. a species that is widely poached
 D. a species which once enjoyed rich resources
- Which of the following best reveals man's vanity?
 A. writing to a press to express concern about animal extinction
 B. logging forests for land and resources
 C. posting photos of injured animals online
 D. poaching animals for their body parts that can yield money
- The writer is probably in support of _____.
 A. Bel Land Development Limited
 B. Exotic Animal Trade Club
 C. The Alliance for Nature Conservation
 D. Jones Wooden Goods

Grammar Corner

We use the **connectives** 'because', 'as a result of' and 'owing to' to give reasons.

'Because' is followed by a clause.

e.g. *Many forests in the world have been logged because land and resources are scarce.*
(Line 5)

'As a result of' and 'owing to' are followed by a noun or a noun phrase.

e.g. *Land and resources are scarce as a result of the ever-expanding world population.*
(Lines 5-6)

e.g. *In addition, many species have become extinct owing to man's vanity.*
(Line 12)

Associate the keyword in each option with the possible stance the organisation or company takes on the issue addressed in the letter.

Part B

Answer the following questions using the information from the letter to the editor.
Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Jerry Lau is whom the writer wrote to express agreement with.

1. What is Jerry Lau's stance on animal extinction?

2. Why are land and resources scarce?


-  3. Look at the following pronouns and answer who/what they refer to in the letter to the editor.

Pronoun	Line	Reference
it	line 8	(a)
they	line 16	(b)
they	line 19	(c)

Note that the things which the pronouns refer to can be complexly structured. In other words, they should be precise and detailed rather than general.

4. Find phrases in the letter to the editor that are similar in meaning to the following:

almost and close to (<i>idm.</i>)	(a) _____ (para. 2)
to ignore temporarily (<i>phr. v.</i>)	(b) _____ (para. 4)
very quickly or soon (<i>idm.</i>)	(c) _____ (para. 4)

-  5. Look at the summary of the letter to the editor below. There is one mistake in each line. Underline the mistake and write the correct answer above the underlined word.

- (a) It is no exaggeration to say that businessmen are the ones who
(b) contribute to the increase in the numbers of certain species.
(c) They keep cutting down woods, which makes animals lose their
(d) habitats. In addition, they breed animals for their body parts. This is
(e) why many species are extinct.

Vocabulary Bank

The following are some habitats of animals. Match them with the correct pictures. One of the words is not used.

swamp coral reef coniferous rainforest polar region
tap water island lake desert fresh water



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



Let's Discuss

1. Can you suggest some ways to protect the habitats of animals?
2. Can you name one organisation that is known for preserving natural habitats? What has it done?