Global commons quiz

This quiz (available to download separately from this issue’s GeographyReviewExtras) is designed for classroom use. It could be used:

- as a ‘starter’ activity to see what students already know about global commons (such as Antarctica) or as a quiz at the end of the topic
- as a ‘team quiz’ just for fun, but to try and reinforce some key terminology and concepts

The quiz is marked out of 10. The answers are provided below along with some additional information designed to promote further discussion in the classroom.

Answers

1. The correct answer is C, national. Global commons are beyond the jurisdiction of sovereign states as they are not owned or controlled by states.

2. The correct answer is B, rivers. Rivers fall within the territory of sovereign states, or in some cases form the political border between states, so are governed by those states.

3. The correct answer is D, outer space. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty set out the basis of what might be termed ‘Space Law’ and as of 2020 has been ratified by 109 countries. The treaty prohibits sending nuclear weapons into space and declares that the Moon should be used for peaceful purposes.

4. The correct answer is B, Antarctica. The other locations are all governed by sovereign states. Greenland is an autonomous region within the jurisdiction of Denmark (since 1814). Antarctica is jointly administered through the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) by the countries with interests in Antarctica.

5. The correct answer is A, the Montreal Protocol. This treaty effectively banned CFCs which were destroyed ozone in the stratosphere and therefore creating the ‘ozone hole’. Its rapid adoption, and success at restricting CFC emissions, means it is often cited as the most successful global environmental treaty to date.

6. The correct answer is B, the Exclusive Economic Zone or EEZ. Beyond 200 nautical miles lies international waters, which are the true ‘commons’ of the oceans. Within an EEZ a sovereign state has exclusive rights to fishing, mineral exploitation and energy exploitation. Territorial waters extend 12 nautical miles from a state’s coastline and the state has full sovereignty over these waters.

7. The correct answer is A, 7. These are Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway, and the UK. The USA and Russia have said they reserve the right to claim Antarctic territory. However, since the 1961 Antarctic Treaty these territorial claims have been put ‘on hold’—they have not be pursued or made formal, but they have also not been relinquished. The ATS currently ensures that Antarctica is used for scientific research and military activity and most resource exploitation is banned.
8 The correct answer is B, the atmosphere. The molecules are carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, all of which are greenhouse gases which are responsible for global warming.

9 The correct answer is C, the United Nations. UN treaties govern the oceans (UNCLOS: United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) and to some extent the atmosphere (UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) as well as outer space (United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space).

10 Each of the answers is correct, as they all involve an environmental threat to a shared common resource.

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