

## CRISIS IN THE RAINFOREST

Just imagine that every second the surface of a football ground is cut down... over the years, more than half of the world's rainforests have been destroyed to make life in our industrialized countries more comfortable.

Tropical forests are the oldest and most complex ecosystems on earth, containing half of

5 the world's wildlife and

at least two thirds of its plant species. In Central and South America, western Africa and south eastern Asia, rainforest tribes have been living there for thousands of years, depending on it for their medicines, food and shelter\*.

10 Yet, incredibly, half of Central and South American rainforests have been cut down and burnt to make cattle farms and supply American hamburger fast-food chains or China and Russia with cheap beef. The second cause of deforestation is logging\*. Exotic trees such as mahogany\*

15 or teak are cut down to make costly furniture. Besides, rainforests have also been removed to extract metals and minerals like diamond, copper\* or gold. Recently, with oil research, forests have also been damaged by the construction of extraction sites, roads and pipelines.

20 Together with deforestation, many tribes have been forced to move away. The worst happened in the 1990s, when Yanomami Indians were massacred by gold miners to take their land, shooting them and introducing diseases such as small pox and tuberculosis.

25 Finally, on the one hand, intensive agriculture for export of tropical fruit, makes the soil poorer, forcing farmers to create new plantations, while on the other hand, indigenous people are destroying their forest to grow food simply to survive.

30 Consequently, with the destruction of their habitat, thousands of species of plants and animals have already

disappeared. Moreover, scientists estimate that by 2030, 20 % of them will become extinct if nothing is done to stop the process.

35 As a result, with less forest to absorb carbon dioxide, deforestation has still increased the threat posed to the world's climate because of the greenhouse effect.

To conclude, we should keep in mind that a quarter of our modern medicines originate from tropical forests even though we use hardly one percent of those amazing plants to fight leukaemia, malaria or hypertension... And whenever you consume cola, chocolate, bananas, coffee, spices or use products like rubber or deodorants, don't forget they were originally found in "virgin forests".

45 So take action and join ecology and conservation groups like "Greenpeace", "Friends of the Earth", "Rainforest Action Network" ...

adapted from *The Disappearing Rainforest*  
[www.pokemonultimate.wanadoo.co.uk](http://www.pokemonultimate.wanadoo.co.uk) and <http://ran.org>



**Shelter** : abri

**Logging** : abattage

**Mahogany** : acajou

**Copper** : cuivre

## Crisis in the rainforest

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I- Read the text again and answer the questions.

Right/Wrong (justify)

- a) Rainforest Indians cut the grass of football grounds in a second.
- b) Most plants and animals of the world originate from rainforests.
- c) Indians killed gold miners in the nineties.
- d) We know the benefits of all the rainforest plants to fight diseases.

II- Répondez en français aux questions suivantes:

- a) Qu'apportent les forêts tropicales à leurs habitants ?
- b) Quel rapport y-a-t-il entre ces forêts et la restauration rapide américaine ?
- c) Le sous-sol est-il également exploité ? Pourquoi ?
- d) Quels sont les points communs entre l'agriculture industrielles et celle des Indiens ?
- e) Quelles sont les différences ?

III- Relisez le texte, pour chacun des mots ou expressions suivantes retrouver sa signification :

English	French
Like	À cause de
Together with	D'autre part
Such as	En conséquence
On the one hand	Comme
While	D'une part
On the other hand	En même temps que
Consequently	En conclusion
Because of	Même si
To conclude	Tandis que
Even though	Tel que

## Crisis on the top of the world

In recent years, tourism and climbers expeditions in the Himalayan Region have increased drastically. During peak tourist season, there are about 700,000 tourists; and twenty to forty thousand of them attempt to ascend the mountains. However, there is no infrastructure to cope with the solid waste\* or pollution these people generate.

American climber Barry Bishop, leader of 'Sagarmatha Environmental Expedition', who first publicized the environmental problems, labelled the mountain "the highest junkyard\* in the world." For him, the situation on Mount Everest is "a major

ecological scandal by men and women who believe their personal conquests are more important than preserving the integrity of a unique natural site."

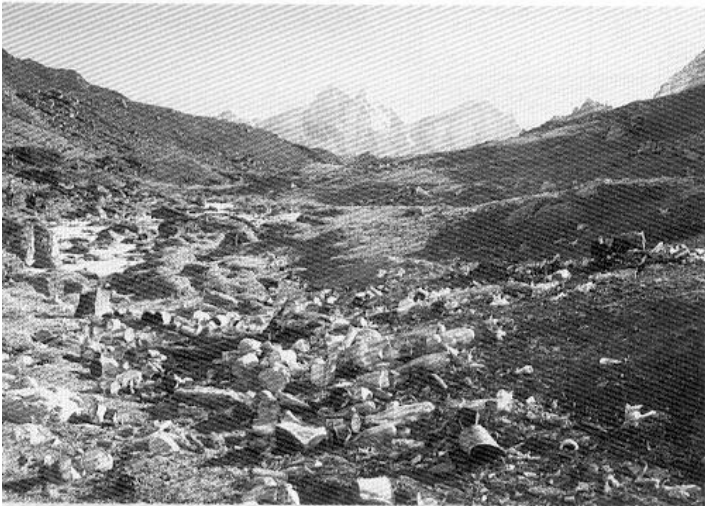
Garbage\* on the mountain includes climbing equipment, foods, plastics, tins, aluminium cans, glass, clothes, papers, tents, and dead bodies. Their trash is scattered everywhere, at different altitudes, but is most prominent on the most popular route to the summit. It has been estimated that every team leaves, on average, five hundred kilograms of trash\* behind after each expedition. Moreover, S.E.E have even reported

finding medical waste such as bloody syringes. Oxygen bottles are also a big problem because they do not decompose, are heavy, and expensive to remove. Another problem is the practice of tossing rubbish\* into the crevasses where it is ground up\* by the action of the ice.

Adapted from

[www.associatedcontent.com/](http://www.associatedcontent.com/)

a junkyard *un dépôt d'ordures* –  
trash, garbage, rubbish, waste *déchets, ordures*  
– grind up *broyer*.



### Read the text and answer the questions.

- 1- What kind of document is it?
- 2- Why is the Himalayan region very touristic?
- 3- Why are there environmental problems in the region?
- 4- Are the Everest climbers nature lovers? (explain)
- 5- Explain the expression "the highest junkyard in the world"
- 6- List the rubbish: Explain why they have been left. What should climbing teams have done or do?

## "Excess baggage"

The plastic carrier bag is useful, but its growing number is an environmental scourge(1) and the symbol of our throwaway society.

Each year, humanity gets through something like billions of carrier bags, which together weigh approximately 5 million tonnes and use about 50 million barrels of oil to produce. Yet they are used on average for 20 minutes, after which, say the critics, the bag survives as rubbish for a further 1,000 years.

Floating on the ocean, they are said by marine conservation organisations to choke some 100,000 whales, seals, dolphins and turtles each year. Turtles mistake them for jellyfish(2) and eat them, only to have their guts(3) blocked - a turtle was washed ashore in Scotland in 1998 with seven plastic bags blocking its alimentary tract. In 2002, a whale that washed up(4) on a Normandy beach had 800g of plastic waste - including two UK supermarket bags - tangled in its intestines. But it is as litter that plastic bags most offend. The Marine Conservation Society's surveys in 2003/04 recorded 40 plastic bags per kilometre of Britain's coastline.

But the plastic bag's days may be numbered. At least 40 countries or states are now known to have banned them or taken action to restrict their use. The movement began in the 1980s in Dhaka Bangladesh, where millions of plastic bags were found to be clogging(5) drains(6) in the monsoons, causing terrible flooding. The city's 26 major plastic bag makers complained bitterly at proposals to outlaw them, but in March 2002 Bangladesh became the first country to ban them outright. The case was taken up in northern India, where plastic bags not only caused floods but were blamed for killing cows. In August 2003, plastic bags were banned - on pain of seven years in prison or a £1,250 fine. Similar laws now apply in several other Indian states.

No European country has yet banned them outright, but several - including Ireland, Denmark and Switzerland - have imposed a "plastax", a tax on plastic bags. France said the bags would be completely banished after 2010 but we still can find some in many places.

**A French supermarket chain has stopped providing them for more than a year without, it seems, any effect on its sales. The UK, however, stands firmly in the "do nothing" camp - much to the distress of environmentalists.**

Source: "The Guardian", October 26, 2005 (adapted)

### Vocabulary

(1) a scourge: un fléau

(2) jellyfish: méduse

(3) guts: intestins

(4) to wash up: rejeter sur le rivage

(5) to clog: obstruer

(6) drains: égouts

Name :

Class :

**A. Répondez en français aux questions suivantes, en utilisant uniquement les informations contenues dans le texte. Composez des phrases complètes et justifiez toujours vos réponses.**

1. Comment le début de l'article présente-t-il le sac plastique ? (2 pt)

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2. Que nous apprend le texte sur la production des sacs plastique, leur utilisation et leur durée de vie ? (3 pts)

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3. Dans quel milieu naturel les sacs plastiques posent-ils un problème particulièrement aigu et pourquoi ? (1 pt)

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4. Que s'est-il passé en Ecosse et en Normandie ? (2 pt)

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5. Quand et où a-t-on commencé à réagir au problème des sacs plastique et dans quelles circonstances ? (3 pts)

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6. Quelles solutions a-t-on choisies dans certains pays européens ? (2 pts)

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**B. Traduisez en français la fin du texte (4 points)**

de la ligne 27 "A French supermarket chain..." à la ligne 29 "...environmentalists."

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