

The Deforestation Debate – Against Deforestation.

Deforestation is the permanent destruction of rainforests in order to make the land available for other uses. Without question, the principal threat to the world's rainforests are human beings. It is estimated that rainforests are being cut down at the rate of 100 trees per minute. To put this into **perspective**, while you read this sentence an area the size of 78 Olympic sized swimming pools will have been destroyed. Despite there being **legitimate** reasons for this destruction: **provision** of fuel, wood or paper and land clearance for farming, mining or cattle ranching, there are broader consequences that must be considered.

Most importantly, deforestation is adding to the greenhouse effect. The greenhouse effect is the natural process by which the atmosphere traps some of the Sun's energy, warming the Earth enough to support life. However, Scientists believe that the greenhouse effect is too strong and this is causing the Earth to become warmer and warmer. Moreover, too much carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the air are making the greenhouse effect stronger. As a result of deforestation, less carbon-dioxide is being absorbed and less oxygen is being released into the atmosphere. Therefore deforestation is directly linked to climate change which in turn is causing environmental damage such as flooding and hurricanes.

Some people believe that planting more trees to replace the ones they have destroyed, is a solution to the problems caused by deforestation. Many countries have reforestation projects to ensure that some of the damage caused by the destruction of rainforests is lessened. Nevertheless this can be **problematic**, as the soil needs to be carefully prepared for replantation and in addition, some species of tree can take years to grow back. Alternatively, if faster growing trees are planted these might not provide the same habitat for the **native** animals.

Another strong point made in the argument against deforestation is the destruction of habitats. Rainforests have very complex eco-systems, this means that they support many different species of plants and animal. Many species are **interdependent**, meaning that they may not survive without each other. For example, the orangutan is now an endangered species. Over the past 20 years, more than 80% of the orangutan's habitat has been destroyed. The orangutan has a massive impact on the ecosystem of the Borneo Rainforest as they play a vital role in seed **dispersal** thus providing food for other animals and humans who live in the forest. Surely we must prevent deforestation to protect these vital eco-systems!

Furthermore, these eco-systems not only affect people living in these areas but the rainforests also provide the rest of the world with food such as: bananas, coffee, cocoa, rice, potatoes, nuts, oranges and figs. Although these may not be the plants or trees which are directly affected by deforestation, as previously discussed, due to the interdependence of all species in the rainforest, some of our favourite foods may also be at risk. Imagine not being able to buy your favourite chocolate bar or grab a healthy banana at snack time!

Finally, not only does a great deal of the food we eat come from rainforest plants, but also about a quarter of the medicines we use come from plants. Currently 25% of the medicines we use contain rainforest materials and this is only the tip of the iceberg – fewer than 10 percent of tropical forest plant species have been examined for their medicinal value. Surely by continuing with deforestation we must be limiting our chances of finding cures for deadly diseases!

In conclusion, it is obvious that deforestation is harmful to the environment, to eco-systems and to habitats, therefore by continuing with deforestation to supply our immediate needs, we are not considering the long-term effects. If we put a stop to deforestation, we may not have the same number of fast-food restaurants but we will have air to breathe and medicines to cure diseases!

The Deforestation Debate – For Deforestation.

Deforestation is where large areas of forest are cleared to enable people to make better use of the land. Although many people believe that deforestation causes damage to the environment and is responsible for the destruction of eco-systems, there are equally worthy reasons as to why it is necessary and of value.

Firstly, rainforests are not only destroyed by human beings, they can also be destroyed by nature. For example: the August 2005 hurricane 'Katrina' affected five million acres of forest. Large parts of forest are also destroyed by floods. Surely it is better that we **utilise** the products instead of them being wasted due to these natural disasters.

In addition to this, the resources that we gain through deforestation are vital to our quality of life. Many people rely on rainforest wood for building houses, making furniture and manufacturing paper. Furthermore, a high **proportion** of our food, such as meat and crops, are farmed on rainforest land. Certainly, without deforestation there would not be enough land to provide all the beef needed to supply the 34,492 McDonald's restaurants around the world!

As a result of deforestation and the using of the trees in the logging industry, millions of people have been provided with jobs. This industry has also helped the governments in poor countries create an income and now these people depend on the money that is created. Don't you think the lives of these people are worth more than trees?

Finally, areas of land that have been cleared to provide wood for the logging industry have been replanted with new trees. Moreover, these new forests can help combat climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Combined with the Sun's energy, the captured carbon is **converted** into trunks, branches, roots and leaves via the process of photosynthesis. Consequently, deforestation could actually be **beneficial** to the environment.

In conclusion, despite there being **valid** reasons against deforestation such as damage to eco-systems and the contribution to climate change, there are also positive reasons for deforestation. Due to the planting of new trees, there may not as much damage to the environment as some people think. Deforestation creates income for people around the world and must continue if we are to maintain our quality of life – how would we survive without paper to write on, toilet roll and fast food restaurants?

By Sarah Bailey

The Deforestation Debate – Oral Teacher Questions

Use your own words to explain what deforestation is. (AF2) **Deforestation where rainforests are destroyed so the land can be used for other reasons.**

Can you find an example of a fact used to persuade the reader against deforestation? (AF2) **It is estimated that rainforests are being cut down at the rate of 100 trees per minute.**

Can you find an example of where the author has used their opinion to persuade the reader against deforestation? (AF2) **Surely we must prevent deforestation to protect these vital eco-systems!**

Why is deforestation bad for the environment? (AF3) **Cutting down trees means that less carbon-dioxide is absorbed and less oxygen is released into the atmosphere.**

What reason does the author give to argue that planting new trees doesn't solve the problem? (AF3) **Some species of tree can take years to grow back.**

Why does the author write, 'while you read this sentence an area the size of 78 Olympic sized swimming pools will have been destroyed'? (AF4) **To put it into a context that the reader can understand.**

The author writes that 25% of the medicines we use contain rainforest materials being only the 'tip of the iceberg'

- What do you think this means? (AF5) **That although some medicinal plants have been found, many more rainforest plants probably have medicinal properties.**
- Why do you think the author used this comparison? (AF6) **Personal response – Something like: because in the water you can only see the tip of an iceberg usually the iceberg is much bigger underneath the water.**

In the argument 'Against Deforestation', how does the writer link the conclusion to the introduction? (AF4) **In the introduction the writer states that there are broader consequences of deforestation to consider and in the conclusion the writer summarises what these consequences are.**

In the argument 'For Deforestation' why does the author say we should chop down trees rather than let them be destroyed by floods or hurricanes? (AF2) **It would be a waste of resources for the trees to be destroyed by natural disasters.**

In both arguments, what audience do you think the text is aimed at? Give evidence from the text. (AF6) **The audience is young people who might go to fast food restaurants. The author writes, 'how would we survive without paper to write on, toilet roll and fast food restaurants?' so presumes the audience needs these things too. The key words are also explained – deforestation, interdependence. The author presumes the audience doesn't know what these mean.**

- Can you find any examples of modal verbs? (AF5) **Will, must, can, might, may, could.**
- Why has the writer used this type of language? (AF5) **Modal verbs express certainty, probability or possibility so they can be used in a debate text to add strength to an argument or to add doubt if the author isn't confident in their facts.**

What evidence is there that rainforests can also be destroyed by nature? (AF3) **The August 2005 hurricane 'Katrina' affected five million acres of forest.**

Which argument For or Against Deforestation do you think is the most persuasive? Why? (AF6) **Personal Response – Hopefully children will think Against Deforestation is most effective, they may notice there are less arguments for deforestation, as well as more modal verbs to add doubt to the facts. The arguments are also quite selfish and don't consider long-term consequences for the planet.**

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The Deforestation Debate – 4a – Teacher Questions

Use your own words to explain what deforestation is. (AF2)

Can you find an example of a fact used to persuade the reader against deforestation? (AF2)

Can you find an example of where the author has used their opinion to persuade the reader against deforestation? (AF2)

What reason does the author give to argue that planting new trees doesn't solve the problem? (AF3)

Why does the author write, 'while you read this sentence an area the size of 78 Olympic sized swimming pools will have been destroyed'? (AF4)

The author writes that 25% of the medicines we use contain rainforest materials being only the 'tip of the iceberg'.

a) What do you think this means? (AF5)

b) Why do you think the author used this comparison? (AF6)

In the argument 'Against Deforestation', how does the writer link the conclusion to the introduction? (AF4)

In the argument 'For Deforestation' why does the author say we should chop down trees rather than let them be destroyed by floods or hurricanes? (AF2)

In both arguments, what audience do you think the text is aimed at? Give evidence from the text. (AF6)

Can you find any examples of modal verbs? (AF5)

Why has the writer used this type of language? (AF5)

What evidence is there that rainforests can also be destroyed by nature? (AF3)

Which argument For or Against Deforestation do you think is the most persuasive? Why? (AF6)

The Deforestation Debate – Vocab 1

Write the meaning of each of these words. (AF2)

perspective _____

legitimate _____

provision _____

problematic _____

native _____

interdependent _____

dispersal _____

utilise _____

proportion _____

converted _____

beneficial _____

valid _____

Write the meaning of each of these words. (AF2)

perspective – the way you see something

legitimate – being right or acceptable

provision – the act of providing or supplying something

problematic – something that poses a problem or is difficult to solve

native – a kind of plant or animal that originally grew or lived in a particular place

interdependent – when objects or people rely on each other for survival

dispersal – the movement or transport of seeds away from the parent plant

utilise – to make use of especially for a certain job

proportion – a part or amount considered in relation to a whole

converted – to change from one form to another

beneficial – producing a good result

valid – sound; just; well-founded

Task A

Re-write the following sentences choosing the correct synonym for the purple word in each case.

The team were **interdependent** on each other to win the game.

When she spoke to her friends, she always gained a different **perspective**.

There was a huge **dispersal** of germs when the girl sneezed.

In the Vimto factory, they **utilise** four separate machines.

The school trip to the seaside was always **problematic** for the teachers.

viewpoint

reliant

employ

spreading

difficult

Task B

Choose the correct word from the list below to fit in the following sentences.

He had moved from his _____ country due to the lack of work there.

The man gave the police a _____ reason for climbing through the window.

The striker _____ the free kick into a penalty.

In their report, the inspectors found the _____ of care to be excellent.

When signing the agreement she made sure that she would receive the correct _____ of the profits.

At the checkout, the shop assistant checked the card to ensure it was still _____.

The head teacher decided that it was _____ for the school to build a swimming pool.

beneficial

native

proportion

legitimate

provision

valid

converted

Task A

Re-write the following sentences choosing the correct synonym for the purple word in each case.

The team were **interdependent** on each other to win the game.

The team were **reliant** on each other to win the game.

When she spoke to her friends, she always gained a different **perspective**.

When she spoke to her friends, she always gained a different **viewpoint**.

There was a huge **dispersal** of germs when the girl sneezed.

There was a huge **spreading** of germs when the girl sneezed.

In the Vimto factory, they **utilise** four separate machines.

In the Vimto factory, they **employ** four separate machines.

The school trip to the seaside was always **problematic** for the teachers.

The school trip to the seaside was always **difficult** for the teachers.

viewpoint

reliant

employ

spreading

difficult

Task B

Choose the correct word from the list below to fit in the following sentences.

He had moved from his **native** country due to the lack of work there.

The man gave the police a **legitimate** reason for climbing through the window.

The striker **converted** the free kick into a penalty.

In their report, the inspectors found the **provision** of care to be excellent.

When signing the agreement she made sure that she would receive the correct **proportion** of the profits.

At the checkout, the shop assistant checked the card to ensure it was still **valid**.

The head teacher decided that it was **beneficial** for the school to build a swimming pool.

beneficial

native

proportion

legitimate

provision

valid

converted

Devices to build cohesion

Connectives can be used to provide cohesion within and between paragraphs.

- ◆ Most importantly, deforestation is adding to the greenhouse effect.
- ◆ Furthermore, these eco-systems not only affect people living in these areas but the rainforests also provide the rest of the world with food.
- ◆ In addition to this, the resources that we gain through deforestation are vital to our quality of life.

Choose the best connective for each sentence:

evidently

alternatively

nevertheless

- ◆ _____ it seems that people continue to destroy the rainforests despite it being harmful to the environment.
- ◆ _____ deforestation may actually be beneficial to the environment.
- ◆ _____ a great deal of research has been done to prove that deforestation has an impact on climate change.

Now, write three sentences of your own either for or against deforestation using these connectives:

clearly

on the whole

as a result

Devices to build cohesion

Connectives can be used to provide cohesion within and between paragraphs.

Choose the best connective for each sentence:

evidently

alternatively

nevertheless

- ◆ **Nevertheless** it seems that people continue to destroy the rainforests despite it being harmful to the environment.
- ◆ **Alternatively** deforestation may actually be beneficial to the environment.
- ◆ **Evidently** a great deal of research has been done to prove that deforestation has an impact on climate change.

Now, write three sentences of your own either for or against deforestation using these connectives:

clearly

on the whole

as a result

Children should be able to do this if they have understood the arguments in the deforestation debate and decided which side of the argument they agree with.