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**"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"**

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## **Mammoths extinct due to lack of grass**

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/100818-extinction\\_of\\_mammoths.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/100818-extinction_of_mammoths.html)

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18th August, 2010

# THE ARTICLE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/100818-extinction\\_of\\_mammoths.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/100818-extinction_of_mammoths.html)

Scientists have come up with a new theory on why woolly mammoths became extinct 21,000 years ago. Up until now, people have believed that mammoths, the 3-metre-high relatives of elephants, died out because they were hunted to extinction. New research shows they ran out of grass, and that was caused by global warming 21 millennia ago. Researchers from the UK's Durham University suggest the hairy dinosaurs starved to death because forests took over the grasslands they needed to survive. As the Earth became warmer and wetter, forests spread and the mammoth had fewer areas to graze. "Mammoths had roamed and munched their way across many parts of Europe," said lead researcher Professor Brian Huntley.

Professor Huntley said what happened to the mammoths in prehistoric times is a warning of what might happen in the future to today's large herbivores. "This was a time of major environmental change and losses of habitat that may have led to the extinction of...mega-species that roamed many parts of the planet," he said. He had a warning about the plight of today's large animals: "It is food for thought in these times of global warming and human-induced habitat change." Other creatures also to become extinct due to climate change were the cave lion, giant deer, woolly rhino and the cave bear. The research team believe today's elephants and rhinoceroses could suffer a similar fate.

# WARM-UPS

**1. EXTINCTION:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about extinction. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*scientists / extinct / relatives / research / global warming / dinosaurs / forests / prehistoric times / herbivores / habitat / habitat / creatures / elephants / rhinoceros*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. DYING OUT:** How bad would it be if these creatures died out? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

	How bad?
Elephants	
Pandas	
Frogs	
Pigeons	
Ants	
Dolphins	

**4. EXTINCT:** Students A **strongly** believe it would be a good idea to bring extinct species back to life; Students B **strongly** believe that's a terrible idea. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. FACTORS:** Which of these are most responsible for the extinction of animals? Rank them and share your rankings with your partner. Put the most responsible at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- Hunting
- Other animals
- Climate change
- Pollution
- Deforestation
- Zoos
- Introduced species
- Disease

**6. ELEPHANTS:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'elephants'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/100818-extinction\\_of\\_mammoths.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/100818-extinction_of_mammoths.html)

## 1. TRUE / FALSE:

Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. Woolly mammoths became extinct around 200,000 years ago.                 | T / F |
| b. There is no biological relationship between mammoths and elephants.      | T / F |
| c. Scientists say mammoths died because forests replaced grasslands.        | T / F |
| d. Mammoths lived in many parts of Europe.                                  | T / F |
| e. A professor said what happened in prehistory could happen again.         | T / F |
| f. The professor said habitat loss definitely killed off many species.      | T / F |
| g. The professor said the animals needed a lot of food to be able to think. | T / F |
| h. Researchers believe elephants might be in danger.                        | T / F |

## 2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. come up with | a. vanished       |
| 2. theory       | b. destiny        |
| 3. died out     | c. chewed         |
| 4. starved      | d. hypothesis     |
| 5. munched      | e. wandered       |
| 6. warning      | f. considerable   |
| 7. major        | g. discovered     |
| 8. roamed       | h. animals        |
| 9. creatures    | i. caution        |
| 10. fate        | j. died of hunger |

## 3. PHRASE MATCH:

(Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. come up with          | a. habitat               |
| 2. hunted to             | b. ago                   |
| 3. 21 millennia          | c. death                 |
| 4. starved to            | d. today's large animals |
| 5. the mammoth had fewer | e. extinction            |
| 6. prehistoric           | f. to climate change     |
| 7. losses of             | g. fate                  |
| 8. the plight of         | h. a new theory          |
| 9. become extinct due    | i. times                 |
| 10. suffer a similar     | j. areas to graze        |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/100818-extinction\\_of\\_mammoths.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/100818-extinction_of_mammoths.html)

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Scientists have come up with a new \_\_\_\_\_ on why woolly mammoths became extinct 21,000 years ago. Up until now, people have believed that mammoths, the 3-metre-high \_\_\_\_\_ of elephants, died out because they were \_\_\_\_\_ to extinction. New research shows they ran out of grass, and that was \_\_\_\_\_ by global warming 21 millennia ago. Researchers from the UK's Durham University suggest the hairy dinosaurs \_\_\_\_\_ to death because forests took over the grasslands they needed to \_\_\_\_\_. As the Earth became warmer and wetter, forests spread and the mammoth had \_\_\_\_\_ areas to graze. "Mammoths had roamed and munched their way across many \_\_\_\_\_ of Europe," said lead researcher Professor Brian Huntley.

*hunted*  
*parts*  
*relatives*  
*starved*  
*fewer*  
*theory*  
*caused*  
*survive*

Professor Huntley said what happened to the mammoths in prehistoric times is a \_\_\_\_\_ of what might happen in the future to today's large herbivores. "This was a time of \_\_\_\_\_ environmental change and \_\_\_\_\_ of habitat that may have led to the extinction of...mega-species that \_\_\_\_\_ many parts of the planet," he said. He had a warning about the \_\_\_\_\_ of today's large animals: "It is food for thought in these times of global warming and \_\_\_\_\_ -induced habitat change." Other creatures also to become extinct \_\_\_\_\_ to climate change were the cave lion, giant deer, woolly rhino and the cave bear. The research team believe today's elephants and rhinoceroses could suffer a \_\_\_\_\_ fate.

*similar*  
*major*  
*roamed*  
*human*  
*warning*  
*due*  
*losses*  
*plight*

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/100818-extinction\\_of\\_mammoths.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/100818-extinction_of_mammoths.html)

Scientists \_\_\_\_\_ new theory on why woolly mammoths became extinct 21,000 years ago. Up until now, people have believed that mammoths, the 3-\_\_\_\_\_ of elephants, died out because they were hunted to extinction. New research \_\_\_\_\_ grass, and that was caused by global warming 21 millennia ago. Researchers from the UK's Durham University suggest the hairy dinosaurs \_\_\_\_\_ because forests took over the grasslands they needed to survive. As the Earth became warmer and wetter, forests spread and the mammoth had \_\_\_\_\_. "Mammoths had roamed \_\_\_\_\_ across many parts of Europe," said lead researcher Professor Brian Huntley.

Professor Huntley said \_\_\_\_\_ mammoths in prehistoric times is a warning of what might happen in the future to today's large herbivores. "This \_\_\_\_\_ environmental change and losses of habitat that may have led to the extinction of...mega-species that \_\_\_\_\_ the planet," he said. He had a warning about the plight of today's large animals: "It is \_\_\_\_\_ these times of global warming and human-induced habitat change." Other creatures also to become extinct \_\_\_\_\_ were the cave lion, giant deer, woolly rhino and the cave bear. The research team believe today's elephants and rhinoceroses \_\_\_\_\_ fate.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/100818-extinction\\_of\\_mammoths.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/100818-extinction_of_mammoths.html)

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'woolly' and 'mammoth'.

<b>woolly</b>	<b>mammoth</b>
---------------	----------------

- 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 activity. 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. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• come</li><li>• believed</li><li>• ran</li><li>• 21</li><li>• needed</li><li>• across</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• warning</li><li>• major</li><li>• planet</li><li>• large</li><li>• habitat</li><li>• team</li></ul>
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# STUDENT EXTINCTION SURVEY

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/100818-extinction\\_of\\_mammoths.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/100818-extinction_of_mammoths.html)

Write five GOOD questions about extinction in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



# EXTINCTION DISCUSSION

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

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'extinction'?
- c) What do you think caused the extinction of the mammoths?
- d) Do you think running out of grass is a reasonable explanation to explain why woolly mammoths became extinct?
- e) What do you think of woolly mammoths?
- f) Would you like them to be re-introduced through their DNA?
- g) How would the world be different if woolly mammoths were alive today?
- h) What other theories are there to explain the extinction of woolly mammoths and other dinosaurs?
- i) How do you think researchers found out this information?
- j) What's your favourite dinosaur and why?

*Woolly mammoths extinct due to lack of grass – 18th August, 2010*  
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# EXTINCTION DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What do you think of Professor Hartley's warning?
- c) How much are elephants and rhinoceroses in danger?
- d) How is human activity endangering the lives of animals?
- e) Which animals do you think will become extinct next (and why)?
- f) What are the chances of humans becoming extinct?
- g) What would happen to the world if we became extinct?
- h) Would it be better for the world if we became extinct?
- i) How much of climate change is human induced?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Professor Brian Huntley?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/100818-extinction\\_of\\_mammoths.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/100818-extinction_of_mammoths.html)

Scientists have come (1) \_\_\_\_ with a new theory on why woolly mammoths became extinct 21,000 years ago. Up until now, people have believed that mammoths, the 3-metre-high relatives of elephants, died (2) \_\_\_\_ because they were hunted (3) \_\_\_\_ extinction. New research shows they ran out of grass, and that was caused by global warming 21 millennia ago. Researchers from the UK's Durham University suggest the hairy dinosaurs (4) \_\_\_\_ to death because forests took over the grasslands they needed to survive. (5) \_\_\_\_ the Earth became warmer and wetter, forests spread and the mammoth had fewer areas to graze. "Mammoths (6) \_\_\_\_ roamed and munched their way across many parts of Europe," said lead researcher Professor Brian Huntley.

Professor Huntley said what happened to the mammoths in prehistoric times is a warning (7) \_\_\_\_ what might happen in the future to today's large herbivores. "This was a time of (8) \_\_\_\_ environmental change and losses of habitat that may have led to the extinction of...mega-species that roamed many parts of the planet," he said. He had a warning about the (9) \_\_\_\_ of today's large animals: "It is food for thought in these times of global warming and human-(10) \_\_\_\_ habitat change." Other (11) \_\_\_\_ also to become extinct due to climate change were the cave lion, giant deer, woolly rhino and the cave bear. The research team believe today's elephants and rhinoceroses could suffer a (12) \_\_\_\_ fate.

**Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.**

- |     |              |                |               |                 |
|-----|--------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1.  | (a) down     | (b) over       | (c) here      | (d) up          |
| 2.  | (a) out      | (b) up         | (c) in        | (d) on          |
| 3.  | (a) at       | (b) to         | (c) by        | (d) for         |
| 4.  | (a) starve   | (b) starvation | (c) starving  | (d) starved     |
| 5.  | (a) Has      | (b) Was        | (c) As        | (d) Is          |
| 6.  | (a) having   | (b) had        | (c) had to    | (d) have had    |
| 7.  | (a) for      | (b) from       | (c) at        | (d) of          |
| 8.  | (a) major    | (b) majority   | (c) majors    | (d) majorities  |
| 9.  | (a) sight    | (b) plight     | (c) slight    | (d) flight      |
| 10. | (a) juiced   | (b) deduced    | (c) reduced   | (d) induced     |
| 11. | (a) creation | (b) creative   | (c) creatures | (d) creaturely  |
| 12. | (a) similar  | (b) same       | (c) the same  | (d) carbon copy |



# 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 out more about woolly mammoths. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. EXTINCTION:** Make a poster about extinction. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. GLOBAL WARMING:** Write a magazine article about global warming. Include imaginary interviews with someone who believe it is created by humans and someone who believes it isn't.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to a climate change expert. Ask him/her three questions about climate change and extinction. Give him/her three of your opinions on how to reduce the effects of climate change. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

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

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. come up with | a. discovered     |
| 2. theory       | b. hypothesis     |
| 3. died out     | c. vanished       |
| 4. starved      | d. died of hunger |
| 5. munched      | e. chewed         |
| 6. warning      | f. caution        |
| 7. major        | g. considerable   |
| 8. roamed       | h. wandered       |
| 9. creatures    | i. animals        |
| 10. fate        | j. destiny        |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. come up with          | a. a new theory          |
| 2. hunted to             | b. extinction            |
| 3. 21 millennia          | c. ago                   |
| 4. starved to            | d. death                 |
| 5. the mammoth had fewer | e. areas to graze        |
| 6. prehistoric           | f. times                 |
| 7. losses of             | g. habitat               |
| 8. the plight of         | h. today's large animals |
| 9. become extinct due    | i. to climate change     |
| 10. suffer a similar     | j. fate                  |

## GAP FILL:

### Woolly mammoths extinct due to lack of grass

Scientists have come up with a new **theory** on why woolly mammoths became extinct 21,000 years ago. Up until now, people have believed that mammoths, the 3-metre-high **relatives** of elephants, died out because they were **hunted** to extinction. New research shows they ran out of grass, and that was **caused** by global warming 21 millennia ago. Researchers from the UK's Durham University suggest the hairy dinosaurs **starved** to death because forests took over the grasslands they needed to **survive**. As the Earth became warmer and wetter, forests spread and the mammoth had **fewer** areas to graze. "Mammoths had roamed and munched their way across many **parts** of Europe," said lead researcher Professor Brian Huntley.

Professor Huntley said what happened to the mammoths in prehistoric times is a **warning** of what might happen in the future to today's large herbivores. "This was a time of **major** environmental change and **losses** of habitat that may have led to the extinction of...mega-species that **roamed** many parts of the planet," he said. He had a warning about the **plight** of today's large animals: "It is food for thought in these times of global warming and **human**-induced habitat change." Other creatures also to become extinct **due** to climate change were the cave lion, giant deer, woolly rhino and the cave bear. The research team believe today's elephants and rhinoceroses could suffer a **similar** fate.

## LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d    2 - a    3 - b    4 - c    5 - c    6 - b    7 - d    8 - a    9 - b    10 - d    11 - c    12 - a