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Congo conference to save great apes

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0509/050906-apes.html>

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6 September, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Congo conference to save great apes

BNE: The race is on to help save the world's great apes from extinction. Unfortunately, it seems as though the odds are stacked heavily against man's closest living relatives. A week of talks opened on Monday in Kinshasa, Congo. Governments and conservationists will thrash out a new global agreement aimed at protecting endangered apes across the world. The crux of the meetings is to save these precious primates from what seems to be impending extinction if no measures are taken to ensure their survival. Delegations from 23 nations from Africa, Indonesia and Malaysia are in attendance. These countries are home to the world's gorillas, chimpanzees and orangutans.

Delegates face an uphill battle for any agreements to be effective. Many zoologists predict most of the great apes will be on the brink of extinction within a generation. Populations have dwindled from millions in the 19th century to a precarious 400,000 and sharply declining today. The apes are threatened by logging, poaching and regional conflicts. Over half of the apes' natural habitat is in strife-torn regions. The Associated Press quotes an optimistic Ian Redmond, chief consultant for the U.N.'s Great Apes Survival Project, as saying: "There are signs of political commitment and a shared determination to address the problems we are here to discuss." A similar meeting took place two years ago in Paris.

WARM-UPS

1. APE DANGER: You are now an ape. Decide if you are a gorilla, chimpanzee or orangutan. You have heard that all apes might disappear within 25 years because of man's actions. Talk to the other "apes" in the class about your daily life in the jungle and the news of being faced with possible extinction.

2. EXTINCTION: What would think if the following animals became extinct? What can we do to stop them from becoming extinct? Rank them in order or which animals you want to save most.

- Chimpanzees
- Tigers
- Red-necked Amazonian frogs
- Ostriches
- Cockroaches
- Ants
- Elephants
- Golden Eagles

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Great apes / extinction / odds / Congo / conservationists / survival / gorillas / chimpanzees / orangutans / zoologists / logging / poaching / optimism

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. EXTINCTION: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "extinction". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. SENTENCE STARTERS: In pairs / groups, agree on the endings to the following sentence starters. Talk about your finished sentences. Change partners and share and compare your sentences.

- a. Chimpanzees are _____.
- b. The Congo meeting will _____.
- c. Extinction of the great apes _____.
- d. Poachers should _____.
- e. The odds _____.
- f. Western governments _____.
- g. African governments _____.
- h. We _____.

6. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think the great apes will survive. Students B think the great apes have next to no chance of survival. Change partners often.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. There will be a "great ape Olympics" for apes to race each other. | T / F |
| b. A meeting in Africa has been set up to save apes trapped in a cave. | T / F |
| c. There is little chance the great apes will become extinct. | T / F |
| d. Brazil, India and China are home to the world's great apes. | T / F |
| e. Delegates have an uphill battle to get to the conference building. | T / F |
| f. Ape populations have dwindled dramatically since the 19 th century. | T / F |
| g. Most of the world's apes live in war zones. | T / F |
| h. A U.N. spokesman was pessimistic about addressing the problems. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| a. stacked | verge |
| b. thrash out | bottom line |
| c. crux | conflict |
| d. impending | representatives |
| e. delegations | diminished |
| f. brink | piled |
| g. dwindled | dangerous |
| h. precarious | negotiate |
| i. strife | will |
| j. determination | imminent |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| a. the race | extinction |
| b. the odds are stacked heavily against | have dwindled |
| c. thrash out | man's closest living relatives |
| d. The crux | is in strife-torn regions |
| e. impending | of the meetings is... |
| f. Delegates face | is on |
| g. on the brink | to address the problems |
| h. Populations | of extinction |
| i. half of the apes' natural habitat | a new global agreement |
| j. a shared determination | an uphill battle |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Congo conference to save great apes

BNE: The _____ is on to help save the world's great apes from extinction. Unfortunately, it seems as though the _____ are stacked heavily against man's closest living _____. A week of talks opened on Monday in Kinshasa, Congo. Governments and conservationists will _____ out a new global agreement aimed at protecting endangered apes across the world. The _____ of the meetings is to save these precious _____ from what seems to be impending extinction if no measures are taken to _____ their survival. Delegations from 23 nations from Africa, Indonesia and Malaysia are in attendance. These countries are _____ to the world's gorillas, chimpanzees and orangutans.

Delegates face an _____ battle for any agreements to be effective. Many zoologists predict most of the great apes will be on the _____ of extinction within a generation. Populations have _____ from millions in the nineteenth century to a precarious 400,000 and _____ declining today. The apes are threatened by logging, _____ and regional conflicts. Over half of the apes' natural _____ is in strife-torn regions. The Associated Press quotes an optimistic Ian Redmond, chief consultant for the U.N.'s Great Apes Survival Project, as saying: "There are signs of political commitment and a _____ determination to _____ the problems we are here to discuss." A similar meeting took place two years ago in Paris.

ensure
relatives
crux
odds
home
thrash
race
primates
poaching
dwindled
address
habitat
brink
sharply
shared
uphill

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'great' and 'ape'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "GREAT APES" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about the great apes and their survival.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- race
- stacked
- thrash
- crux
- ensure
- home
- uphill
- brink
- sharply
- habitat
- consultant
- shared

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What were your feelings after you read the article?
- d. Do you think the great apes will survive?
- e. What difference does it make if the great apes disappear?
- f. Do you think the global agreement will be effective?
- g. Only African countries and Malaysia and Indonesia are attending the conference. Should there be more participants?
- h. Which is your favorite great ape?
- i. Would you like to do something to help protect the great apes?
- j. Do you think apes can be bred in zoos and reintroduced into the wild?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think we are descended from apes?
- d. What do you think of the dwindling numbers of apes?
- e. Who is responsible for preventing logging and poaching?
- f. What punishments should be meted out to loggers and poachers?
- g. Do you think war-torn regions in Africa will become peaceful enough for apes to survive?
- h. What do you think of the idea of recreating savannahs and jungles in the USA and populating them with African animals?
- i. Have you faced any uphill battles?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

GORILLA INTERVIEW: In pairs / groups, write down questions you would like to ask gorillas about their lives and opinions. The following ideas may be useful:

- Jungle
- War
- Logging
- Poaching
- Extinction
- Dwindling numbers
- Lost friends
- The Kinshasa meeting
- Man
- The future

Take turns in role playing the interviewer and gorilla. Change partners and discuss what you heard from previous partners.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Congo conference to save great apes

BNE: The _____ to help save the world's great apes from extinction. Unfortunately, it seems as though _____ are stacked heavily against man's closest living relatives. A week of talks opened on Monday in Kinshasa, Congo. Governments and conservationists will _____ a new global agreement aimed at protecting endangered apes across the world. The _____ of the meetings is to save these precious primates from what seems to be _____ extinction if no measures are taken to ensure their survival. Delegations from 23 nations from Africa, Indonesia and Malaysia are in _____. These countries are home to the world's gorillas, chimpanzees and orangutans.

Delegates face _____ battle for any agreements to be effective. Many zoologists predict most of the great apes will be _____ extinction within a generation. Populations have dwindled from millions in the 19th century to a _____ 400,000 and sharply declining today. The apes are threatened by logging, poaching and regional conflicts. Over half of the apes' natural habitat is in _____ regions. The Associated Press quotes an optimistic Ian Redmond, chief consultant for the U.N.'s Great Apes Survival Project, as saying: "There are signs of political commitment and a _____ determination _____ the problems we are here to discuss." A similar meeting took place two years ago in Paris.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the great apes. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. POSTER: Make a poster about chimpanzees, gorillas or orangutans. Explain their habitat, society structure and the dangers they face. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all find out about similar things?

4. DIARY / JOURNAL: You are a gorilla in the Congo jungle. Write the diary / journal entry for one day in your life. Write about the threats you face from man. Read what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. F c. F d. F e. F f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| a. stacked | piled |
| b. thrash out | negotiate |
| c. crux | bottom line |
| d. impending | imminent |
| e. delegations | representatives |
| f. brink | verge |
| g. dwindled | diminished |
| h. precarious | dangerous |
| i. strife | conflict |
| j. determination | will |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| a. the race | is on |
| b. the odds are stacked heavily against | man's closest living relatives |
| c. thrash out | a new global agreement |
| d. The crux | of the meetings is... |
| e. impending | extinction |
| f. Delegates face | an uphill battle |
| g. on the brink | of extinction |
| h. Populations | have dwindled |
| i. half of the apes' natural habitat | is in strife-torn regions |
| j. a shared determination | to address the problems |

GAP FILL:

Congo conference to save great apes

BNE: The **race** is on to help save the world's great apes from extinction. Unfortunately, it seems as though the **odds** are stacked heavily against man's closest living **relatives**. A week of talks opened on Monday in Kinshasa, Congo. Governments and conservationists will **thrash** out a new global agreement aimed at protecting endangered apes across the world. The **crux** of the meetings is to save these precious **primates** from what seems to be impending extinction if no measures are taken to **ensure** their survival. Delegations from 23 nations from Africa, Indonesia and Malaysia are in attendance. These countries are **home** to the world's gorillas, chimpanzees and orangutans.

Delegates face an **uphill** battle for any agreements to be effective. Many zoologists predict most of the great apes will be on the **brink** of extinction within a generation. Populations have **dwindled** from millions in the nineteenth century to a precarious 400,000 and **sharply** declining today. The apes are threatened by logging, **poaching** and regional conflicts. Over half of the apes' natural **habitat** is in strife-torn regions. The Associated Press quotes an optimistic Ian Redmond, chief consultant for the U.N.'s Great Apes Survival Project, as saying: "There are signs of political commitment and a **shared** determination to **address** the problems we are here to discuss." A similar meeting took place two years ago in Paris.