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WONDERS

Ten incredible places
to discover around the world



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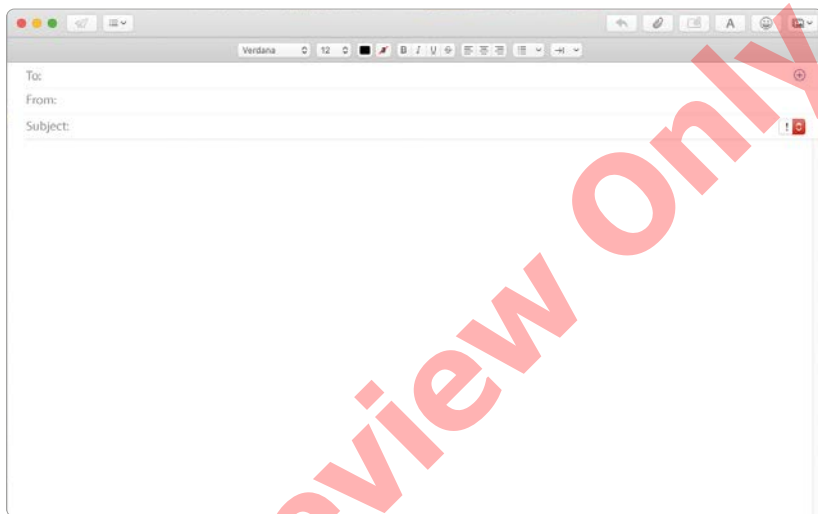
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PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Let's write

- 1 Is there a wonderful place near where you live? Write an email to a friend and tell them about it, saying what it's like and why it is special.



A screenshot of an email composition window. The window has a title bar with standard OS controls. Below the title bar is a menu bar with options like 'Verdana', '12', and various text formatting icons. The main area contains three labeled fields: 'To:', 'From:', and 'Subject:'. The 'Subject:' field is currently selected. A large, diagonal, semi-transparent watermark reading 'For Review Only' is overlaid across the entire email composition area.

Let's talk

- 2 In this book, you'll often see the four words written below. Do you know what they mean? Discuss them in class and use a dictionary if you need to.

WILDLIFE

ECOSYSTEM

VEGETATION

BIODIVERSITY

2030 Agenda - GOAL 15

- 3 Goal 15 of the 2030 Agenda is "Life on Land". What do you think is its aim? What do you think are the main problems for the environment today? Discuss with a partner then compare with the rest of your class. You can do some research online for more information.



Let's reflect

- 4** Match the photos of the first eight places in this book with the country where they are found.



1 ☐ Okavango Delta



5 ☐ Serengeti National Park



2 ☐ Ayers Rock



6 ☐ Sigiriya



3 ☐ Fushimi Inari Taisha



7 ☐ Vatnajökull and Jökulsárlón Lake



4 ☐ Rapa Nui



8 ☐ Monument Valley

a Australia

b Chile

c Tanzania

d Iceland

e USA

f Botswana

g Sri Lanka

h Japan

OKAVANGO DELTA



The river that never meets the sea

▶ 2 The delta* of Okavango is one of the most beautiful natural areas in the world. Situated in the Kalahari Desert, in the northwestern part of Botswana, it covers thousands of square kilometres. In fact, it's the second-largest delta in the world, after the Niger River delta.

The Okavango River originates in Angola and travels around a thousand kilometres before reaching its end, strangely, in the desert rather than the sea.

The park guides refer to it as

“a river that never finds its way to the sea.” A unique and complex natural ecosystem has evolved as a result. Observing the delta from above, aboard a small plane, is a unique and thrilling experience. The European Space Agency (ESA) has recently published a spectacular satellite image on its website, showing the delta's many branches and the unusual convergence of water and desert.

The Delta's main characteristic is the substantial presence of water which, during the rainy season, flows down from the uplands* of Angola and completely floods* the area. However, the river delta is not just a vast wetland*. While the rains can double the size of the

Botswana

POPULATION

2.600.000 approx.

CAPITAL

Gaborone

LANGUAGE

Setswana and English

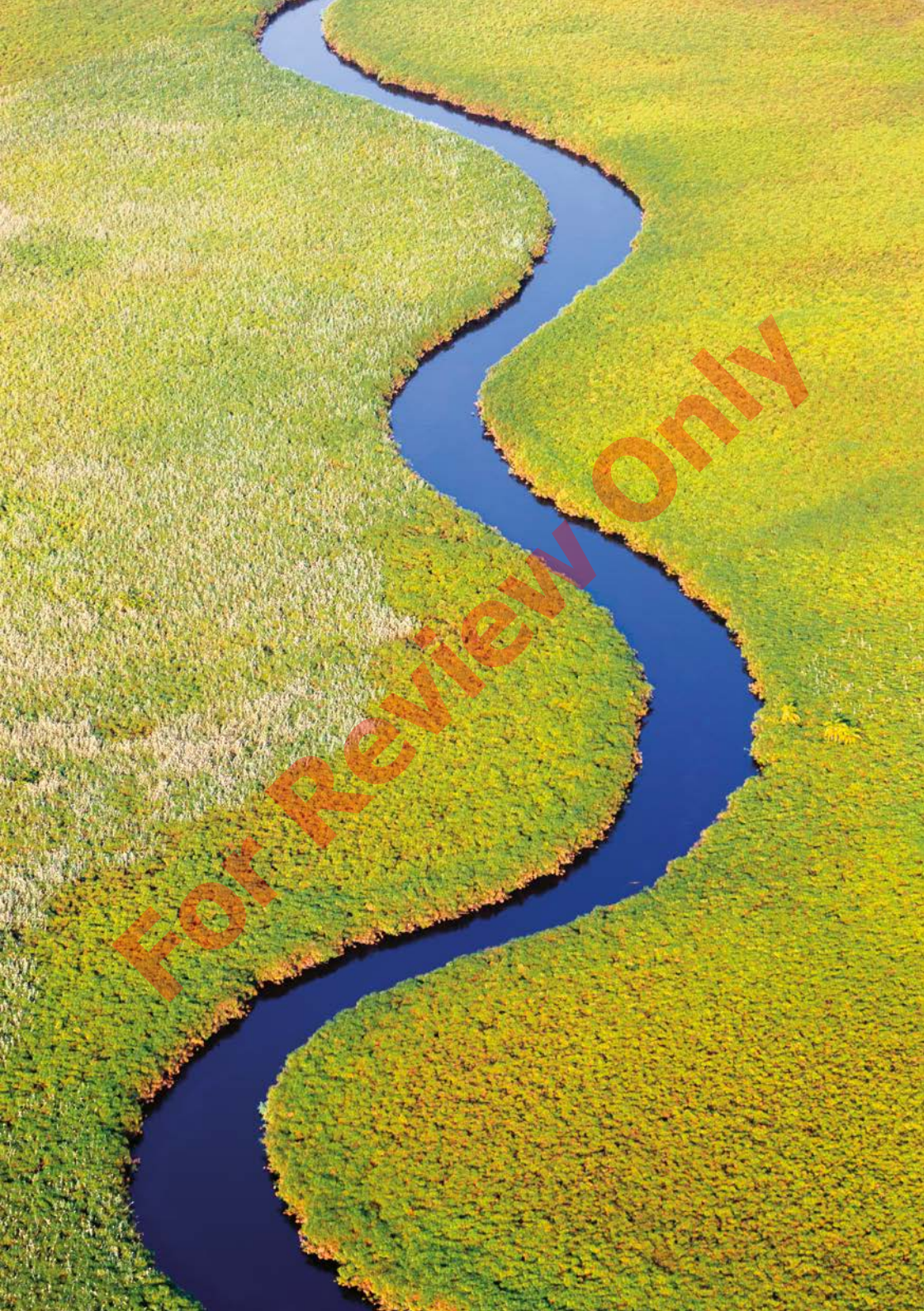
CURRENCY

Botswanan Pula



delta estuary, which is the final part of a river, shaped like a triangle
uplands flat areas of land but above 500 meters

flood fill rapidly and intensely with water, causing flooding
wetland damp area, rich in water



central swamps*, a significant portion of the delta is covered by woodlands, rainforests*, and year-round grassy plains. It is precisely this array of different habitats that enriches the region's wildlife*, making it one of the prime spots for an African safari. Numerous animal species inhabit this area, including the "big five", as well as lycaons*, cheetahs, crocodiles, zebras, and giraffes.

swamp area where the earth is always wet
rainforest typical very damp forest, where it rains a lot



wildlife untamed animals living in nature
lycaons African wild canines



The "big five"

The term "big five" refers to the five major animals of Africa: the lion, African elephant, African buffalo, leopard, and rhinoceros. This expression originated from the South African safari culture, particularly from the hunting world: hunters referred to these animals as the most challenging to hunt. Unfortunately, illegal wildlife poaching remains a concern in these areas.

On South African currency, the Rand, one side of a banknote features a "big five" animal, while the other side displays Nelson Mandela's face. Since 2012, some notes have replaced the animal with a young Mandela's face.



Floods and seasons

Like all complex and diverse natural areas, the Okavango Delta changes with the shifting of seasons and from month to month. As a remarkably humid region, the delta experiences seasonal floods. From December to April, heavy rainfall fills the river, causing it to overflow and flood the delta and surrounding areas. During the peak months of flooding, the delta covers more than 22,000 square kilometres of the Kalahari Desert!



Thanks to these floods, human presence is minimal, which has contributed to the preservation of the rich vegetation and wildlife found here. The best time to visit is the dry season*, between May and September, when animals gather near water sources for drinking, making it easier to observe them.

The mokoro

Given the great number of canals and waterways, it is a fascinating experience to take part in a water safari using a traditional local watercraft* called a mokoro. A mokoro is a canoe fashioned from a tree trunk, which allows movement through the reeds and provides opportunities to see hippos, crocodiles, and elephants. It's propelled using a technique called "poling," where the person guiding the vessel stands at the back of the canoe and pushes it with a long pole. The mokoro is very quiet so it doesn't disturb the wildlife.

dry season opposite of the rainy season, when it doesn't rain



watercraft a means of transportation that operates on water

An ecosystem to protect

The delta is divided into four areas, with the most famous being the Moremi Game Reserve, one of the most beautiful and wildlife-rich protected areas in Africa. This is the only national reserve in the Okavango and occupies 40% of the delta region. It was established by the wife of the leader of the Batswana ethnic group to safeguard

their lands and stop hunting. The Batswana people even relocated to give some space to nature. The reserve is named after King Moremi III. Going on safari in this area is just like stepping into a documentary, but it's important to follow designated trails and avoid travelling at night. Its ecosystem ranks among the richest in the entire African continent

and hosts a diverse range of plants, birds, and some of the most endangered mammals: cheetahs, white and black rhinoceroses, lions, and lycaons. In the heart of the delta lies Chief's Island, around 60 kilometres long and 10 kilometres wide — perfect for guided walks amidst the wild animals.



The Bantu

The Batswana are part of the vast Bantu ethno-linguistic group, which includes over 400 African ethnicities. They share many aspects of language and culture. The name “Bantu” was given by a scholar of African languages as it means “people” in many of these languages. The Bantu people originate from the heart of Africa and there is much information regarding their traditions, for example they believe that certain objects contain magical powers. African culture is highly diverse, boasting numerous distinct traditions. Did you know there are more than 500 Bantu languages? Swahili is the most famous of these and it is widely used in Kenya.



Herero woman,
Bantu group

Birdwatching and rock paintings

On the hills of Tsodillo, north of the Okavango River in the Okavango Panhandle region, there are walls and caves adorned with over 4,000 rock paintings* created by various indigenous populations known as Bushmen. The term “Bushman” refers to the indigenous* peoples of southern Africa, deeply connected to their land and nature, who managed to live in delicate harmony with the environment for millennia. According to archaeological studies, humans have inhabited these lands for at least 100,000 years, possibly even longer. This area was chosen due to the availability of water, animals for hunting and fishing, and abundant vegetation. The first stable settlements* were constructed here, and these are the ancestors* of the people who live here today, such as the Bakgaladi, the Herero, and the Batswana. In 1915, the Batswana chose Maun as their capital, which is now home to most of the population.

The Okavango Panhandle is a marshy strip of land expanding towards Namibia. Birdwatchers are particularly fond of this region: it’s home to African fish eagles, Pel’s fishing owls, and various other birds, as well as interesting fish like the tiger fish.



Traveller's tips

- ☐ Bring binoculars*: this place is a paradise for birdwatching!
- ☐ Take part in a lot of activities with a park guide, both during the day and at night, on the river and on land.
- ☐ Always keep your camera ready.
- ☐ Dress warmly in winter: evenings and early mornings can be very cold!
- ☐ If you're staying in delta accommodations, respect the wild animals that may come close. 



rock paintings artworks on the walls of prehistoric caves

indigenous native to and still living in a specific place

settlements places where human communities have settled and live

ancestors men and women from whom people originate

binoculars device used for distant viewing

ACTIVITIES

Grammar



2030 Agenda - GOAL 1 and GOAL 5

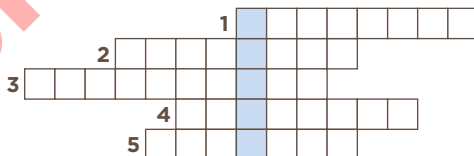
- 1** Complete the text with the correct articles: the, a, - (no article necessary).

Botswana is very active in pursuit of two goals within _____⁽¹⁾ famous 2030 Agenda: Goal No.1 and Goal No.5. _____⁽²⁾ country's economic growth is quite rapid, especially since gaining independence in _____⁽³⁾ 1966. Thanks to good governance, _____⁽⁴⁾ presence of diamond mines, and _____⁽⁵⁾ moderately sized population, Botswana is on _____⁽⁶⁾ track to become _____⁽⁷⁾ relatively affluent nation capable of reducing poverty rates significantly. Additionally, the country is committed to achieving _____⁽⁸⁾ gender equality. It has increased the participation of women in the workforce, and the level of _____⁽⁹⁾ education beyond the age of 25 has equalised between individuals of _____⁽¹⁰⁾ same age but different genders.



Vocabulary

- 2** Which other animal makes up part of the 'big seven' along with the white shark? The only park in the world to house them in their natural habitat is Addo Elephant National Park, in South Africa.



- 1 Untamed animals who live in their natural habitat.
- 2 A type of illegal hunting for endangered animals.
- 3 The mokoro is one of these.
- 4 The name of the desert where the river Okavango arrives.
- 5 It is one of the most endangered species of mammal, but it is not part of the "big five".

Let's write

- 3** Imagine you are on safari in Botswana. Write about what you see, what the days and nights are like, the noises you hear, etc. Begin your text with these words:

I'm on safari in the Okavango Delta, the date is....

Role play/Debate

- 4** Work in pairs. You are in a courtroom. Choose who plays the part of the poacher and who is the forest ranger: the poacher thinks it's normal and right to hunt animals, while the ranger thinks that animals should always be protected. Prepare your discussion with your partner then present it to the class, who will be the jury. You each need to try to convince the jury that you're right. Who will win? The jury will decide.

