


Unit 5 Saving tigers

Biology / Environmental studies:
Endangered animals


Reading skills: Interpreting factual data;
understanding logical connections

Writing skills: Summarising from factual data;
showing logical connections

1 SPEAKING

a  Discuss the questions.

- 1 According to international organisations, over 20,000 species of animals, fish and plants in the world are endangered. What are the main reasons for this? Think about:
 - places where they live
 - climate
 - what they eat
 - humans
- 2 Think about your own country. Choose one species you know is endangered. What are people doing to help? What do you think they should do?

b  You are going to read a text about tigers. How much do you know about them? Do you know (or can you guess) the answers to these questions?

- 1 Where do they mainly live?
- 2 Why are they endangered?
- 3 Approximately how many are there in the world?
- 4 Is the number increasing or decreasing?

2 VOCABULARY

Endangered animals

a Add a word from the box in each gap, and match them with their meanings below.

biodiversity conservation extinct
poaching population protected

- Costa Rica uses money from a petrol tax to spend on ¹_____ programmes.
- Although elephants are a ²_____ species, they are in serious danger from ³_____.
- The ⁴_____ of orangutans is declining, and they could become ⁵_____ in about 10 years.
- The Amazon rainforest is well-known for its ⁶_____ – there are thought to be about 2.5 million insect species, 2,000 animals and birds, and tens of thousands of different plants.

- a protecting natural areas and wildlife
- b the number of individuals
- c you're not allowed to kill them
- d killing or hunting animals without permission
- e the variety of different species
- f when a species no longer exists

3 READING

a Read the text on page 2. How close were your answers in 1b?

b Which is the best summary of what the article says?

- 1 Tigers are in serious danger but governments have started making efforts to protect them.
- 2 Governments have tried to protect tigers for many years but they are still in danger.
- 3 Tigers were in danger, but because of action by governments they are now out of danger.

c **Skills focus** Interpreting factual data

Below are some comments about tigers. From the information in the text and the table, which of them are true? Correct the statements that aren't true.

- 1 'The population has gone down by about half over the last century.'
- 2 'Numbers have dropped faster in the last 10 years than ever before.'
- 3 'Did you know that Bangladesh has the world's largest tiger population?'
- 4 'China and Indonesia aim to have twice as many tigers in 2022 as in 2011.'
- 5 'How many tigers are there in Cambodia? No-one knows exactly, but not many.'

STUDY SKILLS: INTERPRETING TABLES

What kind of information are tables mainly used for?

- comparisons between different numbers
- gradual changes over time
- descriptions of a process

Why is a table a clear way to show this kind of information?

Think about the other two kinds of information above. What would be a clear way to present them?



CRITICAL THINKING

IDENTIFYING THE AIM OF A TEXT

- 1 Do you think the main aim of the text is to ... ?
 - a give information
 - b persuade you to help
 - c entertain you
- 2 What features of language helped you to decide?
 - facts and figures
 - the style of writing: formal/informal? serious/entertaining?
 - opinions expressed in the article

IS THERE HOPE FOR TIGERS?



One of the most endangered species in the world is the tiger. Just over one hundred years ago, there were approximately 100,000 tigers living in different Asian countries. This number has dropped dramatically and there is now a population of between 3,200 and 3,500. Tigers now live in only seven per cent of the area that they once lived in. The most rapid decline in numbers took place between 1996 and 2006 when 40% of the tiger population disappeared. There is a very real possibility that the tiger will become extinct unless action is taken to save the species. The disappearance of the tiger would have an extremely negative impact on the biodiversity of many Asian countries.

There are two main reasons why tigers are in danger. These animals live in forests and many of these have been destroyed to create farms. Human populations have grown steadily in Asia and farming is necessary to feed people. Another serious problem for tiger conservation is poaching. Hunters kill tigers either for sport or because they want body parts. Some traditional medicines believe that the bones of a tiger can cure a wide range of illnesses. It should also be noted that until recently governments have not provided enough money for tiger conservation programmes.

In 2010, the heads of government of different Asian countries met in Saint Petersburg in Russia to agree on a conservation programme to save tigers. Key aims of the programme are to make sure that the environments in which tiger populations currently live are protected. They also decided to work together to stop poaching and to introduce laws and special police to control this illegal activity. They decided on some specific recovery goals to be achieved by 2022.

Country	Tiger population 2011	Estimated tiger population 2022; % increase
Bangladesh	440	550; 25%
Bhutan	75	90; 20%
Cambodia	10–30	50
China	45	90; 100%
India	1,411	2,100; 50%
Indonesia	325	650; 100%

Table 1: Example tiger conservation goals

In table 1 above we can see that the largest increase in terms of numbers will be in India where they aim to double the number of tigers. **Both** China **and** Indonesia aim to increase their tiger populations by 100 per cent. This will result in a significant increase in Indonesia. **By contrast**, Bhutan aims to increase its population by only 20%. **Similarly**, Bangladesh plans to increase its tiger population by 25% to 550 tigers by 2022. **Unlike** other countries, Cambodia did not know exactly how many tigers were living in their forests in 2011. However, they aim to have a population of 50 tigers by 2022.

If these goals are achieved, it could mark a turning point in tiger conservation and lead to the gradual reintroduction of tiger populations into areas where they have disappeared.

4 LANGUAGE FOCUS 1

Describing changes

- a** Add two words in each gap, one from box A and one from box B. Decide which word should come first, A or B. More than one answer may be possible.

A dramatically largest
rapid significant
steadily

B decline dropped
grown increase
rise

- Just over one hundred years ago, there were approximately 100,000 tigers living in different Asian countries. This number has _____ and there is now a population of between 3,200 and 3,500.
- The most _____ in numbers took place between 1996 and 2006 when 40% of the tiger population disappeared.
- Human populations have _____ in Asia and farming is necessary to feed people.
- In Table 1 above we can see that the _____ in terms of numbers will be in India where they aim to double the number of tigers.
- Both China and Indonesia aim to increase their tiger populations by 100 per cent. This will result in a _____ in Indonesia.

- b** Compare your answers with the text then answer the questions.

- Which of the words as used in the text are ... ?
a adjectives c verbs
b adverbs d nouns
- The word *decline* can be used as a noun or a verb:
Example: The population *has declined*. There has been *a decline in* the population.
Think of other verb-noun pairs, using the words in box B.
- Look at the adjectives and adverbs. Which mean ... ?
a a quick or sudden change
b the same change over a longer time
c a change which is important

- c** Make two sentences based on each fact below. Use expressions from 4a and 4b.

- Panda population in China:
2003 – 1,600
Now – around 2,000
- World human population:
1988 – 5 billion
2000 – 6 billion
2011 – 7 billion
2017 – 7.5 billion
- Orangutan numbers:
1910 – 200,000
1996 – 150,000
2006 – 50,000
Now – around 15,000



5 LANGUAGE FOCUS 2

Comparison and contrast

- a** Read the second to last paragraph of the text again and answer the questions.

- In what way ... ?
a are China and Indonesia the same
b is Bhutan different from China and Indonesia
c is Bangladesh similar to Bhutan
d is Cambodia different from the other countries
- Which highlighted expression(s) ... ?
a joins two nouns
b is followed by a noun phrase
c are followed by a comma, then a sentence
- Which two expressions refer back to the previous sentence?

- b** Rewrite these ideas, using an expression from 5a. There may be more than one possible answer.

- Germany has decided to close its nuclear power stations. Other countries in Europe haven't done this.
- In Britain it is illegal to shoot eagles. They're protected in other European countries too.
- Most large animals are declining in Europe. Wolves are increasing in number.
- Ice is melting rapidly in the Arctic. It's also melting rapidly in the Antarctic.

6 WRITING

- a** Look at the facts about tiger conservation goals in six more countries. Which countries ... ?

- already have a relatively large tiger population
- plan to have the largest increase (a) in numbers (b) in percentage
- hope to (a) double the number of tigers? (b) increase the number by half
- know their 2011 tiger population

Country	Tiger population 2011	Estimated tiger population 2022; % increase
Malaysia	500	1,000; 100%
Myanmar	85	120; 50%
Nepal	155	310; 100%
Russia	360	500; 50%
Thailand	200	300; 50%
Vietnam	10–20	50

Table 2

- b** Write a paragraph describing the facts in the table. Try to write it without looking at the text.
- c** Compare your paragraph with the second to last paragraph in the text. What improvements can you make?

7 READING EXTENSION

a Read the article. Choose the best description of Tiger Nation.

- 1 Tiger Nation is a website set up by the Indian government. They follow tigers and take photos of them, so that they can identify them and find out how many there are.
- 2 Tiger Nation is a project which aims to involve tourists in conservation. Tourists can upload photos and videos to help with identifying tigers and people can also follow the lives of individual tigers on the website.
- 3 Tiger Nation is a website set up by Julian Matthews to encourage tourists to visit tiger reserves. Tourists can take photographs and show them on the website and choose a name for their favourite tiger.

b Read the article again and make brief notes in answer to these questions.

- 1 How many tigers are Tiger Nation watching and where?
- 2 What are their aims?
- 3 How are they planning to track tigers?
- 4 What is 'citizen science'?
- 5 How can they identify the tigers? Why is this important?
- 6 Why are they giving the tigers names?
- 7 How does the website get money?

c How has Wakeeta's life changed as a result of the project? How do you think this might help her?

Can social media help to save tigers?

Wakeeta is a five-year-old tigress – a species which lives in constant danger of being killed for their skin or for traditional medicine. She lives in Bandhavgargh, one of India's most famous tiger reserves. Until now she has lived in secret, and only a few guides and visitors to the reserve knew about her. But this week she and 24 other tigers in Bandhavgargh have been introduced to an audience of millions by a new website.

Tiger Nation (www.tignation.org) uses social media to follow individual tigers. So far it is watching 50 in two reserves in India. The aim of the project is to follow the life of every tiger in India. With so few left in the wild – about 1,700 – it seems quite possible to do that.

One of the main people behind Tiger Nation is Julian Matthews, who 10 years ago founded TOFT (Tour Operators for Tigers), a campaign to develop responsible tourism as a way of helping with tiger conservation. He sees Tiger Nation as a powerful way to show how much tourism can help with conservation.

Tiger Nation are hoping to set up webcams in the national parks. 'We would really like to work with the government and we are talking to scientists who have been developing a camera tracking project,' Mr Matthews said.

The website is an example of what is known as 'citizen science', in other words science which involves ordinary

people rather than specialists. The website uses software that can immediately identify a tiger from its stripes so that visitor's photos of particular animals can be added to a database. The information is then available for scientists and organisations to help keep track of tigers and their movements.

For people who visit the website it's like a tiger soap opera. People can follow the story of a tiger from when it's a few months old to when it's 15 and king of its territory.

To increase people's interest, Tiger Nation are planning to choose names for all the tigers they are following. 'You call something T41 and it disappears and no one cares. You call it Sita and then it's "Where's Sita gone?" and you've suddenly got a story,' Mr Matthews told me.

The site will be funded mainly by subscription. Basic entry is free but access to the full site costs £14.99 a year.

In the meantime Wakeeta is rearing a family of her own: three healthy male cubs. They were seen with her, drinking at a waterhole, earlier this month. Someone reported it to Tiger Nation and Wakeeta now has the world watching out for her.

