

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.

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

Answers

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