

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

ENTRANCE EXAM SAMPLES

Reading. Sample Task

The following newspaper article is about an area in the north of India where people frequently travel in search of adventure. Read it carefully and then answer the questions.

The Himalaya mountains are a favourite destination of more and more people. Improved transport, access to previously forbidden areas, and the increasing number of specialised tour operators have all contributed to a rapid rise in the number of tourists entering the area in the last three decades. This increase has caused problems throughout the region and in Nandra Devi in particular. Now conservation work has started to try and improve the situation.

NANDRA DEVI NATIONAL PARK

Nandra Devi lies 530 kilometres northeast of Delhi and is regarded by people living there as the most beautiful of the Himalaya mountains. The surrounding area is called the 'Valley of the Lost Horizon' and is rich in animal, plant and bird life.

The Himalaya (which are a series of mountain ranges with valleys between them) are the world's highest mountains, and run from southeast to northwest. They separate India from China, and evolved 80 million years ago, when hard volcanic rocks were thrust against soft sedimentary crust, forcing it upward. This process continues, and the mountains rise by up to 8mm each year.

Nandra Devi National park opened to tourists in 1974 but, because there were no restrictions and no rules, the area had to be closed again in 1983 to give it time to recover from the destruction caused by the tourists. At the time of writing this article, the park is still closed.

Before the area was closed in 1983 the mountaineers, trekkers, naturalists, ornithologists, botanists, geologists and researchers who entered this area in their thousands had a devastating effect. There were three main problems as a result. The first problem was overgrazing, caused by the large number of pack animals needed to support expeditions. This meant that the natural vegetation was replaced by very much harder kinds of grass and other plants which the animals would not eat. The trouble was that the native wild animals wouldn't eat it either. Second, the porters who accompanied the expeditions to Nandra Devi were often not supplied with fuel for cooking or with tents for shelter. This meant that large numbers of trees were cut down both for cooking fires and to build shelters. Thinning out the forests eroded the topsoil and plant life was disturbed, causing unstable conditions. Third, the amount of rubbish increased and became a significant problem made worse by huge amounts of unused equipment which was just dumped by departing mountaineering expeditions. Medicines that had been left behind entered the water system. This caused river pollution and was harmful to wildlife. According to Dr Ahamed Patel of the Tenzing Conservation Institute, 'the dreadful consequences of this pollution will probably not be fully known for another two or more generations – drastic action is needed to stop things getting even worse.'

The area of Nandra Devi has been chosen as one of twelve areas in India which are going to be preserved as areas of special interest. It is certainly true that if it is going to be opened again to tourists there will have to be rules to make sure that the damage does not occur again.

1. Give two reasons why the number of tourists visiting the Himalaya area increased.
2. Give two reasons why the Nandra Devi area is special.
3. Why did the park have to close in 1983?
4. What was the main problem with the new types of grass?
5. Explain why the trees being cut down caused problems.
6. Based on what you have read, make a list of four points of advice which you would give to an expedition visiting Nandra Devi.
7. In paragraph 4 (*Before the area was closed ...*), find five words or phrases that are used to describe a negative impact on nature.

Reading. Sample Task

Read the following poem Southbound on the Freeway. The hero, a tourist from Orbitville, is describing some of the objects he saw during the journey in his own way of understanding. What objects are these and which words or phrases indicate them in the poem? Give six details.

Southbound* on the Freeway**

May Swenson

A tourist came in from Orbitville,
parked in the air, and said:

The creatures of this star
are made of metal and glass.

Through the transparent parts
you can see their guts.

Their feet are round and roll
on diagrams – or long

measuring tapes – dark
with white lines.

They have four eyes.
The two in the back are red.

Sometimes you can see a five-eyed
One, with a red eye turning

On the top of his head.
He must be special –

the others respect him,
and go slow,

when he passes, winding
among them from behind.

They all hiss as they glide,
like inches, down the marked

tapes. Those soft shapes,
shadowy inside

the hard bodies – are they
their guts or their brains?

* *towards the south*

** *a wide fast road in a US city that you do not pay to use*