



**INDIAN SCHOOL MUSCAT**  
**SENIOR SECTION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**  
**CLASS XI**  
**COMPREHENSION PASSAGE**



**1. Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow:**

**1. Antarctica's Rich Resources**

Antarctica is the coldest, driest, highest, windiest, most inaccessible and inhospitable area of the earth's surface. Although it covers one-tenth of the world's land surface, as large as China, Argentina, France, Nigeria and New Zealand combined; the only people on this harsh continent are scientists and the occasional explorers.

2. Seals and penguins, the only wildlife, inhabit the pack-ice and beaches. Mites. Springtails, lice and midges are the main fauna. The only plants are fungi, algae, lichens and mosses. Shoals of krill, perhaps enough to double the world's fish catch, whales (mostly blue, humpback and fin species) and fish abound in the Antarctic seas.
3. And by geological analogy, scientists believe that there is a very substantial amount of mineral resources, including gas and oil. Estimates made by the United States Geological Survey several years ago suggest an offshore recoverable resource of 15 billion barrels. Coal and iron ore are also present for exploitation beneath the large repository of ice.
4. The total volume of ice in Antarctica is 30 million cubic kilometres. About 70 per cent of the world's store of fresh water and 90 per cent of the world's ice. If it is all melted, the world's oceans would rise between 45 and 90 metres. Such is the intriguing promise of unexplored wealth on this continental land mass, which, when developed, may relieve the world's food shortage and energy crisis.
5. But Antarctica is not a no-man's-land. For a very long time, this continent has been a sphere of political activity. Several superpowers have, through forethought and initiative, developed substantial vested interests in its future. Today, as Antarctica's mineral wealth becomes technically and economically realizable, the interest of **the international community** is gradually being aroused.
6. The wealth of resources in this continent is suddenly seen to be an international problem, and world politicians, practiced in the art of perceiving gargantuan legal and political issues involved in any new undertaking, are thinking: What should be the future of Antarctica? It is not a burning question yet, say Antarctica watchers, but will be so in probably two decades from now, when the Antarctica potential resources are open for profitable exploitation.
7. But before considering the sharing of the "goodies" in Antarctica, it will be necessary to evaluate the benefits that may be won against the risks and the dangers to the **highly vulnerable environment** and the legal and political issues and problems at hand.

**1.1 Read the questions given below and write the option you consider the most appropriate in your answer sheet:**

- a) The opening sentence illustrates that Antarctica is
- i) an uninhabitable place.
  - ii) not worth developing.
  - iii) a land of harsh extremes.
  - iv) a virgin land.
- b) Which of the following statements about Antarctica is false?
- i) it is the home of seals and penguins.
  - ii) It is rich in plant life.
  - iii) The only people in Antarctica are scientists and explorers.
  - iv) It covers ten per cent of the earth's land surface.
- c) A significant potential food resource that Antarctica has is
- i) its plant life.
  - ii) its fauna.
  - iii) its possibility for farming.
  - iv) krill
- d) Scientists believe that Antarctica
- i) is very rich in mineral resources.
  - ii) is moderately rich in mineral resources.
  - iii) is more rich in gas and oil than anywhere else in the world.
  - iv) has coal and iron, but not enough to be mined.
- e) The phrase "the international community" refers to
- i) the world politicians.
  - ii) the superpower
  - iii) the people interested in Antarctica.
  - iv) the people of the world.
- f) In the last paragraph, the writer is expressing
- i) a world opinion.
  - ii) a political issue.
  - iii) her own opinion.
  - iv) a legal problem.

**1.2 Answer the following questions in about 30 words.**

- a) The writer says that Antarctica has a "highly vulnerable environment". What does he mean?
- b) What could be the result of developing Antarctica?
- c) Why are many nations interested in Antarctica?
- d) Mention the flora and fauna that inhabit the Antarctic seas.

**1.3 Find words in above passage which convey the same meaning as the following:**

- a) a comparison of one thing with another thing with similar features (para 3)
- b) slowly over a long period of time ( para 5)