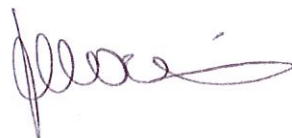busta n. 1

1. Il candidato definisca le funzioni delle Camere di commercio evidenziando in particolare le modifiche introdotte dalla normativa di riordino del 2016

2. Il candidato illustri i servizi digitali erogati dalla Camera di commercio

Do you have eco-anxiety?

A growing number of people around the world are experiencing something psychiatrists are calling 'eco-anxiety', an overwhelming sense of hopeless and doom due to the current climate situation. Of course, direct victims of climate change suffer most. Flood survivors experience depression and anxiety, and people breathing polluted air are at higher risk of dementia. But according to the Institute of Psychiatrists, just reading about the state of the planet in the news is causing stress and anxiety.

Unsurprisingly, many of those suffering from eco-anxiety are young people. When BBC Radio 4 programme, Woman's Hour, spoke with veteran environmentalist, Judy Ling Wong, they asked her if she was worried for young people today:

Judy Ling Wong
I have tremendous compassion for them because what a mess we have left the world in, our generation, and the generation before. Of course, you know, the science is so advanced now… very much in the past, the science would say, yes we think, perhaps… we perhaps have these models… now we have the exact science, so it is an absolutely different ball game… we actually know what to do now. It is about getting on with it, and the young people are the furthest ahead in this : they can see the future as theirs and they're impassioned to do something about it. Young people feel strongly motivated to take action. And, as it turns out, taking action may be one of the most powerful antidotes to eco-anxiety: actually doing something to combat climate change reduces feelings of helplessness. When the Institute of Psychiatry published its special issue on climate anxiety, one of the papers pointed out that if you can do something about it, if you feel part of the movement to change things or to stabilise things, then you feel much better. And also, you know, at the moment the government is trying to reach net zero by 2050 and all that, and they committed to creating 2 million new green jobs. Now, if young people and activists think about this… if you have a green job you're actually dedicating your entire working life to building a green sustainable future, and that has a huge effect on your psychology.

Adapted from : BBC 6 minute English, August 10th 2023 .

busta n. 2

1. Il candidato illustri il ruolo e le funzioni della Giunta della Camera di commercio

2. Il candidato identifichi i servizi erogati dalla Camera di commercio che hanno registrato negli anni una maggiore digitalizzazione

Are you unhappy at work?

https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/6-minute-english_2023/ep-230817

We spend so much of our day working – how can we ensure our job doesn't make us miserable? It takes more than just money and conditions. Most people have had bad work experiences at one time or another - maybe a job that was boring, badly paid, or just working too much and getting burned out – lacking energy or enthusiasm because of working too hard. But does work have to be like this? Since most of our waking day is spent at work, how can we make sure our job doesn't make us unhappy? Really it's all about pace, cost efficiencies, meeting targets, deadlines… so this is why when people do surveys of what we call 'work intensity', so how hard is your job? , Is there a supervisor breathing down your neck? Compared to some European countries, British workers have to meet more targets and deadlines - a time or date by which a particular job must be finished. A good job is about more than pay and conditions, it's one that uses your talents, and gives you some choice over how and when you work. In 2022, Britain's biggest employer, the National Health Service or NHS, lost more than 15,000 nurses.

Another sector with long working hours is the construction industry. Low paid, dirty and physically demanding, construction workers also risk high levels of work-related injury. Emma Stewart, co-founder of social business, TimeWise, tells BBC Radio 4 programme, Analysis, about her trial project to help builders enjoy their jobs more: Emma describes the current working patterns using the word, presenteeism – staying at work longer than usual, or going to work when you're ill, to show that you work hard. But this isn't an effective way to work. Emma thinks a task-based approach is better, both at getting the job done, and for improving work-life balance - the amount of time you spend at work, compared with the amount of time you spend relaxing with your family, and doing things you enjoy. In other words, flexible working is a win-win – a situation that's good for everyone involved.

Adapted from : "BBC 6 minute English", August 17ᵗʰ 2023

busta n. 3

1. Il candidato illustri il ruolo e le funzioni della Consiglio della Camera di commercio

2. La comunicazione tra le imprese e la Camera di commercio ai sensi del Codice dell'Amministrazione Digitale (CAD)

Ecotourism : good or bad ?

https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/6-minute-english_2023/ep-230601

In recent years, nature and wildlife tourism has grown massively. Whether it's meeting mountain gorillas or swimming with dolphins, every year tourists pay thousands of dollars for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. But ecotourism doesn't always work well.

As the popularity of hunting declines, safaris are changing their guns for cameras, offering tourists the chance to photograph wild animals in their natural habitat. In recent years, nature and wildlife tourism, also called ecotourism, has grown massively.

But the story is complex. While money from ecotourism is supposed to support threatened wildlife and traditional local cultures, the reality is sometimes different.

The balance between the good and bad things ecotourism can bring is well understood by Vicky Smith, whose website, Earth Changes, matches ecotourists with environmentally-friendly travel companies. Here is Vicky talking with BBC Radio 4 programme, Costing the Earth:

"Just because tourism is nature-based, it doesn't mean to say it's necessarily responsible or sustainable. So, there's a lot of animal activities in tourism that we know which are, you know, highly irresponsible and unsustainable, like a performing whale and dolphin shows, or swimming with dolphins, elephant-riding, tiger selfies where the tigers are drugged. So, genuine ecotourism is sustainable – designed to continue at a steady level which does not damage the environment. Not every travel company which calls themselves eco-friendly acts sustainably, and may still advertise irresponsible tourist activities, including tiger selfies – having your photo taken with a captive wild tiger. There are two requirements travel companies should meet to qualify as genuine ecotourism. First, tourists' main motivation should be to appreciate and observe the natural world without interfering, and second, the money they spend should support traditional communities. Clearly, having your photograph taken with a chained and drugged tiger does not meet these requirements!"
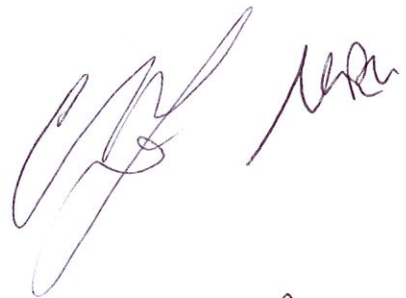
Adapted from : BBC 6 minute English, June 1ˢᵗ 2023

busta n. 4

1. Il candidato illustri il ruolo e le funzioni del Presidente della Camera di commercio

2. Il candidato sintetizzi le linee del Codice dell'Amministrazione Digitale (CAD) con riferimento all'informazione e alla comunicazione digitale

COVID-19 pandemic led to increase in loneliness around the world

https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2022/05/covid-19-increase-loneliness

People around the world experienced an increase in loneliness during the covid-19 pandemic, which, although small, could have implications for people's long-term mental and physical health, longevity and well-being, according to research published by the American Psychological Association.

"The pandemic does appear to have increased loneliness," said author Mareike Ernst, PhD, of Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz in Germany. "However, as loneliness constitutes a risk for premature mortality and mental and physical health, it should be closely monitored. We think that loneliness should be made a priority in large-scale research projects aimed at investigating the health outcomes of the pandemic."

Ernst and her coauthors wanted to explore whether changes such as lockdowns, physical distancing and the switch to remote work and school during the pandemic increased people's loneliness. Such measures undoubtedly increased social isolation, but research has found that social isolation does not always lead to loneliness. Social isolation means having a small social network and few interactions with others, while loneliness is the painful feeling of having less or poorer quality social connections than a person wants. Some studies have found only weak correlations between the two. To figure out whether the pandemic actually increased loneliness, the researchers reviewed 34 studies from four continents—primarily in North America and Europe—involving more than 200,000 total participants. All of the data came from long-term studies that measured participants' levels of loneliness before the beginning of the pandemic and again during the pandemic. The researchers found a small but significant increase in loneliness during the pandemic—about a 5 percent increase in the prevalence of loneliness across the individual studies, on average.

Adapted from "Journal of American Psychology Association", May 9th 2022

busta n. 5

1. Il candidato illustri gli organi della Camera di commercio e le relative funzioni

2. Il candidato illustri le caratteristiche dello Sportello Unico delle Attività Produttive (SUAP)

REFUGEES

Refugees are people who have fled from their country because of wars, political or religious conflicts or because they fear persecution from governments. Displaced people have lost their home but they remain in their own country.

Officially there are about 12 million refugees today. The peak was reached during the Balkan conflict of the 1990s, when almost 18 million people were refugees. About 70 % of the world's refugee population is in Africa and the Middle East.

Over 800,000 people flee from their homes and become refugees every year. Most of them escape wars and conflicts in Africa and the Middle East. During 2011 thousands fled from North African dictatorships during what was called the Arab Spring. During 1994 hundreds of thousands of Rwandans escaped the genocide and terror in their country.

Afghanistan is the country with the most refugees, almost 3 million. Most Afghani refugees go to Pakistan. Germany is home to over 500, 000 Afghan citizens and over a quarter of a million have come to the United States.

Over one million people have left Iraq and Somalia. Sudan and Congo have about half a million refugees each. The United Nations also states there are over 10 million stateless people around the world, Kurds or Palestinians who do not belong to a certain country.

People do not become refugees only because of war or other political conflicts. As drought continues in the Horn of Africa over 12 million people are thought to be homeless or in refugee camps.
On the whole over 40 million people are considered to be homeless worldwide, according to the United Nations, mostly because of new conflicts . They are likely to stay refugees and not be able to go back to their homelands any time soon.

Adapted from: "English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners".

busta n. 6

1. Il candidato descriva i compiti e le funzioni del Segretario Generale e le modalità con cui viene nominato

2. Il candidato definisca la finalità e le caratteristiche della sezione del sito "Amministrazione trasparente"

How did the social care system in Great Britain end up in crisis and how can it be fixed?

The fragility of the social care system was utterly exposed by COVID. The decision to discharge elderly people into care homes in the early days of the pandemic is seen by many as one of its biggest scandals – but delays in making vital resources such as testing and personal protective equipment (PPE) available to staff also had a huge impact.

More than 40,000 people are thought to have died in care homes in England and Wales due to COVID, with many terrible accounts of residents being "locked away", or dying alone with families forced to stand outside.

A staffing crisis, leaving the sector short of over 165,000 carers, led to some homes being declared closed to new admissions – the result of which has been hospital bed blockages and people going without the care they need.

Despite government after government promising to get a grip of Britain's care service, some argue the system is in a worse state than ever. The emergency funding that was supposed to be spent to help the sector during COVID dried up long ago and there have been accusations about that money being mispent, as it allowed private companies to prioritise profit over care.

The fragmented combination of public and private care is a hugely complicating factor. As is the army of "invisible" (largely female) carers working – unpaid – to support family members and friends at home, without acknowledgement or support.

The NHS cannot be fixed unless the care system is transformed. But how?

Adapted from "The Conversation magazine", July 5th 2023

Martina Dalmasto

busta n. 7

1. Il candidato descriva il sistema camerale e ne illustri le caratteristiche

2. Il candidato illustri cosa si intende per dematerializzazione del documento amministrativo

PROVA NON ESTRATTA

VIRTUAL REALITY

Virtual reality (VR) refers to a computer-generated, three-dimensional virtual environment that users can interact with, typically accessed via a computer that is capable of projecting 3D information via a display, which can be isolated screens or a wearable display, e.g., a head-mounted display (HMD), along with user identification sensors. VR can mainly be divided into two categories: non-immersive, and immersive. Non-immersive VR utilizes a combination of screens surrounding the user to present virtual information, while immersive VR refers to using a wearable display, e.g., HMD, to track a user's movement and present the VR information based on the position of users, which allows them to experience 360 degrees of the virtual environment.

Despite virtual reality (VR) being initially marketed toward gaming, there are many potential and existing VR applications in various sectors and fields, including education, training, simulations, and even in exercise and healthcare. Unfortunately, there is still a lack of general understanding of the strengths and limitations of VR as a technology in various application domains. Key VR applications were discussed in terms of how they are currently utilized or can be utilized in the future, spanning fields such as medicine, engineering, education, and entertainment. Overall, virtual reality technology has the potential to be a greatly beneficial tool in a multitude of applications and a wide variety of fields. VR as a technology is still in its early stages, but more people are becoming interested in it and are optimistic about seeing what kind of changes VR can make in their everyday lives. With how rapidly modern society has adapted to personal computers and smartphones, VR has the opportunity to become the next big technological turning point that will eventually become commonplace in most households.

Adapted from : "National Library of Medicine", 12th September , 2021

PROVA NON ESTRATTA

busta n. 8

1. Il candidato descriva le principali fonti di finanziamento delle Camere di commercio

2. Il candidati illustri i soggetti coinvolti negli adempimenti relativi alla privacy

Our wildfire problem is growing beyond our ability to tame it

Jennifer Balch is a fire scientist and director of the Environmental Data Science Innovation and Inclusion Lab at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

The loss of life and property in Lahaina, Hawaii, is shocking even to a fire scientist. I have long assumed the next wildfire disaster was going to be in the super-dry American West, not on the tropical island of Maui.

But it is easy to find parallels between the tragedy in Lahaina and the deadly and devastating wildfires that struck the towns of Louisville and Superior in Colorado in 2021, and Paradise in California in 2018. Those two fires resulted in 87 deaths and destroyed thousands of structures.

Wildfire boils down to three ingredients: a warm and dry climate, fuels to burn and a spark. Wind is an accelerant and has been a player in almost all of the recent wildfire disasters. The same is true in Lahaina, but there are some other overlooked factors at work. The first is grass. Hawaiian ecosystems are not adapted to fire, which means they are vulnerable to wildfires. Invasive species, particularly flammable grasses, push out native species. These non native plants, such as guinea grass, fountain grass and molasses grass, can cause great damage on ecosystems and abandoned agricultural areas, creating a continuous carpet of fine and very flammable fuel. This invasive grass-fire cycle is a national and global phenomenon and a growing problem on the U.S. mainland. Some of the largest fires in the United States are fueled, in part, by invasive cheatgrass, which is known for promoting fire in ecosystems common in the West. In Hawaii, non native grasses and shrubs now cover about a quarter of the state; just parking a car on a dry patch of tall grass can start a fire.

Adapted from The Washington Post, August 12th 2023

busta n. 9

1. Il candidato illustri il ruolo e le funzioni del Collegio dei revisori dei conti

2. Il candidato definisca il significato dell'accountability e su quali attività si basa

Emanuela
Grippi

The rise of animal – assisted therapy

https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jul/21/cats-camels-and-a-jesus-lizard-the-rise-of-animal-assisted-

It's the cat lovers' dilemma. You buy sachets of food that stink out the house, clean out litter trays, and spend hundreds on vet bills. In return, the feline companion scratches your furniture and arms, deposits dead rodents on the carpet, and occasionally disappears for three days.

"With humans, it's survivor thinking: if I'm nice to people, they will be nice to me," says Yoni Yehuda, an Israeli psychotherapist, as his cat Jack Daniels licks water from a jug on his office table.

With animals, he says, there is no apparent quid pro quo. We help them for purer reasons, often with no expectation of a return.

This concept is the foundation of the professor's work – providing therapy for people with mental health conditions by asking them to care for animals. There is healing, he believes, deeply rooted in the animal-human relationship.

Animals were used in mental health institutions in the late 18th century to encourage socialisation. Today, a patient might be given time to stroke a dog, which has been shown to reduce stress. Practitioners say animals can also motivate patients to stay in treatment, or be used as a metaphor for their own struggles. Some traumatised people prefer not to interact with another person at all.

In the past few years, analyses of dozens of studies indicate animals in therapy can have a limited but positive impact on a range of disorders, including depression, schizophrenia and addiction.

Adapted from The Guardian. July 21st 2020

busta n. 10

1. Il candidato definisca le competenze delle Camere di commercio in materia di regolazione del mercato

2. Il candidato indichi quali sono gli atti della pubblica amministrazione soggetti all'obbligo di pubblicazione on line

Should we fear chatbots?

How human are chatbots? Do they really know what we are thinking, and should we fear them?

Now, I'm sure most of us have interacted with a chatbot. These are bits of computer technology that respond to text with text or respond to your voice. You ask it a question and it usually comes up with an answer

Yes, it's almost like talking to another human, but of course it's not – it's just a clever piece of technology. It is becoming more sophisticated – more advanced and complex, but could they replace real human interaction altogether?

Now, the old chatbots of the 1960s and 70s were quite basic, but more recently, the technology is able to predict the next word that is likely to be used in a sentence, and it learns words and sentence structures.

It's clever stuff. I've experienced using them when talking to my bank - or when I have problems trying to book a ticket on a website. I no longer phone a human but I speak to a 'virtual assistant' instead. Probably the most well-known chatbot at the moment is ChatGTP.

The claim is it's able to answer anything you ask it. This includes writing students' essays. This is something that was discussed on the BBC Radio 4 programme, Word of Mouth. Emily M Bender, Professor of Computational Linguistics at the University of Washington, explained why it's dangerous to always trust what a chatbot is telling us. She tells us: "chatbots might appear to write and speak in a coherent way, but really, they are just predicting one word after another, based on what they have learnt. We should, therefore, be on guard – be careful and alert about the accuracy of what we are being told. One concern is that chatbots – a form of artificial intelligence – work a bit like a human brain in the way it can learn and process information. They are able to learn from experience - something called deep learning.

A cognitive psychologist and computer scientist called Geoffrey Hinton, recently said he feared that chatbots could soon overtake the level of information that a human brain holds. That's a bit scary isn't it?
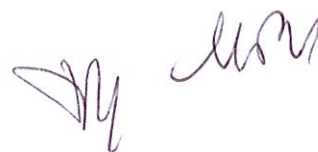
For now, chatbots can be useful for practical information, but sometimes we start to believe they are human, and we interact with them in a human-like way. This can make us believe them even more.

Adapted from : BBC six – minute English , August 5th 2023

busta n. 11

1. Il candidato definisca le competenze delle Camere di commercio in materia di orientamento al lavoro e alle professioni

2. Il candidato descriva l'obbligo di trasparenza della pubblica amministrazione e il contemperamento con il diritto alla riservatezza nell'epoca della comunicazione digitale sui siti on line

Why parenting has become more difficult in the USA

Parents in a recent survey agreed, by a six-to-one margin, that parenting is seen as more difficult today than in the past.

Indeed, to hear today's moms and dads tell it, Ruth Graham wrote recently at *Slate*, parents "never get their houses clean, never have sex, never read books or have adult conversations, never shower, and never, ever have a moment to themselves." That's hyperbolic, as Graham and parents themselves know, but (many parent-bloggers seem to say) it's not far off the mark.

How could parenting be so hard today, when the basic tasks of feeding, clothing, protecting, and educating kids have never been easier? Responding to Graham's piece and drawing on Jennifer Senior's book *All Joy and No Fun: The Paradox of Modern Parenthood*, Ross Douthat suggests one major reason that parenting seems harder now than ever before:

"It isn't necessarily that family life has changed that dramatically in the last few generations. Rather, it's stayed the same in crucial ways—because babies still need what babies need—while outside the domestic sphere there's been an expansion of opportunities, a proliferation of choices and entertainments and immediately available gratifications, that make child rearing seem much more difficult by comparison. In the contemporary U.S., having a child, even for those who feel a moral obligation and a strong desire to do so, is an option. It marks a major but not inevitable change in life, and so its burdens feel especially heavy. You are not sharing the experience of parenting with everyone in your generation, in the way that all teenagers share the turbulence of adolescence or all octogenarians share the struggles of aging. Parenting is something you took on voluntarily---and now you must live with the consequences, many of which you never expected."

Adapted from: "Institute for Family studies", October 2015

busta n. 12

1. Il candidato illustri la composizione degli organi delle Camere di commercio e le modalità di rinnovo

2. Il candidato definisca i principali strumenti digitali di comunicazione adottati dalla pubblica amministrazione

PROVA NON ESTRATTA

THE UNHEALTHY OBSESSION WITH BEING THIN

https://bestcare.org/news/unhealthy-obsession-being-thin

In a culture dominated by perfection and obsessed with thinness, we are bombarded with artificially-produced images of perfectly sculpted men and women. We learn, often in our most vulnerable years, that we are only as good as our size, and our self-worth is measured in pounds.

In this dizzying flurry of unrealistic — and unhealthy — expectations, 30 million Americans of all ages, genders, and backgrounds are suffering from eating disorders.

As a consequence, many people consider food as an enemy, which results in eating disorders. Eating disorders are marked by an unhealthy approach to eating, exercise, and weight. They include anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating disorder. While different diseases, they share common features.

Those suffering from anorexia and bulimia will often severely restrict food intake due to an overwhelming fear of gaining weight and engage in repetitive and frequently dangerous behaviors to prevent weight gain. Some may use medications inappropriately, induce vomiting or exercise excessively to rid themselves of calories.

Binge-eating disorder is characterized by episodes of eating too quickly or eating large amounts of food in short periods of time. Those with binge-eating disorder will often eat until uncomfortably full and suffer from large swings in weight.

Regardless of the specific disease, many will also struggle with untreated anxiety, depression, phobias, and post-traumatic stress disorder. It's not uncommon for those with eating disorders to feel shame, embarrassment, and a lack of control.

Our bodies cannot thrive without proper nutrition, and eating disorders can be deadly. When we don't take in enough calories, our hearts can fail, women stop having menstrual periods, our bones thin and are at high risk for breaking, and our stomach and colons slow.

Adapted from "Methodist, today's medicine".

busta n. 13

1. Il candidato descriva la figura dell'imprenditore

2. Il candidato descriva le caratteristiche e le funzioni dell'identità e del domicilio digitale

Can AI have a mind of its own?

Is artificial intelligence capable of consciousness? We'll hear from an expert who believes that AI is not as intelligent as we sometimes think. In the autumn of 2021, something strange happened at the Google headquarters in California's Silicon Valley. A software engineer called Blake Lemoine, was working on the artificial intelligence project, 'Language Models for Dialogue Applications', or LaMDA for short. LaMDA is a chatbot – a computer programme designed to have conversations with humans over the internet.

After months talking with LaMDA on topics ranging from movies to the meaning of life, Blake came to a surprising conclusion: the chatbot was an intelligent person with wishes and rights that should be respected. For Blake, LaMDA was a Google employee, not a machine. He also called it his 'friend'. Google quickly reassigned Blake from the project, announcing that his ideas were not supported by the evidence. But what exactly was going on?

Although Hollywood is full of movies about robots coming to life, Emily Bender, professor of linguistics and computing at the University of Washington, thinks AI isn't that smart. She thinks the words we use to talk about technology, phrases like 'machine *learning*', give a false impression about what computers can and can't do.

Professor Bender also speaks about 'speech recognition'. She says that if you talk about 'automatic speech recognition', the term 'recognition' suggests that there's something cognitive going on, where probably a better term would be automatic transcription. That just describes the input-output relation, and not any theory or thinking about what the computer is doing to be able to achieve that. Using words like 'recognition' in relation to computers gives the idea that something cognitive is happening – something related to the mental processes of thinking, knowing, learning and understanding. But thinking and knowing are human, not machine activities. Professor Benders says that talking about them in connection with computers is "wishful thinking" – something which is unlikely to happen.

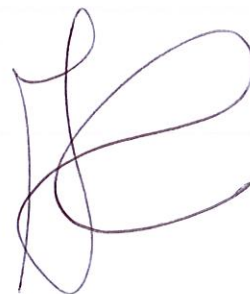Adapted from "BBC 6 minute English", January 23rd 2023

busta n. 14

1. Il candidato illustri le diverse tipologie di impresa

2. Il candidato descriva quali dati relativi agli organi della Camera di commercio sono soggetti all'obbligo di pubblicazione nella sezione "Amministrazione trasparente"

GLOBAL WARMING

Since the industrial and scientific revolutions, Earth's resources have been gradually depleted. Furthermore, the start of the world's population's exponential expansion is particularly hard on the environment. Simply put, as the population's need for consumption grows, so does the use of natural resources, as well as the waste generated by that consumption.
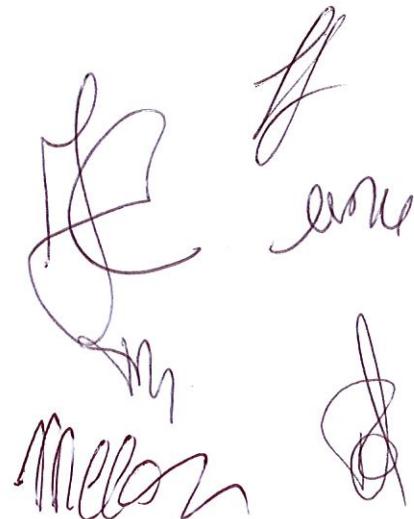
Climate change has been one of the most significant long-term consequences of this. Climate change is more than just the rise or fall of global temperatures; it also affects rain cycles, wind patterns, cyclone frequencies, sea levels, and other factors. It has an impact on all major life groupings on the planet.

Global warming is the unusually rapid increase in Earth's average surface temperature over the past century, primarily due to the greenhouse gases released by people burning fossil fuels. The greenhouse gases consist of methane, nitrous oxide, ozone, carbon dioxide, water vapour, and chlorofluorocarbons. The weather prediction has become more complex with every passing year, with seasons more indistinguishable, and the general temperatures hotter. The number of hurricanes, cyclones, droughts, floods, etc., has risen steadily since the onset of the 21st century. The supervillain behind all these changes is Global Warming. The name is quite self-explanatory; it means the rise in the temperature of the Earth.

Of course, industries and multinational conglomerates emit more carbon than the average citizen. However, activism and community effort are the only viable ways to slow the worsening effects of global warming. Furthermore, at the state or government level, world leaders must develop concrete plans and step-by-step programmes to ensure that no further harm is done to the environment in general.

Although we are almost too late to slow the rate of global warming, finding the right solution is critical. Everyone, from individuals to governments, are working together to find a solution to Global Warming. Some of the factors to consider are pollution control, population growth, and the use of natural resources.

Adapted from "Wings", essay on global warming

busta n. 15

1. Il candidato descriva il ruolo e le funzioni del Conservatore e del Giudice del Registro delle imprese

2. Il candidato illustri le modalità di conservazione del documento informatico

An utter disgrace': 90% of England's most precious river habitats ruined by raw sewage and farming pollution

More than 90% of freshwater habitats on England's most precious rivers are in unfavourable condition, damaged by farming pollution, raw sewage and water abstraction, an *Observer* investigation reveals.

None of the approximately 40 rivers with protected habitats in England are in overall good health, according to an analysis of government inspection reports. These include the River Avon in Hampshire, the Wensum in Norfolk and the Eden in Cumbria.

Recent government figures show that only 9.9% of these habitats on sites of special scientific interest (**SSSI**) are in favourable condition. The *Observer's* analysis suggests the freshwater habitats are most at threat because of a cocktail of pollution from agricultural runoff, sewage discharges and microplastics, as well as damaging human interventions such as dredging.

Out of 256 assessments of freshwater habitats on 38 English rivers that are SSSIs, just 23 (9%) were in favourable condition, meaning they are in a healthy state and are being conserved by appropriate management.

"It is an utter disgrace," said Charles Watson, founder and chair of the charity River Action, which raises awareness of river pollution and the need for solutions. "These should be the most protected river catchments in the country, but there has been a total failure of regulation."

Some of the SSSI river sections have not been inspected since 2010 because of lack of funds. Volunteers across the country are stepping in to measure the quality of their local rivers and are demanding action to counter what they claim to be the government's inadequate inspection regime.

From : "The Observer", 12th August 2023