

Social Sciences 5

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In this text you are going to read about **Marijuana, Cannabis, Hemp farming** and different opinions on these things. There are some words in this text that you won't see very often when you are reading but are important for this text. These words are in bold in the text. Look at the questions below about these vocabulary items and try to answer them. You should use a dictionary if you are unsure of the answers.

A: Pre-reading Vocabulary

1. An ecosystem (n)

'The rainforests are the oldest, most productive and most complex ecosystems on Earth.'

Is an *ecosystem* (a) a method of counting all the trees in a forest or (b) a system of sustaining life on this planet?

2. Pulp (n)

'Forest fires destroy more forests than are used for making pulp and paper.'

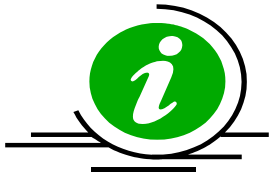
Is *pulp* (a) a type of forest fire or (b) a type of material made from wood?

3. Hemp (n)

'Farmers can grow hemp quickly and it is not likely to fall to disease.'

Is *hemp* (a) a crop that farmers grow or is it (b) a type of field?

B: Critical Reading Exercise



Critical reading is the ability to evaluate the credibility of a piece of writing. All writers have a purpose when they write, and usually, a writer will choose or emphasize facts and details which support his or her purpose, and ignore facts which don't. As a good reader, you need to be aware of this.

- ✓ *In this exercise, you will see a number of quotations from different "interest groups" or "lobbies". A **lobby** or **interest group** is a group of people who have a common interest and who work together to publicize and promote their point of view. In the exercise, you will read quotations from five lobbies:*

The Forestry Industry: The forestry industry makes money from cutting down trees. Therefore, they want to be able to continue to cut trees, and they want to discourage any alternative ways of producing pulp and paper.

The Environmentalists: The environmental lobby want to protect the forests against logging companies, so they would like to show how destructive logging is, and how valuable the forests are.

The Hemp Farming Lobby: The hemp farmers would like the fibre hemp plant to be legal so that they can grow it. They want to show how useful it is for making paper and other products, and they would like people to understand the difference between the marijuana plant and the fibre hemp plant.

The Marijuana Legalization Lobby: These people would like marijuana to be legal. They are interested in linking the fibre hemp plant with marijuana, because they think it may be possible to legalize BOTH kinds of plant. They want to show how useful industrial hemp is, and at the same time, they want to convince people that marijuana is harmless.

The British Government: The British government has just legalized industrial hemp, but they want to keep marijuana illegal, so they want to show that it is dangerous. They also get lots of taxes from the forestry industry, so they do not want to restrict wood cutting too much.

**Your task in this exercise is 1) to identify which group each quotation comes from and 2) explain why you think this.
Tick the answer you think is correct.**

1. *"The rainforests are quite simply the richest, oldest, most productive and most complex ecosystems on Earth."*

- a) the forestry industry
- b) the environmentalists ☺
- c) the hemp farming lobby
- d) the marijuana legalization lobby

WHY: The quotation relates to the importance of rainforests, which is what the environmentalists would consider the most important thing. (example answer)

2. *"Some have calculated that if Britain converted the entire **pulp** and paper production in Britain to **hemp**, it would be necessary to plant hemp over 22% of the country."*

- a) the forestry industry
- b) the marijuana lobby
- c) the environmentalists
- d) the hemp farming lobby

WHY: _____

3. *"Farmers can grow **hemp** without using pesticide or herbicide because it grows quickly and is not likely to fall to disease."*

- a) the British government
- b) the hemp farming lobby
- c) the forestry industry
- d) the marijuana legalization lobby

WHY: _____

4. *"Each year, forest fires destroy more forests than are used for making **pulp** and paper."*

- a) the environmentalists
- b) the British government
- c) the hemp farming lobby
- d) the forestry industry

WHY: _____

5. *"Decriminalizing cannabis could result in a greater use of the drug by British people, therefore increasing the health and safety risks associated with it."*

- a) the marijuana legalization lobby
- b) the hemp farming lobby
- c) the British government
- d) the environmentalists

WHY: _____

6. *"The government added marijuana in 1923 to The Opium Act of 1908 without any health concerns inherent in the law whatsoever. The Opium Act was introduced as a purely racist measure to deport and jail Asian-Britons."*

- a) the hemp farming lobby
- b) the British government
- c) the forestry industry
- d) the marijuana legalization lobby

WHY: _____

7. *"67% of the fibre used to make British **pulp** and paper comes from recovered paper that used to be disposed of in landfills."*

- a) the environmentalists
- b) the hemp farming lobby
- c) the forestry industry
- d) the marijuana legalization lobby

WHY: _____

8. *"**Hemp** is about business and the environment. Marijuana is a moral question about the government's control of the drugs that people consume. These two questions have nothing in common but the shape of the leaf, therefore we have to separate the issues."*

- a) the hemp farming lobby
- b) the marijuana legalization lobby
- c) the forestry industry
- d) the British government

WHY: _____

9. *"In the Brixton Riots of 1981, police attacked and injured hundreds of innocent peaceful marijuana smokers."*

- a) the marijuana legalization lobby
- b) the forestry industry
- c) the British government
- d) the hemp farming lobby

WHY: _____

10. *"Wood cutting and production is still the biggest employer and the biggest contributor to tax revenue in some parts of the country."*

- a) the hemp farming lobby
- b) the forestry industry
- c) the British government
- d) the hemp farming lobby

WHY: _____

Adapted from <http://home.earthlink.net/~eslstudent/read/read.html>

Answer Key

A: Pre-reading Vocabulary

1. An ecosystem is a system of sustaining life on this planet.
2. Pulp is a type of material made from wood.
3. Hemp is a crop that farmers grow.

B: Critical Reading

1. Example answer.
2. **A** is the most likely answer because the forestry industry would try to point out that growing hemp is more expensive than growing wood.
3. **B** is the most likely answer because the hemp farming lobby would point out that hemp is very easy to grow.
4. **A** is the most likely answer because the environmentalists would point out that there are more problems with the forestry industry than advantages.
5. **C** is the most likely answer because the British government would want to support their decision to keep marijuana illegal.
6. **D** is the most likely answer because the marijuana legalization lobby would like to show that there is no good reason for marijuana being illegal.
7. **A** is the most likely answer because the environmentalists would point out that paper is mainly produced from sources other than the forestry industry.
8. **A** is the most likely answer because the hemp farming lobby would want to separate their industry from the illegal use of marijuana.
9. **A** is the most likely answer because the marijuana legalization lobby would like to emphasize that marijuana smokers are peaceful and innocent.
10. **B** is the most likely answer because the forestry industry would show that this industry is important to the country.

Important: You may have different answers to these that are correct. If you are unsure, ask a teacher to look at your answers. Remember, you are trying to justify your position!

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