

2a Reading

1 Read the text and for questions 1-6 choose the correct answer A, B, C or D.

The Great Migration



A Every year, after the rainy season one of the most incredible spectacles in the natural world takes place in East Africa. One and a half million wildebeest (Africa's famous large antelope) gather up their young and begin a 2,800 km trek across the plains of the Serengeti and Maasai Mara in search of food and water. This annual migration, which has been dubbed the 'Greatest Show on Earth', is the largest mass movement of terrestrial mammals on the planet.

B The journey to find fresh, juicy grass is a dangerous one. Wildebeest must cross crocodile-infested rivers, survive strong currents, and escape the jaws of predators during their trek from the Serengeti in Tanzania to the greener pastures of the Maasai Mara in Kenya.

C Waterways are terrifying to wildebeest for two reasons. First, because of the animals' fear of the water itself and the crocodiles that live within it. Second, because water generally means vegetation and predators such as lions and leopards lie in wait for wildebeest in bushes as they enter and exit waterways. Wildebeest have an inbuilt instinct to move in a certain direction, though. Thus, they will cross rivers despite their terror.

D The most treacherous part of the wildebeests' entire journey is the crossing of the Mara River. Many lose their lives in the Mara either by drowning or in the jaws of hungry crocodiles, but there are other dangers too. In 2007, approximately 10,000

wildebeest drowned trying to cross the Mara River due to unusually strong currents.

E The sheer number of wildebeest and the drama of the crossings makes the Mara River the most popular spot for tourists who travel to Africa to witness the Great Migration. Interestingly, when wildebeest arrive on the banks of the Mara they do not cross it immediately. Instead, they gather, waiting to cross. For days their numbers build up, and for no apparent reason, they turn and wander away from the water's edge. Finally, one brave wildebeest steps forward and takes the first plunge into the river. This sets off a stampede, with every animal for itself, swimming and fighting to get to the other side.

F The animals that survive the Mara River crossing find themselves in the Maasai Mara plains, and it's time to feast on the juicy grass. Zebras, which join the wildebeest in their migration, form an excellent partnership with them. Zebras travel ahead of the wildebeest and, as they prefer long grass, take the first course, trimming it neatly for their friends at the back, who like it nice and short.

G The wildebeest remain on the Mara grasslands until the grass is gone. Then, they make their return trip back to the Serengeti to mate during the rainy season. The Serengeti is their breeding ground. By the time they arrive there, the grass will once again be green and lush. And so the cycle will begin again.

- 1 The 'Greatest Show on Earth' takes place because wildebeest
A are looking for food.
B have a natural instinct to keep moving.
C need to increase their numbers.
D are looking for a place to give birth.
- 2 At waterways,
A the greatest danger for wildebeest are the crocodiles.
B wildebeest will only move forward in a straight line.
C the natural instinct of wildebeest is to turn back.
D wildebeest become easy prey for big cats.
- 3 The Mara River
A is East Africa's most popular tourist spot.
B always has very strong currents.
C is where wildebeest face the highest risk of death.
D has more crocodiles than any other river in Africa.
- 4 The first wildebeest to cross the Mara River is
A the leader of the pack.
B the animal who reaches the river first.
C a random animal.
D the strongest swimmer.
- 5 Zebras and wildebeest
A eat different foods.
B eat different parts of the same plant.
C eat side by side.
D eat only tall grass.
- 6 With regards to grass, the Mara differs from the Serengeti in
A the amount of grass it has.
B how fast its grass grows.
C the season its grass appears.
D the type of grass it has.

2 Find words in the text with a similar meaning to the following words/phrases.

- **Para A:** unbelievable, assemble in one place, described
- **Para B:** journey, grasslands
- **Para C:** tends, specific
- **Para D:** dangerous, about
- **Para E:** actual, obvious, dive
- **Para F:** eat, alliance, cutting
- **Para G:** area, rich

What part of speech is each word?

3 Find words in the text which mean the opposite to the following words/phrases.

- believable • not immediately obvious
- precisely • small • not alarming • prey

4 Fill in: *incredible, natural, annual, terrestrial, currents, inbuilt, spot, breeding*.

- 1 John is addicted to TV documentaries which explore the wonders of the **natural** world.
- 2 The Lake District, which has got England's largest lake and tallest mountain, is a **popular** **spot** for hikers.
- 3 Unlike many of their marine cousins, most **terrestrial** mammals have got skin covered in hair.
- 4 It's not safe to swim in the river due to the strong **currents**.
- 5 The documentary was about penguins leaving the ocean to walk to their **breeding** ground of thick ice.
- 6 The swans will fly south when it's time for their **annual** migration before the winter.
- 7 Bears have got a(n) **inbuilt** instinct that motivates them to hibernate for the winter.
- 8 Have you ever seen the **incredible** spectacle of lights created by the Aurora Borealis?

5 Fill in: *waterways, pastures, plunge, crossing, banks, trek, migration, vegetation*.

During their 1) **migration** from the Serengeti to the green 2) of the Maasai Mara, millions of wildebeest face a treacherous journey. The wildebeest need bravery, particularly to cross the 3) **waterways** on this great annual 4) **migration**. Not only are the rivers infested with crocodiles, but the animals must also conquer their fear of water. The 5) **crossing** of the Mara River is the most famous challenge for these dedicated animals. The wildebeest wait for days on the 6) **vegetation** of the river. They feed on the 7) **pastures** there before finally taking the 8) **plunge** into the river. The wildebeest which survive will then be free to feed on the juicy grass of the Maasai Mara.