

## Part A. Reading Comprehension

### THE BLUE PLANET

Covered with a mantle of water that occupies more than two-thirds of its surface, this planet is clearly misnamed Earth. Seen against the blackness of space, it is primarily a world of water. The magic liquid not only gives Earth its distinctive gem-blue colour; it also makes this planet an oasis of life in the sterile void of space.

Some of the other planets - Venus and Mercury, for instance - suffer from metal-melting heat. By contrast, Neptune and Pluto are locked in a permanent ice age, with surface temperatures that are near the  $-459^{\circ}$  F of Absolute Zero. But the Blue Planet, 93 million miles from the Sun, is blessed with temperate conditions that, when combined with the unique chemical properties of the water molecule, result in a world where water exists in a liquid state. No other planet in the solar system - as far as scientists have been able to discern - possesses so benign a set of circumstances. Water and the oceans make Earth unique.

As long as the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, Leonardo da Vinci realized that 'water is the driver of nature'. But it is now that mankind is beginning to recognize how fully dependent all life is on the oceans. In interaction with the atmosphere, the oceans help regulate global climate, storing excess heat in summer and releasing it in winter. They are a source of life-sustaining rainfall and contribute food, minerals and energy, as well as being the roads for commerce and the place where humanity's waste is deposited.

**1. Answer the following questions using your own words.**

- a. What makes the Earth different from other planets?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. Give two reasons why oceans are so important for life.

**2. Are the following statements true (T) or false (F)? Support your answer.**

- a. The importance of water for nature has been recognized only very recently.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. Except the Earth, Neptune and Pluto, all the other planets suffer from extreme temperatures.

**3. Find a synonym for each of the four words below from these six options: (1 point: 0.25 each)**

temperate    source    oasis    misnamed    waste    surface

- a. a place with trees and water in a desert
- b. the outer part
- c. free from very high or very low temperatures
- d. used, damaged or unwanted matter

**Part B. Composition (130-150 words approximately).**

1. Water is getting scarce. Explain the ways you can help to save water.
2. We aren't taking enough care of our environment.