

Reading and Use of English Part 5: Multiple choice

Crisis and Commitment: Environmentalism in the United States

In the United States, environmentalism grapples with a complex tapestry of multifaceted challenges that significantly influence the nation's ability to safeguard its environment and respond effectively to pressing ecological concerns. These intricate challenges encompass climate change, political polarisation, the influence of economic interests, the imperative of sustainable resource management, and disparities in environmental justice.

A Perhaps the most existential challenge confronting environmentalism in the United States and worldwide is climate change. As one of the world's leading greenhouse gas emitters, the United States plays a central role in addressing this global issue. Despite international agreements and growing scientific consensus, the nation struggles to develop comprehensive policies that will not only reduce carbon emissions but also facilitate the transition to a low-carbon economy. Climate change represents a challenge that necessitates immediate and sustained commitment.

1 The author mentions international agreements on climate change to highlight:

- A the fact that the United States has no intention of honouring its commitments
- B the critical role that the United States has played in tackling the problem
- C the conflict between the United States' declared objectives and its ability to fulfil them
- D the agreements' ineffectiveness when it comes to developing thorough environmental policies

B The landscape of political polarisation in the United States has hindered the creation of coherent and enduring environmental policies. Environmental issues often become polarised, with contentious debates surrounding regulations and the role of government in environmental protection. To surmount this challenge, there is a critical need to bridge the political divide and cultivate bipartisan support for effective environmental policies. Addressing these issues should be viewed as a shared goal, transcending political affiliations.

2 _____

A _____

B _____

C _____

D _____

C The perpetual tension between economic interests and environmental preservation poses a recurring dilemma. Industries such as fossil fuels, agriculture, and manufacturing often find themselves at odds with environmental objectives. Striking a balance between promoting economic growth and minimising environmental harm represents an ongoing and intricate challenge. It calls for innovative approaches that encourage sustainable economic practices and responsible resource management.

3 _____

A _____

B _____

C _____

D _____

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D Another pivotal challenge in environmentalism is the management and conservation of natural resources. Issues like deforestation, habitat destruction, overfishing, and water scarcity raise significant concerns. Implementing sustainable resource management practices and finding equilibrium between resource exploitation and conservation represent fundamental, but formidable, challenges. These solutions will be essential in ensuring the preservation of vital ecosystems and species for future generations.

- 4 _____
- A _____
- B _____
- C _____
- D _____

E Economic justice issues are inextricably linked to environmentalism in the United States. These issues pertain to the disproportionate environmental burdens borne by marginalised communities, including air and water pollution, inadequate access to clean resources, and exposure to hazardous waste. Addressing these inequalities is paramount, and it necessitates the formulation of equitable environmental policies and the removal of disparities in environmental protection.

- 5 _____
- A _____
- B _____
- C _____
- D _____

F Environmentalism in the United States is confronted by a complex web of challenges. Confronting these challenges demands concerted and collective efforts from various sectors of society. It is crucial to recognise that environmental protection is fundamentally intertwined with ecological, economic, and social well-being. By acknowledging these challenges and working collaboratively toward sustainable solutions, we can aspire to preserve and safeguard the environment, ensuring a more equitable and sustainable future. These challenges, though daunting, provide opportunities for positive change and transformation on a grand scale.

- 6 _____
- A _____
- B _____
- C _____
- D _____

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Activity

In pairs or small groups: reading, writing and speaking

Aim

To help students better understand the role of distractors in the multiple-choice Reading task

Exam Focus

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Preparation

Make one copy of the worksheet for each pair or small group.

Time

25 minutes

Teaching notes

Procedure

- › Tell your students that this activity is about the multiple-choice Reading task, Reading and Use of English Part 5. Explain that they will have their own opportunity to create questions and multiple-choice options for a text, with the goal of tricking their fellow students into picking an incorrect answer.
- › Put students into pairs or small groups and give each pair or small group a worksheet. Point out that for the first paragraph, an example question with multiple-choice options has been provided. Give the students three minutes to read the first paragraph and choose the answer they think fits best according to the text.
- › After three minutes, elicit answers from each team; be sure to ask them why they chose the option they selected. Also ask about the incorrect options: do they see how they were written to distract them? (The answer that fits best is *C: the conflict between the United States' declared objectives and its ability to fulfil them.*)
- › After revealing the answer, point out that the key words in it (*conflict, declared, objectives, ability, fulfil*) appear nowhere in the paragraph and that this was done intentionally to conceal it. Tell your students to underline these words, and circulate to ensure that no words have been missed.
- › Now point out that the incorrect answers contain words that appear in the paragraph (e.g. *commitment, role, policies*) as well as synonymous language (e.g. *addressing this issue* and *tackling the problem, central and critical, comprehensive and thorough*) and that these were intended as distractors. Tell your students to underline these words and phrases, and circulate to ensure that no words or phrases have been missed.
- › Now assign a paragraph to each of the teams and tell them they have ten minutes to create a question and four multiple choice options for their paragraph. Ask them to do their best to conceal the correct answer while at the same time making the other options look like they might be correct. The goal is to trick another team into picking one of the incorrect answers.
- › Tell your students to write their question and multiple-choice options on the worksheet and a separate sheet of paper, which they will need later. While they do the task, circulate and provide support.
- › When the task is done, have each team pass their worksheet to another team. Now each team has three minutes to answer the question they have been given. After each team has answered their question, they reveal their answer, and the relevant team lets them know if they are correct.
- › Now ask the groups to add their question and options to the worksheet they have and then pass it along to another group. Now ask that group to add their question and options to the worksheet. Repeat this until each worksheet has all of the questions and options that your students have created.

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Possible answers

- 2 What do we learn about political polarisation in this paragraph?
A challenging environmental issues are the inevitable outcome of polarised politics
B unresolved political divisions obstruct the formation of constructive strategies
C addressing environmental issues will require the end of political affiliations
D debates are the only way to bridge political divisions and protect the environment
- 3 In this paragraph, the writer gives the impression that:
A environmental preservation is not a priority for the fossil fuels industry
B the government must intercede to resolve the conflict between industry and environmentalists
C the interests of businesses and environmental groups must be considered equally
D industry will not reform itself unless it is encouraged to do so by the environmental movement
- 4 By mentioning future generations, the writer seems to suggest that:
A issues like overfishing and water scarcity will have little impact in the present
B young people today have little ability to implement sustainable resource strategies
C those currently in power will not benefit from the preservation of the environment
D our failure to find solutions will ultimately lead to damage that is irreparable
- 5 How can the writer's argument in this paragraph best be summarised?
A environmental improvements would economically benefit marginalised communities
B people in vulnerable populations are inordinately impacted by environmental issues
C economic inequality will never be overcome without environmental equality
D more affluent communities are rarely affected by issues like air and water pollution
- 6 The writer uses the word 'daunting' to emphasise that:
A tackling these multifaceted challenges will be an intimidating undertaking
B the extent to which these challenges are intertwined will require extraordinary effort
C the opportunities provided by confronting these challenges will not be uniformly positive
D the collaborative nature of this effort will increase the scale of its complexity