

Opción B

Biodiversity

The year 2010 has been declared as the International Year of Biodiversity. Biodiversity is the variation of life forms within a given ecosystem, or on the entire Earth. It is often used as a measure of the health of biological systems. The biodiversity found on Earth today consists of many millions of distinct biological species. However, biodiversity is not distributed homogeneously on Earth. It is consistently richer in the tropics, where the number of animals and plants is enormous. On the other hand, it is less rich in polar regions where fewer species are found.

Biodiversity has always been subject to huge changes along time. Of all species that have existed on Earth, 99.9 percent are now extinct. Since life began on Earth, five major mass extinctions have led to large sudden drops in the biodiversity of species. The Phanerozoic eon (the last 540 million years) marked a rapid growth in biodiversity in the Cambrian explosion —a period during which nearly every class of multicellular organisms first appeared. The next 400-million-year period was distinguished by periodic, massive losses of biodiversity classified as mass extinction events. The most recent, the Cretaceous-Tertiary extinction event, occurred 65 million years ago, and has attracted more attention than all others because it killed the dinosaurs.

Today there is concern that the period since the emergence of humans is part of a huge reduction in biodiversity, caused primarily by the impact that humans are having on the environment, particularly the destruction of plant and animal habitats. The relevance of biodiversity to human health is becoming a major international issue, as scientific evidence is gathered on the global health implications of biodiversity loss.

1. Write **one of the following two** compositions:
 - a. Do you think humans should worry about the world's biodiversity? Give your opinion in at least 80 words.
 - b. Write a story of at least 80 words **beginning with** this sentence: "*One day, Brian decided he had to do something for the preservation of biodiversity*". Remember that the **14 words in this sentence cannot be counted in the 80 words you must write**.
2. Answer the following **two** questions:
 - a. Does the writer say that the number of animals and plants on Earth has always been the same? Explain your answer.
 - b. According to the text, have humans had any influence on recent changes in the world's biodiversity? Explain your answer.
3. Imagine you see someone starting a fire in a forest. Order him/her not to do so and give him/her a good reason for it.
4. Grammatical transformation.
 - a. Rewrite the following sentence in the negative-interrogative (one sentence only):
The relevance of biodiversity to human health is becoming a major international issue.
 - b. Rewrite the following sentence in indirect style (reported speech), beginning with the words *She said*:
The Cretaceous-Tertiary extinction event occurred 65 million years ago and has attracted more attention than all others.