

# Exam practice 2

## If the ice melts ...

**A** During the last few decades, there have been many reports about global warming, and various assessments of how it will affect the planet. One thing we know for certain is that it is having a noticeable effect on the polar ice caps. In recent years, scientists have been collecting data, measuring the movement of ice, and calculating how these changes will continue in the future.

**B** At the North Pole, most of the Arctic sea ice melts each summer and freezes again later in the year. However, the amount of sea ice present during the summer is declining faster than ever before. In 2012, there was less than 3.5 square kilometres of ice left at the pole – just 40% of the amount measured in summers during the 1970s. The remaining ice is also becoming thinner, leading some scientists to predict that the Arctic Ocean will have no ice in the summer by 2020.

**C** The decline in sea ice has allowed global shipping companies to have access to a route across the north of Russia – avoiding the more costly and time-consuming route through the Suez Canal from Asia to Europe. This northern sea route is only open for a few months each year, but ships using it can reduce their travelling time by ten to fifteen days, and cut their costs by 40%. In 2011, only four ships used the route; in 2013, that number rose to more than 200.

**D** Although there are financial and environmental benefits to the Arctic area having less ice, there are some major concerns too. The polar ice cap has a substantial effect on climates all over the world. If there is less ice, the Earth absorbs more sunlight, which increases global temperatures. The sea warms up and expands too, so the sea level rises. This means that flooding, coastal erosion, and contamination of fresh water supplies become more likely.

**E** There is one, perhaps even bigger, reason for concern. As the ice melts, warming sea water may cause large amounts of methane gas, which is usually trapped under the ice, to be released. A group of scientists and economists working together on this issue have predicted that the cost of dealing with a single giant release of methane could be over €30 trillion. Vast amounts of methane released into the atmosphere would warm the planet even further and cause extremes of weather like droughts, storms and flooding, and affect agricultural production. In the coming years, all of us may be watching the ice to see what will happen.

## Reading

- 1 Answer the questions according to the information given in the text. Use your own words and full sentences.**
- How have increasing global temperatures affected the polar ice caps during the summer?  
.....
  - What do some scientists think will have happened by 2020?  
.....
  - Why would it be a disaster if large amounts of methane gas were released into the atmosphere?  
.....
- 2 Choose the correct answers.**
- Between the 1970s and 2012, the amount of ice at the North Pole in summer decreased by ...  
A 40%.  
B 60%.  
C 3.5 square kilometres.
  - A reduction in sea ice at the North Pole means that shipping companies save ...  
A time. B money. C time and money.
  - Warming sea water contributes to higher global temperatures by ...  
A reflecting more sunlight.  
B releasing methane gas.  
C adding to sea levels.

## Use of English

- 3 Complete the sentences with no more than three words each.**
- Teams of scientists ..... analysing data for several decades.
  - It is important that people ..... for a changing climate.
  - It is predicted that ice in the Arctic Ocean ..... by the summer of 2020.
- 4 Look at the letters in bold. Circle the word in each group which does not have the same sound.**
- northern / **effect** / increase / benefits
  - world / considerable / **concern** / contamination
  - increasing / **leading** / measured / released
  - global / **overall** / erosion / locked
  - losing / through / flooding / **true**

## Writing

- 5 Choose one of the tasks. Write 100–150 words.**
- Write a review of a book or film about the future that you've recently read or seen. Give reasons why you would or wouldn't recommend it.
  - Imagine it is the year 2115. Describe what life is like, and how it has changed in the last 100 years.

