

## Test Your Speaking & Listening Skills

Discussion Questions – Page 2

### Raw Materials



*Ask and answer the questions with a partner or small group:*

1. Do we need to continually buy new 'must-have' gadgets? How often do you upgrade your... a) mobile phone, b) laptop, c) tablet, d) car? Do you need to upgrade them so often? What happens to your old devices and gadgets? Can they be fully recycled?
2. Why is the earth so rich in useful natural resources? Have you ever held in your hand... a) raw gold, b) wool from a freshly shorn sheep, c) fresh rainwater, d) fresh milk from the udder, e) newly fallen snow, f) natural cotton, g) a fossil, h) coal?
3. Will the planet's raw materials ever run out? Which raw materials have already run out? Which are close to running out? What will happen when all the raw materials have been used? Which raw materials used for fuel are running out? Should we be concerned? Which raw materials are infinite, if any?
4. Could you live in the wild? Could you gather raw materials? How and where? Do you agree with the hypothesis that mankind is the only species that is not naturally adapted to life on earth. For example, we need clothes, tools, heating etc. while other species do not. How do we make life more comfortable for ourselves?
5. Would you like to work as a... a) miner, b) sheep shearer, c) fisherman, d) metalworker, e) butcher, f) lumberjack? g) cotton picker, h) JCB driver? Why? / Why not? Are they well paid jobs? Is the work easy and comfortable? Imagine a typical day in the life of one or more of these people.
6. Why are people who collect raw materials often so badly paid? Why can it be so difficult to collect the fruits of the earth? How do you feel about child labour being used to bring us raw materials... a) in the past, b) today?
7. How long have you had your mobile phone? How long will you keep it for? How long could it potentially last? How will you get rid of it? What will happen to it? What is its life cycle? How could you possibly extend it?
8. Could you live on only natural medication, i.e. homeopathic remedies? Why? / Why not? Since mankind has existed for more than two hundred thousand years without modern medicine, why couldn't you? What raw materials are humans made of?
9. Why do we rely on plastic to make so many products? Could we ever get rid of plastic completely? Will plastic end when the oil runs out? Since plastic is in the food chain due to plastic waste in our oceans, are we part-plastic?
10. Research then describe to your partner: find out how to make... a) paper, b) glass, c) steel, d) leather, e) honey, f) a diamond, g) a tin can, h) a beefburger, i) wine.
11. Which countries do raw materials come from? Why are countries which are so rich in raw materials often among the poorest on earth?
12. Compare two different materials, e.g. wood and glass. What is different / similar about them, their uses, how they are harvested and then changed in production?