

Class- xi
Subject - English
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Questions - Answers- The Ailing Planet.

A. Understanding the Text

Question 1:

Locate the lines in the text that support the title "The Ailing Planet".

Answer:

The following lines in the text support the title "The Ailing Planet".

"Are we to leave our successors a scorched planet of advancing deserts, impoverished landscapes and ailing environment.

A three-year study using satellites and aerial photography conducted by the United Nations, warns that the environment has deteriorated so badly that it is 'critical' in many of the eighty-eight countries investigated.

Question 2:

What does the notice "The world's most dangerous animals" at a cage in the zoo at Lusaka, Zambia, signify?

Answer:

The notice "The world's most dangerous animals" at a cage in the zoo at Lusaka, Zambia signifies that man is solely responsible for all the deterioration in environment and depletion of natural resources. Thus man is the world's most dangerous animal.

Question 3:

How are the earth's principal biological systems being depleted?

Answer:

The earth's principal biological systems are being depleted by excessive use. Over . fishing is quite common. Forests are being cut to obtain firewood for cooking. Grasslands are turning into barren wastelands and croplands are deteriorating as their productivity has been impaired.

Question 4:

Why does the author agree that the growth of world population is one of the strongest factors distorting the future of human society?

Answer:

The growth of world population puts a severe strain on the earth's principal biological systems. Due to excessive human claims these reach an unsustainable level where their productivity is damaged. Development is not possible if world population continues to grow so rapidly. Increasing population brings hunger, poverty and unemployment.

B. Talking About the Text

Discuss in groups of four:

Question 1:

Laws are neither respected nor enforced in India.

Answer:

It is painful but true that laws are neither respected nor enforced in India. Let us take examples from everyday life. Almost everyone is conversant with the rule of the road. Still there are cases of wrong overtaking, lane jumping, signal jumping, over speeding and road rage. Our laws insist on compulsory elementary education up to the age of fourteen. Yet we find many illiterate teenager boys or girls of this age loitering around in lanes or employed in petty jobs in road side restaurants or as domestic servants. Our Constitution insists on the protection and improvement of the environment. The states have been given the responsibility of protecting forests and wildlife. Forests are being cut and illegal shooting of wildlife goes on. Similarly, there are laws regarding abolishing casteism, untouchability and bonded labour. But these remain on paper. In actual life, these are never put into practice. Hence, it can be concluded that laws are neither respected nor enforced in India.

Question 2:

Are we to leave our successors a scorched planet of advancing desert, impoverished landscapes and an ailing environment?"

Answer:

I fully agree with the view contained in the statement. There is every likelihood of such an eventuality occurring in future. There are solid reasons behind this apprehension. Our resources are limited. They will not last indefinitely if we go on consuming them indiscriminately. Fisheries, forests, grasslands and croplands form the basis of the global economic system. They supply us food and raw materials for industry. Increasing population has put a severe pressure on them. Excessive use of these resources have impaired their productivity. In large areas of the world these systems have reached an unsustainable level. The results are awful and disastrous. The fisheries will collapse, forests disappear, grasslands will become barren wastelands and croplands will lose their fertility. Decimation of forests will increase dryness and heat and there will be less rainfall. Hence there is a possibility of the earth becoming an overheated place full of increasing deserts, poor landscapes and ailing environment in future.

Question 3:

We have not inherited this earth from our forefathers; we have borrowed it from our children'.

Answer:

This is a revolutionary statement by Mr. Lester Brown. It focuses attention on the position of man in this universe. People take it for granted that the earth is theirs as they have inherited it from their forefathers. They forget the fact that the real owners of the land are our children. We are only custodians or trustees and we must continue development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs. We must not strip the natural world' of the resources future generations would need. In our effort to feed the increasing millions, we are plundering the heritage of our children. We have open overusing

natural resources for our present purposes. Destruction of natural resources will create an ailing environment. Our consumption of non-renewable resources should be checked. We must preserve natural resources and hand them over to children intact as they are the real owners.

Question 4:

The problems of overpopulation that directly affect our everyday life.

Answer:

Overpopulation causes many problems in every day life. The three basic human needs—food, cloth and shelter have assumed alarming proportions. Fisheries, forests, grasslands and croplands are under severe strain. In many areas they have reached an unsustainable level. People resort to over fishing to obtain protein. Forests are being destroyed to obtain firewood. Grasslands are becoming deserts. Artificial fertilizers have improved the productivity of croplands. Overpopulation hinders development and adversely affects the spread of education and health care among the masses. It is observed that the poor beget more children. It only leads them to unending poverty. More children does not mean more workers but merely more people without work. Thus over-population leads to unemployment. Public transport proves insufficient. We see long queues everywhere. In short, overpopulation leads to deterioration in environment and shortens our lives by causing many diseases.

C. Thinking About Language

The phrase 'inter alia' meaning 'among other things' is one of the many Latin expressions commonly used in English.

Find out what these Latin phrases mean:

prima facie'

ad hoc

ad infinitum mutatis mutandis

caveat

tabula rasa

Answer:

Prima facie: on the first view

Ad hoc: for the special aim

Ad infinitum: up to infinity

Mutatis mutandis: with necessary changes

caveat: a warning that particular things needs to be considered before something can be done

Tabula rasa: a smooth tablet

. Working with Words

I. Locate the following phrases in the text and study their connotation:

gripped the imagination of

dawned upon

ushered in
passed into current coin
passport of the future

Answer:

gripped the imagination of: have powerful effect on imagination
dawned upon: became obvious; began to realize for the first time
ushered in: to make something new begin
passed into current coin: become a part of current usage
passport of the future: a thing that enables us to achieve something ‘

II. The words grip, dawn, usher, coin, passport have a literal as well as a figurative meaning. Write pairs of sentences using each word in its literal sense as well as the figurative sense.

Answer:

Grip:

- (i) She gripped on to the railing with both hands.
- (ii) Terrorism has gripped the country for the past five years.

Dawn:

- (i) A new technological age has dawned.
- (ii) It dawned on me that they couldn't possibly have met before.

Usher:

- (i) The Secretary ushered me into his office.
- (ii) The change of management ushered in fresh ideas and policies.

Coin:

- (i) Every coin has two sides.
- (ii) She coined a phrase to explain her meaning.

Passport:

- (i) I showed my passport to the security
- ii) Hard work alone is the passport to success.

. Notice these expressions in the text.

Question 1:

Guess their meaning from the context.

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Answer:

A holistic and ecological view: a complete view of the whole thing keeping in mind the inter relationship of constituents among themselves and to environment.

Sustainable development: development that can be continued for a long time.

Languish: forced to stay somewhere.

Ignominious darknes: disgraceful/humiliating darkness.

Inter alia: among other things.

Decimated: destroyed.

Catastrophic depletion: disastrous exhaustion.

Transcending concern: surpassing concern.