

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

ENTRANCE EXAM SAMPLE TASKS

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

Reading. Sample Task 2

Read the following article about water, and then make a summary of the physical benefits water brings to humans.

Your summary should be one paragraph of no more than 100 words.

You should use your own words as much as far as possible.



Water is one of the oldest, most versatile and freely available health tonics used since time began. In all its three forms: ice, water or steam, it has been used to benefit both the inside and the outside of the human body. We sometimes take water for granted, but often forget to take advantage of it. During the hot summer months, we should enjoy water, while at the same time remembering not to waste it.

If we do not drink enough water, especially when the weather is hot, we risk dehydration; in other words, our bodies will begin to dry out. The human body is made up of about 70% water, and its main job is to regulate our body temperature at 37°C (98.6°F). When the body heats up, we sweat and this evaporation of the water from the skin allows heat to be drawn away from our body and it cools down.

Normally we need to drink eight glasses of water every day, but for more physically active people this can double. In the heat, it is easy to add on at least two more glasses to the minimum of eight. Don't wait to get thirsty before you drink! The brain will send you a message to drink water, but if you ignore the message, the brain gives up, particularly in young and old people. If you are thirsty, it means you are already dehydrated to a small degree, and you should reduce any physical activity and try to get away from the heat.

Water in all its three forms has been used for external pain relief. As an ice pack cold application, it can reduce body pain; hot packs increase blood flow locally to the area involved and reduce inflammation. Changing from hot to cold packs has proved very effective in reducing pain and swelling.

Swimming and aqua exercises are great ways to combine fun with workout activity during hot weather. Water gives a non-impact form of exercise and is a great way of getting a total body workout. Muscles do not get as sore as with high impact exercises, such as running. Hydrotherapy, using water to overcome problems such as muscle weakness, joint mobility and poor coordination, makes use of the buoyancy of water. In other words, because the human body floats in water, the pressure of weight is removed. Also, the warmth of water is useful for the relief of pain and helps muscles to relax. In addition, children benefit enormously from the freedom of movement that water gives them. By swimming regularly, we can keep blood pressure and diabetes under control. However, learning the right way to move and getting the technique right are important. Different movements get different muscles groups to work. Walking fast through water is useful for strengthening leg muscles and improves the fitness of the heart. Swimming is also useful for maintaining regular breathing rates.