**Mohamed Khider University of Biskra**

**Faculty of Letters and Languages**

**Section of English**

**Course**: Reading **Full name**: …………….....……………………

**Level:** First Year **Group:** ............

**Alaska Is Melting!**

Alaska is disappearing slowly, but surely. It is estimated that since the 1950s, as much as fifteen percent of Alaska’s land area has disappeared. How can a whole state be disappearing? The problem is that Alaska’s glaciers are melting. The state has more than 100,000 glaciers. These glaciers account for about 75,000 square kilometers, or five percent, of the state’s area. That is an area of land larger than Ireland!

According to a recent report by the US Geological Survey, ninty-nine percent of Alaska’s glaciers are either retreating or diminishing. This diminishing seems mainly due to the increase in global temperatures. Since the 1960s, the average year-round temperature has increased by almost 3°C. Additionally, the average winter temperature has increased by over 6°C. Presently, an estimated 100 cubic kilometers of ice is

disappearing from Alaskan glaciers every year. It may be even more in the near future, as some scientists predict that the average world temperature could go up 4 to 7°C by the year 2100.

Another problem facing Alaska is its thawing permafrost. Much of the land in Alaska used to be permanently frozen or frozen for most of the year. Now, the thawing permafrost is causing a number of problems for people living in Alaska. Roads and utility poles are collapsing as the ground around and under them warms and softens. Also, the hard permafrost that originally prevented beaches from eroding during violent storms is now melting. People who live along Alaska’s coasts are being forced to relocate. For villages on small low islands, one terrible storm could wipe out the entire community.

The melting permafrost and increasing temperatures are both affecting the forests of Alaska. As the permafrost under the forests melts, insects that normally do not turn up until the warmer seasons are appearing sooner. The spruce-bark beetle, for example, is increasing in numbers as a result of warmer winter temperatures. It usually takes about two years for these beetles to grow and reproduce in very cold weather. However, due to the increase in temperatures, spruce-bark beetles are reproducing faster and damaging

as many trees in one year as they previously damaged in two. If something cannot be done to change things, Alaska’s forests will not survive the turn of the century.

Some scientists believe that human activity is linked to a global increase in weather temperature. Whatever the cause of rising temperatures may be, the fact remains that temperatures are warming, affecting Alaska for the worse. Horribly, this could be a preview of what will happen to the rest of the world in the next century.

**Source: Malarcher, C., & Janzen, A. (2010). *Reading Challenge 3(2nd ed).***

**Part One:** **Reading comprehension**

**A/ Choose the best answer. (5pts)**

**1.** What is the main idea of this reading?

1. Alaskan trees are dying.
2. Warmer temperatures are affecting Alaska.
3. Alaska has beautiful glaciers.
4. Alaskan villages must relocate.

**2.** What do some scientists predict?

1. All of Alaska’s glaciers will melt and disappear in the next eight years.
2. Spruce-bark forests will become extinct in Alaska by the year 2100.
3. Global temperatures will start decreasing by the year 2100.
4. Most Alaskan villages on the small surrounding islands will be wiped out.

**3.** Normally, which is true regarding permafrost?

* 1. It is frozen by glaciers.
  2. It may be frozen all year.
  3. It never freezes.
  4. It rarely freezes.

**4.** Why are the forests in Alaska being destroyed?

* 1. More insects are attacking them.
  2. There is not enough land to live on.
  3. Spruce trees don’t grow well in the warmer weather and are dying.
  4. The water from the melting glaciers is drowning the trees.

**5.** How could the events in Alaska be a preview for the rest of the world?

1. They show how a rise in global temperature could affect us negatively.
2. They show how the environment is important for ecology.
3. They show how ice is necessary to the Earth.
4. They show how human activity can negatively affect the Earth.

**B/ Vocabulary (3pts)**

**Write the letter of the word or phrase with the same meaning as the underlined word or phrase.**

**a.** disappearing; lessening **b.** mean; (X1+X2+X3)/3

**c.** have babies **d.** guessed by approximation

**e.** all the time; not temporarily **f.** being swept away; being destroyed

**1.** \_\_\_\_ It is **estimated** that Alaska is fifteen percent smaller than it used to be.

**2.** \_\_\_\_ On **average**, temperatures around the world have increased by 3°C.

**3.** \_\_\_\_ The land in Alaska used to be **permanently** frozen.

**4.** \_\_\_\_ Because of the heavy rain this year, the nearby beaches are **eroding**.

**5.** \_\_\_\_ That beetle doesn’t **reproduce** every year—only every two years.

**6.** \_\_\_\_ The **diminishing** glaciers are causing problems in Alaska.

**C/ Idiomatic Expressions: (3pts)**

***/ wipe out / turn up / turn of the century /***

**Fill in the blank with one of the above idioms. Change its form if necessary.**

**1.** I hope we have less pollution at the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**2.** The guest of honor didn’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at the dinner party.

**3.** Water pollution could \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ all of the fish in the rivers.

**Part Two: Writing (9pts)**

**Use the appropriate words from the list below and fill in the gaps to make a short paragraph:**

***/ Last*** ***/ Celsius / life / summers*** ***/ scientists / temperature*** ***/ global*** ***/ farmers / part*** / ***/ / crops*** ***/ wet / unusual /***

I live in the northern ....................................of Texas. Usually, .................................... in north Texas are hot and dry. .................................... summer was very cool and ..................................... The highest .................................... was only about 35 degrees ..................................... This was .................................... , but great for me and for .................................... ! I didn’t get too hot, and the farmers’ .................................... grew well.

**Good Luck / Rmadan Kariim**