Presentation

This course contains materials to help you mantain progress in your language learning, and to find solutions to problems in your academic and professional life. It will help you to acquire strategies and skills necessary for extracting information from texts written in English.

There are a lot of practical activities in which understanding written English is a necessity, and perhaps you have already had experience of some of them.

For example:

1 Understanding the instructions of modern video-games, such as: Super-Nintendo, Sega-Genesis, pocket games, etc.

2 Understanding manuals of PC Programs.

3 Understanding instructions to install and use imported articles.

4 Reading the labels on imported products.

5 Understanding songs.

These are only a few examples in which we can see how useful it is to know English, and it is clear that the most important of all is having access to the vast amount of information available only in this language.

We hope that the material fulfills your expectations at the same time offer you new experiences which will increase your knowledge and develop the strategies and skills for learning English.

1 Current Issues: Environment and Computers

Time to read! (1)

Which picture do you like best? Why?_____

Work with 5 other students.

Can you find a link between these pictures?

Can you work out a short story?

Choose a title for each drawing.

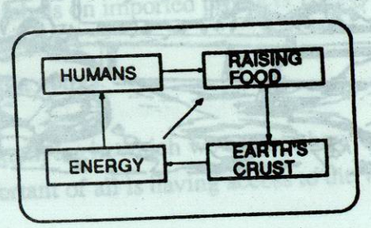
A) Man needs food.

B) Extraction of material from the Earth's crust.

C) Environment is a complex mixture of factors.

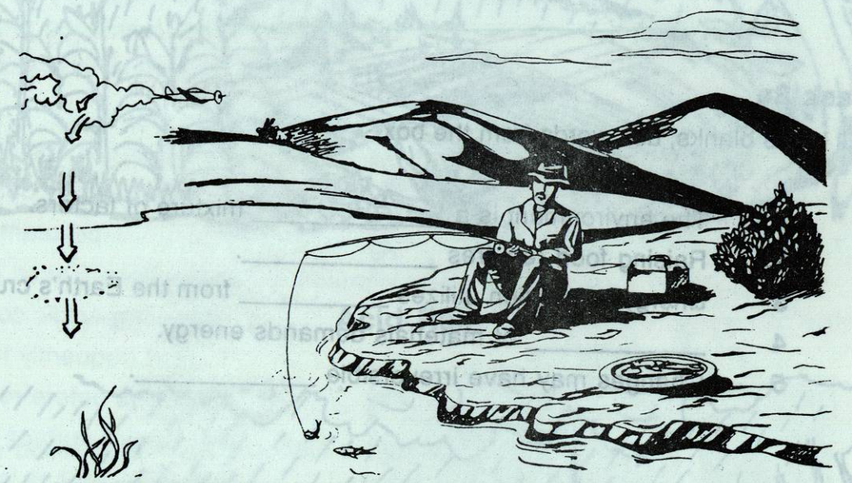
D) Man is a part of the ecosystem.

E) Irreversible consequences.



Environment

The environment is a complex mixture of factors which interact constantly with each other. Man needs food. Raising food requires energy. Energy production utilizes materials from the Earth's crust. The extraction of these materials demands energy, and all of these activities depend upon the labor and ingenuity of people who need food.



Pesticides do not break down easily and are very soluble in fat. Once in the water they are absorbed or eaten by tiny microorganisms and then make their way up the food chain. At each step up the chain the concentration of the toxic chemical increases.

So, when anyone of the factors in the environment is altered, either intentionally or accidentally, the repercussions are felt in the entire system. The human population, an integral component of the ecosystem, influences and ultimately is affected by these alterations. The environmental actions that man decides to take will affect everyone, and ill-considered changes may have irreversible consequences.

Save Your Environment !

Task 1

According to the text, write **T** or **F** *(True or False)* in the blank.

1 The environment is formed by one factor. ___
2 Energy production requires materials from the surface of the Earth. ___
3 The human population is not part of the ecosystem. ___
4 Ecosystem alterations affect the human population. ___
5 Changes may have unwanted results. ___

Task 2a

Fill in the blanks, use words from the box.

1 The environment is a _____ mixture of factors.
2 Raising food requires _____.
3 Energy production utilizes _____ from the Earth's crust.
4 _____ of materials demands energy.
5 Changes may have irreversible _____.

results, complicated, resources, mining, power

Task 2b

Find words in the text that mean about the same as those in the box. Write them in the spaces:

_____ _____ _____
_____ _____

☐ *Choose a "green" topic. Make a campaign poster for your school.*

Time to read! (2)

Normal Rain

Acid Rain

Acid Rain

Acid rain is one of the most controversial environmental problems in modern industrial society.

Burning fossil fuels has released vast quantities of pollutants into the atmosphere. These pollutants often form acidic compounds that frequently travel long distances before returning to the Earth's surface as rain or snow, as well as in dry form.

While the substances that produce acid rain also occur naturally, it is the man-made contributions that have transformed acid rain into an environmental problem of potentially global proportions.

Task 1

Underline the correct answer:

An example of fossil fuel is:

Alcohol | T.N.T. | Gasoline

Pollutants often return to the Earth's surface as:

Rain | Aerolites | Clean air

Cities that produce more pollutants are:

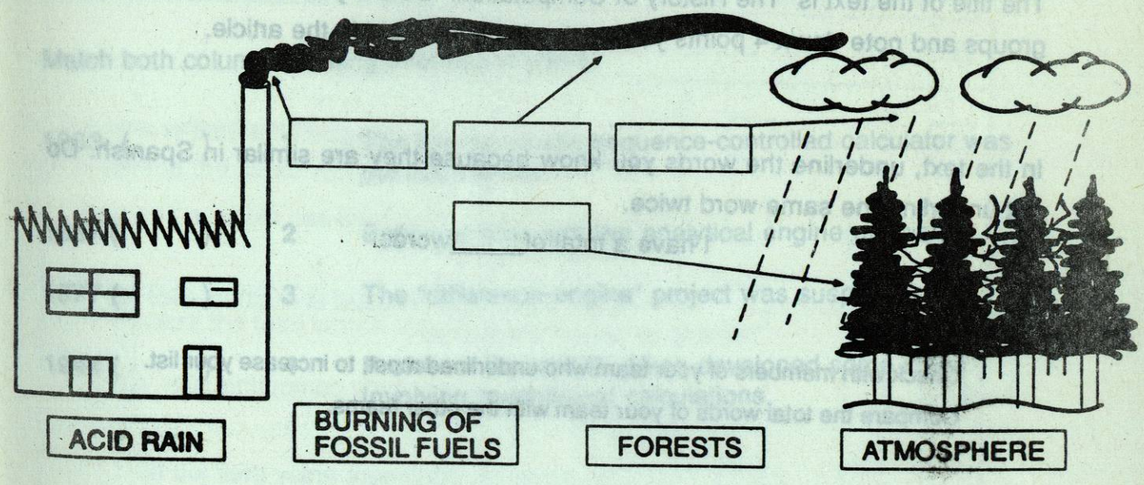
Cancun and Puerto Escondido | Mexico City and Monterrey | Palenque and Oaxaca

Acid rain may occur naturally as an effect of:

the sun | the moon | volcanic activity

Task 2

Fill in the boxes with the appropriate expressions.



❒ *Work in groups. Talk about these questions.*

A) How are you, your family, and your community affected by acid rain?

B) List at least three things that can be done about acid rain.

_____

_____

_____

Time to read! (3)

Work in teams.

The title of the text is "The History of Computation." Before you read the text, work in groups and note down 4 points you think will be included in the article.

In the text, underline the words you know because they are similar in Spanish. Do not underline the same word twice.

I have a total of_____words.

Check with members of your team who underlined most, to increase your list.

Compare the total words of your team with the other teams.

History of Computation

Automatic computation began in 1812 with Charles G. Babbage, an English mathematician who mastered the basic fundamentals of digital computers. His ideas were not appreciated until the last decade of that century. The major contribution of Babbage was the "difference-engine." In 1812, while looking a logarithm table full of mistakes, he began to think in terms of a machine capable of computing mathematical tables. However, Babbage took more time than anticipated to complete his model, as he became interested in a new idea. In 1833, while the "difference-engine" was suspended for a year, Babbage conceived the idea of building an analytical engine which would be capable of performing any calculation. Unfortunately, Babbage died in 1877 with his job unfinished.

More than a hundred years passed before another machine similar to the one visualized by Babbage was developed. In 1937, professor Howard G. Aiken, a physicist at Harvard University, developed some ideas involving mechanical calculations. Aiken worked with Harvard University and IBM, and seven years later (May 1944) an automatic sequence-controlled calculator was put into service.

Task 1

Match both columns relating events and years.

1833 ( )	1	The first automatic sequence-controlled calculator was put into service.
1937 ( )	2	Babbage died with the analytical engine unfinished.
1877 ( )	3	The "difference-engine" project was suspended.
1944 ( )	4	Professor Howard G. Aiken developed some ideas involving mechanical calculations.