

## Orangutan asks for help in sign language



**1a SPEAKING** What do you know about orangutans? Decide if the following statements are true or false. Discuss your ideas with a partner.

- A Orangutan means 'person of the forest' in Malay.
- B We share 99.4 percent of our genetic makeup with orangutans
- C Orangutans are vegetarians.
- D Orangutans are very caring mothers to their babies.
- E 100 years ago there were 315,000 orangutans left in the wild. Now there are around 60,000.
- F Orangutans are likely to go extinct unless we help them.

**2 VIDEO** Watch the video (up to 1.31) of an orang-utan talking to an American girl online, using sign language, and answer the following questions.



- 1 What is the girl's name and what is the orangutan called?
- 2 What do they both like to play?
- 3 What does the orangutan like to eat? And the girl?

**3** What help do you think the orang-utan needs? Watch the rest of the video and check your ideas.



**4 VOCABULARY Match the words with the definitions. Check your ideas with a partner.**

<b>NOUNS</b>	<b>DEFINITIONS</b>
<b>consumers</b>	Pieces of paper fixed to something which give information about it
<b>environment</b>	The natural home of a plant or animal
<b>cultivating</b>	Cutting down trees over a large area
<b>habitat</b>	Using natural products in a way which harms nature
<b>companies</b>	Preparing and using land for growing plants
<b>unsustainable</b>	Business organisations which sell things
<b>endangered</b>	The natural world
<b>deforestation</b>	People who buy things
<b>labels</b>	In danger of becoming extinct

**4b Read the text and complete the gaps with words from exercise 4.**

Even though I quite quickly realised that 'Strawberry', the orangutan couldn't possibly be really having such an in-depth conversation in sign language, the video still made me feel emotional.

Released by Rainforest Action Network (RAN), the video shows a 12 year old deaf girl, Lena signing on Skype with an Indonesian orangutan. They talk about their daily lives, but when Strawberry sees the peanut butter that Lena loves to eat she signs sadly, 'Your food is destroying my home'

Orangutans may not be able to say this for themselves (though they can and do communicate with humans on a more basic level using signs), but it is sadly true.

While there is nothing wrong with 1 \_\_\_\_\_ palm oil in itself, much of it is still being produced in ways which harm the 2 \_\_\_\_\_, causing 3 \_\_\_\_\_ as the original trees are cut down, and destroying the 4 \_\_\_\_\_ of these 5 \_\_\_\_\_ creatures.

It is estimated that around 50% of packaged products, such as soap, toothpaste, chocolate and lipstick, contain palm oil, which is often 6 \_\_\_\_\_. As 7 \_\_\_\_\_, we can help to pressure 8 \_\_\_\_\_ into using only sustainable palm oil by looking more carefully at the 9 \_\_\_\_\_ on what we buy. We owe it to the orangutans.

**5 SPEAKING Discuss the questions in pairs or small groups.**

- 1 Do you think it matters that the orangutan was not actually signing the conversation you saw? Why/why not?
- 2 Do you look at the labels of food you buy to see if the ingredients are sustainable? Why/why not?
- 3 Do you think that campaigns like these can have a positive impact on the environment? Why/why not?



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## Key and Notes

1

A Orangutan means 'person of the forest' in Malay - True

B We share 99.4 percent of our genetic makeup with orang-utans – False- but it's 96.4, which still makes them pretty close to us.

C Orangutans are vegetarians- False – they do eat insects, though nothing larger.

D Orangutans are very caring mothers to their babies- True- they look after them until they are six or seven, which is very unusual in the animal kingdom.

E 100 years ago there were 315,000 orangutans left in the wild. Now there are around 60,000.- True

F Orangutans are likely to go extinct unless we help them.- True

2

1 Lena and Strawberry

2 Hide and seek

3 Bananas- and peanut butter

3

The voiceover at the end says:

Orangutans can't speak for themselves but if they could they would tell us that much of the palm oil used in America's snack food is being grown by cutting down rainforest that are orangutans only home. But we can stop it by telling brands that use palm oil there's a better way. We'll use our customer power to demand change, before it's too late.

The power is in your palm.

4

NOUNS	DEFINITIONS
consumers	Pieces of paper fixed to something which give information about it (labels)
environment	The natural home of a plant or animal (habitat)
cultivating	Cutting down trees over a large area (deforestation)
habitat	Using natural products in a way which harms nature (unsustainable)
companies	Preparing and using land for growing plants (cultivating)
unsustainable	Business organisations which sell things (companies)
endangered	The natural world (environment)
deforestation	People who buy things (consumers)
labels	In danger of becoming extinct (endangered)

4b

- 1 cultivating
- 2 environment
- 3 deforestation
- 4 habitat
- 5 endangered
- 6 unsustainable
- 7 consumers
- 8 companies
- 9 labels

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