

**Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts: K-12 Close Reading Task**

Text grade band placement: 6-8	
Text	Text Complexity Analysis
<p><b>Title:</b> “Ecuador Set To Poison Millions of Rats on Galapagos Islands”</p> <p><b>Author:</b> Colin Shultz</p> <p><b>Link:</b> <a href="http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/smartnews/2012/11/ecuador-set-to-poison-millions-of-rats-on-galapagos-islands/#ixzz2a05ZdqUB">http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/smartnews/2012/11/ecuador-set-to-poison-millions-of-rats-on-galapagos-islands/#ixzz2a05ZdqUB</a></p>	<p><b>Quantitative:</b> Lexile: 1500L</p>
	<p><b>Qualitative:</b> It is moderately complex in its structure giving multiple references for its ecological impact. Language used is literal and is relatively clear but does include some challenging vocabulary that is subject - specific to Biology such as equatorial, archipelago, endemic, prolific, etc.</p>
	<p><b>Reader and Task:</b> The text gives students an opportunity to read about a current situation that involves issues of biodiversity, interconnectedness, and the impact humans have on the ecosystem.</p> <p>Students should at the end of this assignment be able to connect the information in the text to the prior knowledge of ecological connections, exotic vs. native species, possible bioaccumulation, and possible unknown long term effects on the islands.</p> <p>Although the quantitative measures are extremely high, because this text connects to prior knowledge in the TN science standards, students should be able to access it with strong teacher support.</p>
ELA/Literacy Common Core Standards addressed by task	
<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.1 Write arguments focused on <i>discipline-specific content</i>.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p>	

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis reflection, and research.

**What key insights should students take from this text?**

1. Students should make the connection to a real life modern day example of human impact on environment.
2. Students should evaluate the severity of impact on the unique species of the Galapagos due to their isolation.
3. Students should analyze the survival capabilities of the rat invaders due to their adaptability and broad niches and determine the additional negative impact.
4. Students should be able to discuss the potential danger in the island-wide poison drop to the delicate ecosystem.
5. Students should be able to analyze the risk/reward nature of the current efforts in the Galapagos based on their previous knowledge.

**Text-Dependent Questions**

1. What has been the most devastating impact of introducing rats to the Galapagos island ecosystem?
2. What evidence does the author provide that suggests that human travelers are having a negative impact on the native species of the Islands?
3. Ecologists plan to eliminate the rats' negative impact by dropping "poison pellets" on the island. What are some reasons this might be a "risky measure"?
4. What positive outcomes could result from human intervention in the island crisis? In your opinion, do the risks of the intervention outweigh the intended benefits?

**Writing Mode**

**Writing Prompt**

Argumentative

Write an argumentative essay that makes one of the following claims:

1. The risk of dumping poison pellets on the Galapagos Islands is too great to justify the intervention measure.

	<p>2. The benefit of dumping poison pellets on the Galapagos Islands is too great to not take the intervention measure.</p>
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Cite evidence from the text to support your claim and be sure to address the counter claim.

**Scaffolding and support for special education students, English language learners, and struggling readers:**

In order to support struggling readers, vocabulary support must be given and connections made to prior learning of human impact on environment and biodiversity consequences. Teachers can also use:

- Peer tutoring may for struggling learners to fully comprehend the material
- Small group discussions to help students process the concepts
- Extra time one-on-one in directed studies
- Pre-reading vocabulary support and reviews of the previous knowledge linking to the lesson

**How this task supports the content standards for relevant subject area courses in this grade band**

This task is appropriate for an 8<sup>th</sup> grade science course and supports the following standards:

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| GLE 0807.5.3 | Analyze how structural, behavioral, and physiological adaptations within a population enable it to survive in a given environment.            |
| GLE 0807.5.4 | Explain why variation within a population can enhance the chances for group survival.   |
| GLE 0807.5.5 | Describe the importance of maintaining the earth's biodiversity.  |
| SPI 0807.5.2 | Analyze structural, behavioral, and physiological adaptations to predict which populations are likely to survive in a particular environment. |
| SPI 0807.5.3 | Analyze data on levels of variation within a population to make predictions about survival under particular environmental conditions.         |
| SPI 0807.5.4 | Identify several reasons for the importance of maintaining the earth's biodiversity.  |