

MR043- C

There might be as many as 10 million species of complex life on this planet today—a huge number. But add up all of the complex species that ever lived and some biologists think the grand total would be about five billion. The
5 estimate leads to an astonishing conclusion: a staggering 99% of species are not around any more. They have been driven to extinction.

More species are joining the ranks of the extinct every year. Many scientists believe we are living through an episode of
10 remarkably rapid extinction, on a scale that has been seen only five times in the last half a billion years.

They call this current episode the sixth mass extinction—a large, global decline in a wide variety of species over a relatively short period of time. And they tend to agree that
15 humans are the main cause.

Over-hunting, overfishing, and human-driven habitat loss are pushing many species to the brink. In fact, we have changed the planet so much that some geologists are now suggesting that we have entered a new phase in Earth's
20 history; an epoch they call the "Anthropocene". By 2100, it is expected that humans will have caused the extinction of up to half of the world's current species.

Because we are living through this extinction, it is relatively easy for us to study the driving forces behind it. But how
25 do we determine what caused other mass die-offs that happened long ago? To do so we have to look at what archaeologists, palaeontologists, geologists and other scientists have concluded from the evidence they have gathered.

30 The trouble is, those scientists do not always agree with one another—even about the most recent extinction event. As well as the five-or six- mass extinctions, there have also been many smaller extinctions.

One of these mini extinction events happened towards the
35 end of the Pleistocene, a few tens of thousands of years ago. It is sometimes called the "megafaunal" extinction because many of the species it claimed were particularly large animals, weighing more than 97lb (44kg). However, its cause remains a debate amongst scientists.

1 What can we learn about the sixth mass extinction?

- A. Humans are the main cause of it.
- B. It means a global decline over a long time.
- C. It occurred towards the end of the Pleistocene.
- D. Scientists still disagree about the cause of it.

2 What can be inferred from the text about species?

- A. 99% of species will not be around any more by 2100.
- B. By the 22nd century, there will probably be about five million on this planet.
- C. About eight years later we will enter what is called the "Anthropocene".
- D. It is not easy for us to figure out causes behind the "Anthropocene".

3 Which of the following is closest in meaning to the underlined word in the last paragraph ?

- A. Land animals.
- B. Marine life.
- C. Huge animals.
- D. Flesh-eating creatures.

PART 2 1 / 阅读理解

每小題 2 分

MR044- A

My youngest son Jack has begun to learn the cello (大提琴). Every night, he carefully gets his cello out of its case and begins practising. I won't lie; it's not pretty. While he's getting better every day, he has a long way from becoming the next Yo-Yo Ma.

This led me to wonder what Yo-Yo Ma was like the first time he played the cello. Of course, we now know him as one of the most excellent artists in the world, but I'm sure that when he first tried, he wasn't much better than my son. I'm not suggesting that Jack is going to take the classical music world by storm one day. But he's got to start somewhere.

Michael Jordan wasn't born playing basketball, but I'm sure that he had to start somewhere. Warren Buffett wasn't born making great investment choices, but he had to start somewhere. J. K. Rowling wasn't born a writer, but she had to start somewhere. Bruce Springsteen wasn't born a songwriter and performer, but he had to start somewhere. Each of these individuals is now famous as being at the top of their occupation. But when they first started, their skills would have been disappointing and their potential unrealized. It has taken years of hard work to realize their undoubted talents. But they had to start somewhere.

I don't know what my kids are going to do with their lives, but they have a great opportunity to explore a wide range of experiences before focusing on one or two things that they can be crazy about and good at. It's my job as dad to encourage them not to be put off by their bad first efforts. Because everyone has to start somewhere.

1 We know the author's son _____.

- A. has no gift for playing the cello
- B. doesn't like playing the cello
- C. cannot play the cello well now
- D. is sure to be the next Yo-Yo Ma

2 How is the third paragraph developed?

- A. By setting down general rules.
- B. By making comparisons.
- C. By Presenting research findings.
- D. By giving examples.

3 What does the underlined sentence in the last paragraph mean?

- A. The author has no confidence in his kids.
- B. The author will encourage his kids.
- C. The author is worried about his kids' bad first efforts.
- D. The author will give his kids freedom to do what they want.

4 The text is meant to show that _____.

- A. everyone has to start somewhere
- B. people should do what they're good at
- C. a gift is very important in one's success
- D. everyone can realize their potential with practice