

land is being claimed for agriculture and trees are felled for wood. A few thousand years ago, tropical rainforests covered as much as 12% of the land surface on Earth, but today this has fallen to less than 5.3%.

We can only hope that the world governments work together with environmentalists and

businesses to use their environmental knowledge and power to preserve the rainforests – awe-inspiring, beautiful and vital for our existence.

## After reading

### Exercise 1

Select the best answer to each of the following questions.

1. Rainforests can be found
  - a) only in South America
  - b) in many countries all over the world
  - c) in a small strip of land, mostly equatorial
2. Rainforests hold
  - a) more than half the world's species
  - b) less than half the world's species
  - c) approximately half the world's species
3. Rainforests are 'the lungs of the planet' because they
  - a) produce a large amount of oxygen and store a large amount of carbon dioxide
  - b) store a small amount of oxygen and produce a large amount of carbon dioxide
  - c) produce a small amount of oxygen and store a small amount of carbon dioxide
4. Rainforest tree leaves never touch the leaves of another tree
  - a) to make rain fall on the ground of the forest
  - b) to protect the trees from disease and insects
  - c) to give the forest animals more exercise
5. Rainforests make a difference to the world's water supply because
  - a) the humidity of the rainforests produces rainclouds
  - b) rainforests are very rainy places
  - c) the rainforests produce their own rain
6. Over the last few thousand years, the land covered by rainforests has
  - a) increased
  - b) decreased
  - c) stayed the same

## Answers

**Exercise 1:** 1. c; 2. c; 3. a; 4. b; 5. a; 6. b