

Reading Comprehension

Directions: Read the following two passages carefully and answer the questions according to the information therein. Each question has four choices, A-D. choose the best alternative.

The Shrinking Earth: Ecological Threats

1. In 1977, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UNESCO jointly published an alarming map of the spread of deserts across the world. Shaded in orange, pink, and red were all the areas in danger of desertification. The coloured patches are a major part of the developing world outside the rainy equatorial belt. In Latin America, they covered northeast Brazil, central and northern Mexico and stretched right down the Andes as far as Chili. They ate into the Horn of Africa and much of the southwest of the continent. And without interruption, they reached halfway around the globe in a broad swath from the Atlantic coast of the Sahara, right across North Africa and the Sahel, through the Middle East and Persia to Pakistan and northwest India.
2. There could be no more graphic expression of the ecological dangers that threaten so much food production, and so many livelihoods in the developing countries. The world is losing precious agricultural land at twice the rate that new land is being broken for farming. An area greater than Great Britain is disappearing every year. Soil is being exhausted, eroded, and blown away at the rate of two and a half billion tons per year. By the end of the century, the world may have to support one and a half times its present population on only three-quarters of its present cultivated area.
3. In this report on the state of the environment in 1977, United Nations Environment Programme Director, Mostafa Tolba, warned that, if present trends continue, there would be only 0.15 hectares of farmland per person by the year 2000, half the 1975 level. Productivity would have to double merely to allow people to get the same amount of food as today, these are the figures on which he based that cultivation: in 1975 there were 1240 million hectares under cultivation. Over the next 25 years, perhaps another 300 million new hectares may be opened up but over the same period 600 million hectares half the entire 1975 cultivated area may be lost of these, half will probably disappear under the ink-blot spread of cities, which are expanding horizontally twice as fast as the populations are growing and over some of the best agriculture land. The other 300 million will be the toll of soil degradation.

4. At least half of the total erosion will be in the world's 45 million square kilometers of potentially productive but ecologically precarious dry lands, which stretch through a hundred nations. About 700 million people live in this zone, almost all of them in developing countries, and 18 million live in areas that are currently undergoing rapid desertification.

5. Everywhere the deserts are advancing. In Sudan, the southern edge of the Sahara moved south by 100 km between 1958 and 1957. The deserts do not march forward on a solid front, like an army. Patches appear, like those at Aorema in Burkina Faso, around centers of population or watering holes, then spread, link up with others, and finally merge into the desert itself.

6. The chief agent of what has been called leprosy of the soil is man, and the impact of his activities on highly sensitive and delicately balanced ecosystems. The prime factor in the process is population increase. The number of people in the Sahel, for example, is doubling every 25 to 30 years. We can see everywhere the consequences of this among settled farmers: the cutting down of fallow periods, progressive decline in the vegetation cover, and increasing erosion. As population goes on growing cultivation is pushed into areas that are entirely unsuitable for agriculture, and there the process progresses even more rapidly.

Taken from English four, ETC, department of English

Direction: Answer the below questions based on the passage above

1. According to paragraph 2, how much of our soil is getting out of use every six months?

A. [1.75 billion tons](#)

B. [2.50 billion tons](#)

C. [1.50 billion tons](#)

D. [1.25 billion tons](#)

A. 1.75 billion tons

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

B. 2.50 billion tons

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

C. 1.50 billion tons

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

D. 1.25 billion tons

Correct [Next Question](#)

- **Explanation:** the annual soil erosion rate (2.5 billion tons) and divided by 2 to get the six-month rate = 1.25 billion tons

2. Which paragraph could be cited as a good example to show that the continent of Africa has been seriously affected by desertification?

A. [paragraph 1](#)

B. [paragraph 5](#)

C. [paragraph 4](#)

D. [paragraph 6](#)

A. paragraph 1

Correct [Next Question](#)

- **Explanation:** specifically mentions the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region as affected by desertification.

B. paragraph 5

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

C. paragraph 4

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

D. paragraph 6

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

3. In relative terms, which one of the following factors contributes more to desertification?

- A. [cultivation of land unsuitable for farming](#)
- B. [increase in the amount of erosion](#)
- C. [decrease in land left uncultivated](#)
- D. [decline in vegetation covering the areas](#)

A. cultivation of land unsuitable for farming

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

B. increase in the amount of erosion

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

C. decrease in land left uncultivated

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

D. decline in vegetation covering the areas

Correct [Next Question](#)

- **Explanation:** The passage emphasizes the role of population growth, which leads to increased pressure on land, deforestation, and overgrazing. These factors ultimately contribute to desertification.

4. Which one of the following sentences best summarizes paragraph 2?

- A. the world is losing its precious agricultural land at an alarming rate.
- B. the amount of cultivable land is decreasing while the population remains constant.
- C. soil degradation is a serious problem threatening people in developing countries
- D. the amount of cultivable land population growth are inversely proportional.

A. the world is losing its precious agricultural land at an alarming rate.

Correct [Next Question](#)

- **Explanation:** Paragraph 2 focuses on the rapid loss of agricultural land and soil degradation

B. the amount of cultivable land is decreasing while the population remains constant.

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

C. soil degradation is a serious problem threatening people in developing countries

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

D. the amount of cultivable land population growth are inversely proportional.

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

5. What does the phrase, the ink blot spread of cities (paragraph 3) mean?

A. spread of cities along the main roads.

B. establishment of a city to be followed by another in a short distance

C. establishment of megacities on farmlands

D. establishment and spread of cities into the farmland

A. spread of cities along the main roads.

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

B. establishment of a city to be followed by another in short distance

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

C. establishment of megacities on farmlands

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

D. establishment and spread of cities into the farmland

Correct [Next Question](#)

- **Explanation:** The phrase implies that cities are expanding rapidly and encroaching on agricultural land

6. How many Africa countries have specifically been mentioned as those in danger of desertification?

A. 2

B. 5

C. 4

D. 3

A. 2

Correct [Next Question](#)

- **Explanation:** The passage mentions Sudan and Burkina Faso.

B. 5

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

C. 4

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

D. 3

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

7. What is the main idea conveyed in paragraph 1

- A. deserts affected developing countries more than they did the developed ones.
- B. Africa has been more seriously affected by deserts than Latin America.
- C. the areas outside the rainy equatorial belt have not been affected by deserts.
- D. FAO and UNESCO have shown a serious concern about desertification problems.

A. deserts affected developing countries more than they did the developed ones.

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

B. Africa has been more seriously affected by desert than Latin America.

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

C. the areas outside the rainy equatorial belt have not been affected by deserts.

Incorrect [Try Again](#)

D. FAO and UNESCO have shown a serious concern about desertification problems.

Correct

- **Explanation:** Paragraph 1 introduces the global problem of desertification, highlighting the extent of the affected areas