

READING

Extinct species

LEVEL

Upper-Intermediate
(B2)

NUMBER

EN_B2_1061R

LANGUAGE

English

Learning outcomes

- I can read a text about extinct species and understand its main ideas.
- I can give my opinion on the importance of protecting animals.





Warm-up

Can you give an example of an animal that has died out?



Do you know why it died out?



Reading

Read the text. **Answer** the question below.

Extinction is nothing new in the history of our planet. **Species** have been **dying out** for as long as life on Earth has existed, but the **rate** at which creatures are now becoming extinct *is* something new. In the past, the extinction of a species usually happened because of a natural event, either a sudden shock, like an **asteroid** hitting the Earth, or the more **gradual** warming or cooling of the planet which left some species **vulnerable**.



1. In the past, what caused animals to become extinct?



Reading

Read the text. **Answer** the question below.

However, in modern times almost all **extinction** events have been **caused by** human activity. Whether it is our clearing of land to make way for farming, man-made pollution, introducing **alien species** into certain environments, or even overhunting and overfishing, our everyday activities as humans damage our planet and kill off animals, birds and plants.



2. Nowadays, who is responsible for animals dying out?



Fill in the gaps

- 1 Introducing an _____ species can harm existing wildlife.
- 2 Many animals are in danger of _____.
- 3 Changing climates leave animals and plants _____ to extinction.
- 4 Our everyday _____ as humans also directly affect other lifeforms on our planet.
- 5 If a species _____ out, it becomes extinct.

vulnerable
alien
activities
dies
extinction



Work in pairs

1. **Choose** one of the reasons why animals become extinct.
2. **Write** a short explanation together in **breakout rooms** for how it leads to extinction.
3. **Share** your explanation with the class.

land clearance
for farming

pollution

introducing
alien species

overfishing or
overhunting



Use the internet to
research your reason!

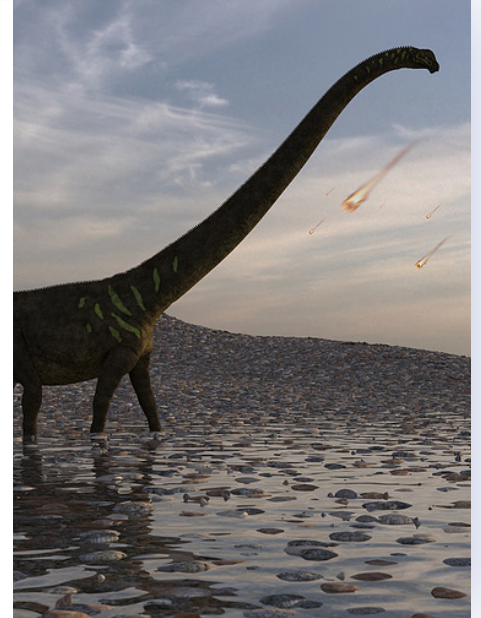


Reading

Read the text. **Answer** the questions below.

Perhaps the two best-known examples of species which have become extinct are dinosaurs and the dodo.

Most scientists agree that a large piece of space matter hit the Earth causing the dinosaurs to be wiped out. The dodo, however, might have been the first species that humans caused the extinction of.



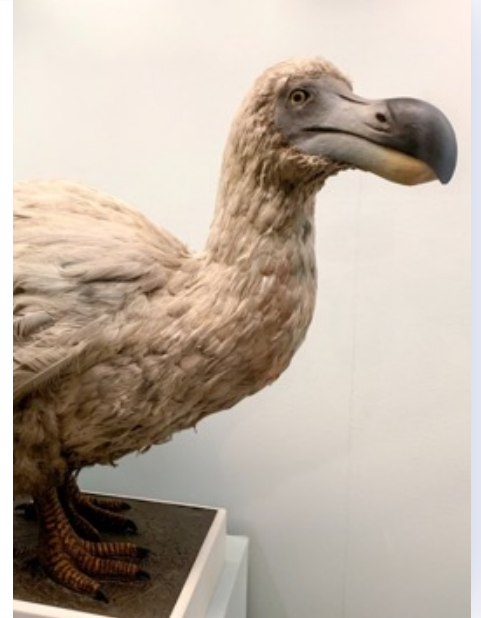
1. How was the dinosaurs' extinction different from the dodo's?



Reading

Read the text. **Answer** the question below.

Native to the island of Mauritius, the dodo was a **flightless** bird, known to humans for only 100 years. In that time, humans introduced alien species to the island, such as dogs and pigs, which damaged **nests** and ate eggs. Settlers in Mauritius also **destroyed** the dodo's forest **habitat**. By the late 17th century, the dodo had disappeared forever and it became a **symbol** of the damage humans can do to the planet.



2. What two things led to the dodo's extinction?



Reading

Read the text. **Answer** the questions below.

In fact, throughout the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries Europeans caused huge amounts of damage to native species wherever they went. In South Africa, an animal, called the Quagga, which looked like a half zebra half horse, and was **commonly** seen, became extinct in the late 19th century after it was **heavily** hunted by Dutch settlers. The Tasmanian tiger, found in Tasmania was finally made extinct in the early twentieth century thanks to hunting, along with the **destruction** of its habitat by humans.



3. What was a Quagga?
4. What happened to the Quagga?



Complete the sentences

Based on what you read in the text.

- 1 The dinosaurs were wiped out by...
- 2 The demise of the dodo was caused by...
- 3 The Quagga looked like a half...
- 4 The Quagga was native to...
- 5 The Tasmanian tiger became extinct due to...





Didn't an asteroid kill
off the dinosaurs?

Oh, yes! **That rings a
bell.**

We use this expression to mean, *that
sounds familiar* or *I remember that from
somewhere!*



Discuss

**Which of the animals that
were mentioned had you
heard of before?**

**How did you feel while reading
the text?**

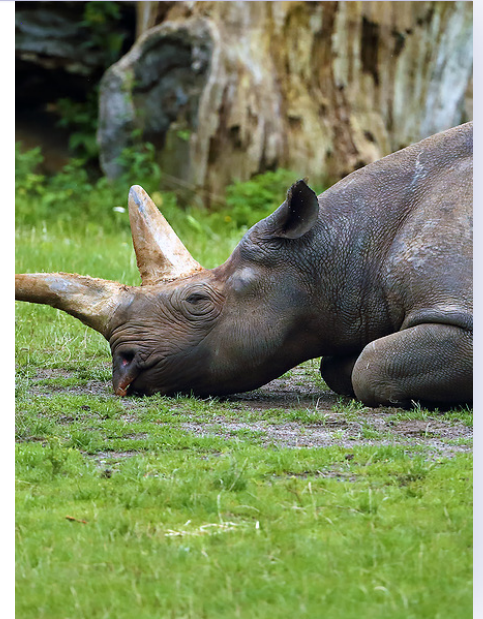




Reading

Read the text. **Answer** the questions below.

The West African Black Rhinoceros was an **endangered** species from the 1930s. Its horn was thought to have **medicinal uses** and this led to it being hunted. Efforts were made to **protect** the animal, but it was **declared** extinct in 2011. Another animal that is **practically** extinct is the Chinese River Dolphin, which lived in the Yangtze River. Despite having survived for 20 million years, China's **industrialisation** led to a **loss** of their natural habitat. Not a single one has been seen since 2002.

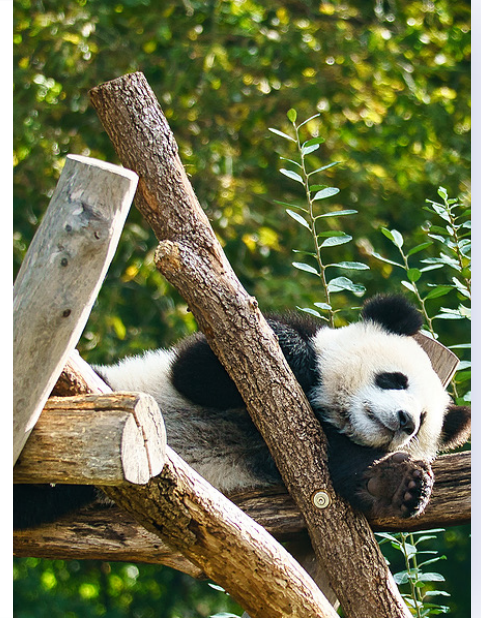


1. What caused the West African Black Rhino to become extinct?
2. Which other animal has almost died out?

Reading

Read the text. **Answer** the question below.

The Giant Panda is one of the best-known **endangered** species. Its **popularity** helped bring it back from being nearly extinct; so much so that it has recently been taken off the **endangered** list. The Orangutan is another animal which is endangered, due in large part to the **destruction** of their **fragile** rainforest habitat in Borneo. Huge efforts are being made to save them. These are only two examples; yet, thousands, if not millions, more creatures are endangered and may die out in the near future.



3. Which animal has been successfully saved from extinction?



Brainstorm





Discuss

How important is it to protect endangered species?



What do we lose when a species disappears?

End of the lesson

Idiom

to bite the dust

Meaning: to be destroyed or to die (informal)

Example: That's another species that **bit the dust** thanks to humans!



Additional practice



Fill in the gaps

Choose the correct word to complete the sentence.

- 1 An _____ species refers to an animal that is introduced into a particular habitat and not native to it.
- 2 The Javan rhino is one of the most _____ species in the world.
- 3 The mountain gorilla is one animal currently in danger of _____.
- 4 Human _____, such as hunting or overfishing, have a direct impact on wildlife populations.
- 5 Once a species has died _____, it's too late to save it.

alien
vulnerable
out
activities
extinction



Discuss

Can you give an example of an animal that was saved from extinction?



What do you know about this animal?





Write a social media post

Aim to write 30-50 words.

Find an example of a critically endangered animal.

Write a short social media post telling your friends it is at risk of extinction and what can be done to save it.





Answer key

P. 4-5: 1. Natural events.
2. Humans

P. 6: 1. alien
2. extinction
3. vulnerable
4. activities
5. dies

P. 8-10: 1. Dinosaurs' extinction was caused by natural events; the dodo was by humans.
2. Introduction of alien species to Mauritius; settlers destroying its habitat.
3. An animal in South Africa that lived until late 19th century.
4. It was heavily hunted by Dutch settlers.

P. 14-15: 1. Hunting
2. Chinese River Dolphin
3. Giant Panda

P. 21: 1. alien; 2. vulnerable; 3. extinction; 4. activities, 5. out



Summary

Talking about extinction

- *species; to die out; gradual; vulnerable; alien species;*
- *native; flightless; nests; to destroy; habitat; destruction; endangered; loss; to declare extinct.*
- *The orangutan is another **endangered** animal, due to the **destruction** of their habitat in Borneo.*

Reasons for extinction

- *Animals can go extinct for a variety of reasons such as from **land clearance for farming** and **pollution**.*
- *Some are closely related to human activity, such as **introducing an alien species** into a habitat or by **overfishing** or **overhunting** the animal.*



Vocabulary

species

to die out

gradual

vulnerable

alien species

native

flightless

nests

to destroy

habitat

destruction

endangered

loss

to declare extinct

land clearance

