

# Endangered species

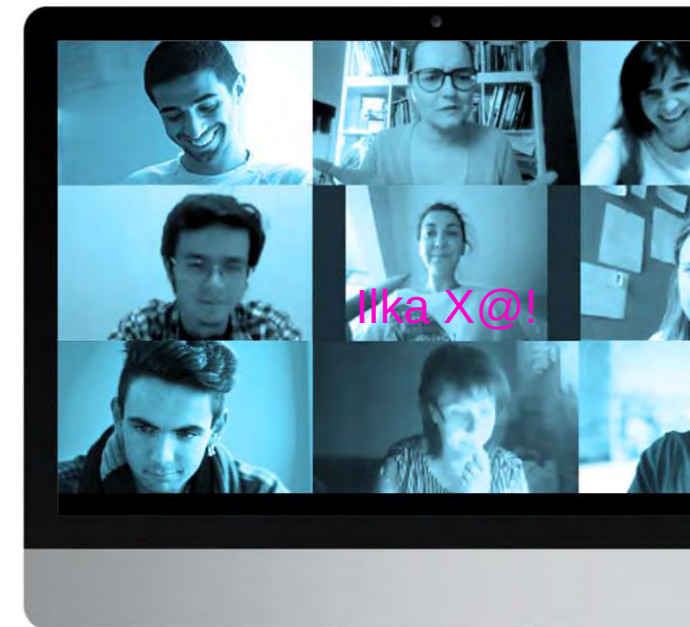
Theme:

Travel, Holidays and the Environment

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# Before we start, please make sure...

- ✓ **your name on Zoom is clear (use Latin letters)**
- ✓ **your camera is on and mic is off (unmute when needed)**
- ✓ **you are in a quiet area that helps you focus**
- ✓ **you have a notebook or a note app ready to take notes**

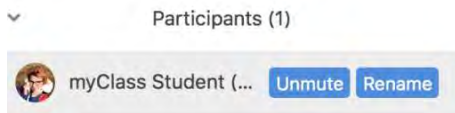


# Zoom features

Check your audio and video settings



Use Latin letters for your name

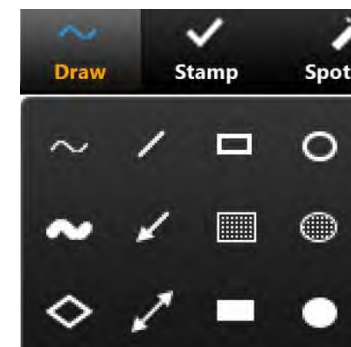


Ask questions in the Chat or use Reactions

Share Screen when the teacher asks



Use Annotate when a screen is shared



Use Save to make screenshots

# Welcome to English Online



## How does it work?

**You need to complete all three parts to get the most out of English Online.**

Prepare before class



Live class  
+  
After-class speaking session  
(optional)



Practise after class

# After-class speaking session

**Stay back after class for 5 or 10 minutes to talk to your classmates from around the world.**

**This extra speaking practice will help you...**

- improve your conversation skills
- practise using language learnt in class
- support and help your fellow students
- practise using English in a natural context
- become a part of a global learning community



# Pre-lesson activities

## Prepare



An appeal to save endangered species

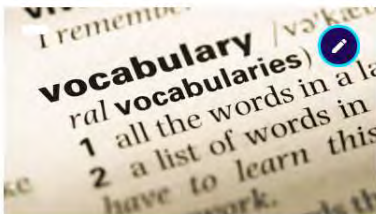


An appeal to save endangered species



An appeal to save endangered species

## Practise



Collocations used in an appeal



Collocations used in an appeal

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## Lesson objective

**What do you expect to learn by the end of this class?**



# Lesson objectives

In this **live** part of the lesson, you will **argue** in favour of an endangered species of animal to be adopted by a school.

You will also **review the vocabulary** that you learned **before** the lesson.

## Highlighted skills:

Speaking (live class) and listening (before and after the lesson)

## Language focus:

**Vocabulary:** collocations to talk about environmental issues

**Functional language:** phrases for persuasion



# Lead-in

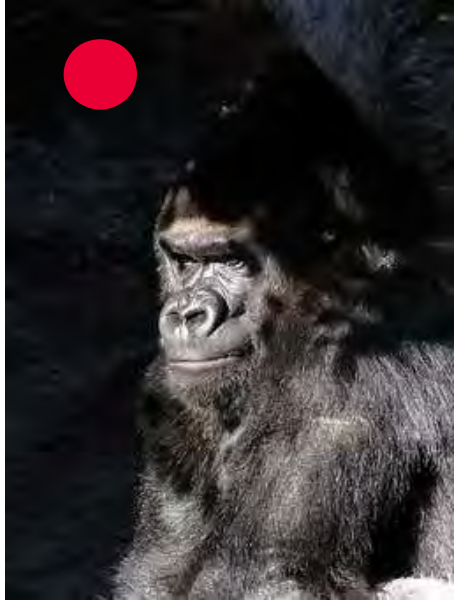
Group these animals into critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable (according to WWF)





## Answers

### Lead-in



# Language focus 1: collocations

**endearing features**

**critically endangered**

**fragile habitat**

**thick fur**

**dramatic decline**

**grave threat**

**high intelligence**

**ruthlessly hunted**

**iconic creatures**

# Language focus 2: phrases for persuasion

Replace the *italicised* parts of the sentences with your own ideas related to environmental issues.

1 *The majestic snow leopard roams through the harshest winter known to man in the Himalayas, and other mountainous regions of Central Asia,* but for how much longer?

2 *The shy, retiring orang-utan* is recognisable by its characteristic colouring, high intelligence and endearing features.

3 *The gentle giant of the sub-tropical rainforests of Borneo* faces extinction on an unprecedented scale.

4 It faces a two-fold threat, primarily from *illegal and unsustainable logging which is destroying its fragile habitat,* but also from *poaching of adults and capture of babies for the illegal pet trade.*

5 Are you willing to stand idly by and watch the dramatic decline of *both these species?*

6 Only with *your help* can this be halted.

7 We urgently need donations *to fund the ongoing conservation projects.*

8 Please call 0800 234 7616 or follow the link on our web page, *to preserve these animals for future generations*

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# Task





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# Task Preparation

Read the letter from a school head to a conservation website. What do you think the criteria should be in her decision?



I am the Head of Honstow Middle School and we would like to 'adopt' an endangered species as a school. The children are from mixed ethnic backgrounds and range in age from nine to fourteen. The younger children are more attracted to the 'cuddly toy' image of animals like the panda, whereas some of the older children would appreciate more of a challenge. I'd like your advice on a species we could adopt that would make the biggest impact and engage the majority of the children.

## Task Preparation 2

Now read the website's response. How similar is it to your ideas? Do you think the criteria are helpful?

A

It's been estimated that as many as 27,000 species are becoming extinct every year and it looks increasingly likely that we will have to choose where to target our limited resources. In terms of impact, we can take the following criteria into consideration.

**Value.** Is the animal in some way 'the last of its line'? Would a branch of the evolutionary tree die off with them? Does the species have unique anatomy or behaviour which makes it valuable? A species may also be valuable for economic, cultural or historic reasons.

**Impact on biodiversity.** It's important to protect 'keystone' species which are a necessary part of an ecosystem, for example, coral or pollinating bees. Likewise 'umbrella species', the protection of which also helps other species within the same environment, for example the Indian tiger, whose habitat also shelters other endangered plants, animals and insects.

**Likelihood of success.** Can you really do anything or is it too late? Do we know exactly what the problem is and do we have a solution? Consider, for example, the continuing high death rates of bees, which seems to be due to a terrifying spread of factors, some of which are improperly understood.

As for **engaging** the children, conservation organisations have traditionally used attractive, appealing 'mascot' species - usually the big mammals, to bring in the money, but it seems very unfair if conservation becomes a beauty contest - a point that you can impress upon your children. I suggest you have a look at the range of species currently endangered or vulnerable and weigh up the pros and cons.

# Task

You are going to argue in favour of an endangered species that you think Honstow School should adopt.

1. Your teacher will give you some information
2. Prepare your arguments
3. Present the case for your species to another group or to the class
4. When you've heard about all the species, take a class vote. Which species should Honstow School adopt?





# Task Card 1

## **Black rhino**

**Description:** One of the oldest groups of mammals. Can be described as living fossils. Three of the seven subspecies of black rhino have become extinct.

A huge source of revenue from ecotourism in Eastern and Central Africa countries. Valuable 'umbrella species' – their protection creates large blocks of land benefitting many other species such as elephants.

**Threats:** Main threat is illegal poaching due to rising demand for rhino horn. The market is strongest in S.E. Asia, particularly China and Vietnam, where traditional medicines contain rhino horn. Ninety-six per cent of Africa's black rhinos were killed between 1970 and 1992. Political instability and war have made it difficult to fight this trade, which is now on the increase again.

In captivity, they are susceptible to disease and show high mortality rates.

## **Mountain gorilla**

**Description:** Small populations remain in Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. In September 2015, estimated that less than 900 remain. Very social, shy and generally gentle and peaceful. Conservation work, often with the involvement of the local community and ecotourism has shown some success and numbers are beginning to increase, but still critically endangered and dependant on continuing conservation to survive.

**Threats:** War and civil unrest has led to movement of refugees and subsequent loss of rhino habitat, and an increase in poaching. They have been killed for their heads, hands and feet which are sold to collectors. Babies are sold to zoos or private owners.

Increased contact with tourists and researchers has made the gorillas susceptible to human disease – they can die from the common cold. Small numbers in isolated groups has led to signs of inbreeding appearing.

## Task Card 2

### Asian elephant

**Description:** The largest living land animal in Asia. The only remaining species of the genus *Elephas*. The population has declined by approximately 50% over the last 60 years. Highly intelligent and self-aware, research is showing that they exhibit grief, altruism, compassion and use of tools. A flagship species, used to raise awareness of conservation issues. Of huge importance culturally and economically in Asia. Used ceremonially in Hindu traditions and used to work as timber carriers in inaccessible areas.

**Threats:** The main threat is loss of habitat from encroachment of settlements, roads, railways, etc., resulting in human-elephant conflict over protection of crops. Elephants are increasingly confined to "islands" as they cannot migrate or mix with other herds.

They are also poached for their ivory and skin. The loss of the big males with large tusks, is increasing the dangers of inbreeding.

Wild elephants are also captured for use in the timber or tourist industries, often resulting in the elephant's death.

Zoo populations are not sustainable – they die younger and have a lower birth rate and higher infant mortality rate than in the wild.

### Bluefin tuna

**Description:** Atlantic bluefin tuna can grow up to 4 metres long and weigh up to 450kg. Their size, speed (up to 64km/h) and power are remarkable. All tunas are warm-blooded, which is rare for fish, but the bluefin has the most highly developed ability to thermoregulate, allowing it to survive in cold water. It's a top predator in the food chain and plays an important role in maintaining balance in the marine habitat.

Now extinct in the Black Sea. Has declined by 90% in the Atlantic since the 1970s.

**Threats:** The main threat is the global demand as a food fish, particularly in the sushi trade. Bluefin is overfished and attempts to impose controls have not been successful.

Aquaculture of tuna is not sustainable. Young tuna are captured from the wild before they have had time to reproduce, to be raised captive in pens. Tuna farming has also decreased prices so fishermen now need to catch twice as many to make the same money, using ever more sophisticated techniques.



# Task Card 3

## **Polar bear**

**Description:** Found around the Arctic. Polar bears are at the top of the food chain and have an important role in the overall health of the marine environment. Over thousands of years, polar bears have also played a key role in the cultural and spiritual life and economies of indigenous Arctic peoples, and continue to do so today.

Polar bears need sea ice in order to hunt and survive and so are directly and quickly affected by climate change, meaning that they are a crucial 'indicator species' for the effects of climate change on wildlife as a whole.

Eight of the nineteen subpopulations are declining.

**Threats:** The biggest threat is climate change and the loss of sea ice. Without sea ice the bears can't hunt and are now suffering from malnutrition, or even starvation in some cases of females with cubs. Increased shipping and developments of gas and oil also pose a threat.

As sea ice disappears, the hungry bears are forced onto the land and into contact with human populations, which doesn't usually end well.

## **Axolotl** (Ax-oh-lot-ul)

**Description:** Also known as the Mexican walking fish, it is in fact an amphibian, related to the salamander. They are found exclusively in the Xochimilco Lake complex beneath Mexico City. It eats small fish and worms and can live up to 15 years.

There is some mythological connection with Xolotl, the dog-headed Aztec god, but stories vary. It is popular in aquariums because of its grotesque – or adorable – appearance, depending on your point of view. The axolotl's main claim to fame is as a laboratory animal, firstly because of its ability to regenerate limbs, and secondly the fact that it does not metamorphose as it grows, and keeps its larval features such as gills, as an adult. This is called 'neoteny' and is extremely rare.

**Threats:** For the above reasons, the axolotl is unlikely to die out in captivity, but its numbers have declined drastically in the wild. In 2010 the species was declared near to extinction. This is largely due to the draining and pollution of Lake Xochimilco as a result of the growth of Mexico City. Some waterways and channels still exist where the creature may be able to survive.

## Feedback

Good use of the target language.

Points to remember:

ice = uncountable [we can say 2 ice sheets, ice caps, pieces of ice, etc.]

# Review

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# Lesson materials

## Make sure you have

- **downloaded the \*.pdf with this presentation**
- **saved the Zoom Chat**



How can you make more progress?

**Complete the Progress activities online.**



# What's next?

New

## Travel, Holidays and the Environment

6 lessons

Travelling abroad brings us new experiences and stories to tell. It can also present challenges to those living and working in a new culture. Environmental issues are hot topics. Find out about solutions for global warming and choose the most newsworthy stories. Support an endangered species and reflect on how you can contribute to a greener way of life.





# After-class speaking session

**You can talk about any topic that interests you!**

**Use these questions as a guide, if needed.**

- How do you feel about the use of animals for medical research?
- Are there laws about hunting in your country?
- Would you eat an animal that you killed yourself?
- Do you think people should buy and wear fur coats?
- Should animals be kept in a zoo?

For help, contact:

[support.englishonline@britishcouncil.org](mailto:support.englishonline@britishcouncil.org)

**English Online** | [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)

## **Dos**

- ✓ Treat everyone with respect
- ✓ Keep your camera on and on mute
- ✓ Let others share ideas too
- ✓ Listen to everyone
- ✓ Click 'Leave' if you cannot attend

## **Don'ts**

- ✗ Don't take pictures or recordings
- ✗ Don't share personal details
- ✗ Don't let your children be onscreen

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# What do you think?

Do you like the platform?

What did you think of the activities?

What further information do you need?

For more information, write to

**[support.englishonline@britishcouncil.org](mailto:support.englishonline@britishcouncil.org)**



# Teacher's Notes

This slide deck was made by Katherine Martinkevich

## Notes

*This lesson has lots of language and it may not be possible to complete all the language focus activities. You might want to spend less time on the lead-in and do just a few sentences in each language focus activity. The task handout has already been reduced from 12 animals to 6.*