

From child soldier to wildlife ranger

Level 3 • Advanced

1 Warmer

Put these animals in order from 1 (most endangered) to 5 (least endangered).

- | | |
|----------|---------------------|
| 1. _____ | a. giant panda |
| 2. _____ | b. Asian elephant |
| 3. _____ | c. mountain gorilla |
| 4. _____ | d. orangutan |
| 5. _____ | e. tiger |

2 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

poacher	corruption	war-torn	bush	sustainable
park ranger	daunting	resolute	sacrifice	rebel

- A _____ is someone whose job is to look after a forest or a piece of countryside.
- A _____ is someone who kills or catches animals illegally.
- If you are _____, you are extremely determined.
- A _____ is the act of giving up something important or valuable so that you or other people can do or have something else.
- A _____ way of life uses methods that do not harm the environment.
- _____ is dishonest or illegal behaviour by officials or people in power, especially when they accept money in exchange for doing things for someone.
- A _____ is someone who tries to remove a government or leader using force.
- In hot parts of the world like Australia and Africa, the _____ consists of areas that are not used for agriculture, are usually far from cities and have very few people there.
- A _____ country has been badly damaged by fighting, especially fighting that involves different groups from the same country.
- A _____ task is one that makes you worried because you think it will be very difficult or dangerous to do.

3 Find the information

Find the following information in the text as quickly as possible.

- Where is the Virunga National Park?
- How many hippos are there in Virunga National Park?
- How big is Upemba National Park?
- How many park rangers are there in Upemba National Park?
- How long did Rodrigue Katembo spend in jail?
- How many illegal miners have been removed from Upemba National Park?

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From Congo child soldier to award-winning wildlife ranger – a life in danger

Forced into the militia as a child in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rodrigue Katembo has now been awarded a Goldman prize for risking his life fighting to protect his country's wildlife

Damian Carrington

24 April, 2017

- 1 As an enforced child soldier, Rodrigue Katembo saw his little brother die and had to carry the news to his mother. Now 41, he remains on the frontline – but today, he protects the extraordinary wildlife in the national parks of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from armed militias.
- 2 It is exceptionally dangerous work: 160 park rangers have been killed protecting Virunga National Park in the last 15 years, outnumbered ten to one by militias and poachers. Around the world, about 1,000 rangers have died in the line of duty over the last decade. But Katembo, who has been awarded the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize, is resolute, despite the attacks he has endured and the risks he continues to run.
- 3 “It is really worth it to make this sacrifice,” he said. “I know it is among the most dangerous work in DRC but I am working for the welfare of future generations.” His goal is to protect the rainforests and savannahs of Congo’s parks, and the endangered mountain gorillas, lions and elephants they contain, and build a sustainable way of life for the many thousands of people living there.
- 4 Katembo has made heavy personal sacrifices in the fight against the corruption that helps fuel the destruction. In 2013, just days after stopping an oil-related development, he was arrested. “I was tortured and put in jail for 17 days,” he said, adding that he also suffered mock executions. “That was a really difficult time for me and my family as we didn’t know if I was going to die in prison or not.”
- 5 Katembo survived and in 2015, the company pursuing oil in Virunga, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, abandoned its plans. However, continuing death threats from poachers, armed rebels and illegal miners led to his transfer to Upemba National Park, though, even there, he has to live apart from his family for their safety.
- 6 The source of Katembo’s courage and determination is his love of the natural world: “Since I was very young, I really wanted to become part of the Wildlife Authority of Congo.” The best moments in his dangerous job are in the bush, he says: “Many times as a chief warden, you take your rangers on patrol. You look at tracks and follow the wildlife but every time you do that, you are amazed at the beauty of the wildlife of Congo. Every time, you see new things and make new discoveries – it’s marvellous.”
- 7 Katembo lists his successes with pride: “We saw the population of hippos in Virunga go from 500 to 1,700 in three to four years – that was a really important moment for me. In Upemba in 2015, we only had 54 zebra: we now have 72. We had no elephants inside the park but now we have 68.”
- 8 Katembo’s early love of wildlife and desire to serve his war-torn country was disrupted at the age of 14. “One of the armed groups tricked me and said they were going to bring me to university,” he says. “In the end, I started to be a child soldier. Many of the youths that tried to run away were killed. But I stayed there for two years.”
- 9 “I was then able to go home during some holidays,” Katembo says. “I had to tell my mother that my younger brother had been killed in front of my eyes. My mother really fought to try to stop me having to return and I was able to escape. My mother then did everything she could to pay for my schooling and thanks to her, I was able to study.”
- 10 Katembo joined the DRC Wildlife Authority in 2003, which funded further study, and he has risen fast. He says he takes strength from the teams he works with but also from the responsibility he bears: “It is really important they trust me and see in me someone whose leadership is bringing them support and who is giving an example.”
- 11 His work in Upemba is daunting. The park covers 1.75m hectares and contains spectacular wildlife, including leopards and the Katanga impala, found only there. But there are also gold, emeralds and coltan – a highly valuable ore used in electronics – which draw illegal mining. Katembo has already closed down eight coltan mines and removed 1,400 small-scale miners.

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- 12 But the murderous Katanga Mai Mai militia have infiltrated the park, making the need for more resources even more urgent. Katembo has just 160 rangers, far short of the 400 needed, and a single patrol truck.
- 13 Nonetheless, Katembo is not ready to back down from the fight. "It is not the time to do something else. When we see how many groups are trying to destroy our protected areas, we

cannot stop now. If I left, I would be abandoning the protections the wildlife and national parks deserve. I also need to ensure a new generation of young Congolese are there to take up the baton."

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First published in *The Guardian*, 24/04/17

4 Comprehension check

Choose the best answer according to the text.

- Why does Rodrigue Katembo describe his work in Upemba National Park as "daunting"?
 - because the park contains spectacular wildlife, including leopards and the Katanga impala
 - because there is illegal coltan mining in the park
 - because he does not have enough resources to protect the park from illegal mining and armed militia groups
- Why does he think it is worth risking his life for his job?
 - because he is working for the benefit of future generations
 - because there are more zebras in the park now
 - because his mother did everything she could to give him an education
- What, according to Katembo, gives him strength in his work?
 - his love of wildlife
 - his love of the Democratic Republic of Congo
 - the people he works with and the responsibility he has
- Why did Katembo move from Virunga to Upemba?
 - because of death threats from poachers, rebels and illegal miners
 - because he was offered the job of chief ranger
 - because his younger brother was killed in Virunga

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5 Find the word

Find the following words and phrases in the text.

1. a three-word phrase meaning *in a position where you are most likely to be attacked* (para 1)
2. a five-word phrase meaning *while working* (para 2)
3. an adjective meaning *admired and respected by people* (para 2)
4. a verb meaning *hurt someone in a very cruel way, especially in order to punish them or make them say something* (para 4)
5. an adjective only used before a noun meaning *not real but intended to look or seem real* (para 4)
6. a two-word phrasal verb meaning *stop doing something or saying you will do something because a lot of people oppose you* (para 13)
7. a verb meaning *leave a person or place when you should stay* (para 13)
8. a four-word verb phrase meaning *take over responsibility and continue to fight* (para 13)

6 Verb + noun collocations

Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns or noun phrases in the right-hand column.

- | | |
|------------|-------------------|
| 1. make | a. your country |
| 2. award | b. a risk |
| 3. run | c. a sacrifice |
| 4. serve | d. responsibility |
| 5. bear | e. a plan |
| 6. abandon | f. a prize |

7 Word-building

Complete the sentences using the correct form of the word in brackets at the end of each sentence.

1. Being a park ranger in the DRC is _____ dangerous work. [EXCEPTION]
2. His goal is to protect _____ species in the national park. [DANGER]
3. Corruption contributes to the _____ in the parks. [DESTROY]
4. The park contains _____ wildlife. [SPECTACLE]
5. The _____ Katanga Mai Mai militia have infiltrated the park. [MURDER]
6. He has just been awarded an _____ prize. [ENVIRONMENT]

8 Discussion

Discuss the statements.

- Rich countries must do more to protect wildlife in countries like the DRC.
- Man's greed is destroying animal species around the world.
- Animals become extinct. We have bigger problems than that.

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KEY

1 Warmer

(approximate numbers in brackets)

1. c. mountain gorilla (880)
2. a. giant panda (2,000)
3. e. tiger (4,000)
4. b. Asian elephant (40,000)
5. d. orangutan (60,000)

2 Key words

1. park ranger
2. poacher
3. resolute
4. sacrifice
5. sustainable
6. corruption
7. rebel
8. bush
9. war-torn
10. daunting

3 Find the information

1. in the Democratic Republic of Congo
2. 1,700
3. 1.75 million hectares
4. 160
5. 17 days
6. 1,400

4 Comprehension check

1. c
2. a
3. c
4. a

5 Find the word

1. on the frontline
2. in the line of duty
3. prestigious
4. torture
5. mock
6. back down
7. abandon
8. take up the baton

6 Verb + noun collocations

1. c
2. f
3. b
4. a
5. d
6. e

7 Word-building

1. exceptionally
2. endangered
3. destruction
4. spectacular
5. murderous
6. environmental