

3.2 K-Selected and r-Selected Species

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 10 marks

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **K-selected and r-selected species**.

You must be able to:

- distinguish **r-selected** and **K-selected** 策略 species
- link each to a reproductive strategy
- predict which recovers faster from disturbance

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a question type used later —follow the steps and you can do the Practice and Exam-style questions yourself.

■ Two reproductive strategies

- **r-selected** —many small offspring, little parental care, fast maturity, short life (insects, weeds). Population grows fast (high r).
- **K-selected** —few large offspring, much parental care, slow maturity, long life (elephants, humans). Population stays near carrying capacity (K).

■ Recovery from disturbance

r-selected species reproduce rapidly and recolonize quickly after a disturbance. **K-selected** species recover slowly, so they are more vulnerable to overharvesting or habitat loss.

■ A worked classification

A mouse (many young, short life) is **r-selected**; a whale (few young, long life, much care) is **K-selected**.

■ Extinction risk

K-selected species with low reproduction are at **higher extinction risk** when their populations fall, because they cannot rebuild quickly.

2 Practice

Now apply the methods above.

2.1 Do r-selected species have many or few offspring? [1]

2.2 Give one example of a K-selected species. [1]

2.3 Which type recovers faster after a disturbance? [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A K-selected species typically has [1]

- A many offspring and little care
 - B few offspring and much parental care
 - C a very short life
 - D rapid population growth
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3.2 An insect species and an elephant species live in the same area.

(a) Classify each as r- or K-selected. [2]

(b) Explain which is more vulnerable to overharvesting. [2]

3.3 Explain why r-selected species are often the first to recolonize a disturbed area. [2]

4 Go further

You are now ready for the real exam questions on this subtopic:

- work through the **3.2 K-Selected and r-Selected Species** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **K-Selected and r-Selected Species** section of the AP Environmental Science handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 Many.

2.2 Any one: elephant, whale, human.

2.3 r-selected.

3.1 B —few offspring and much parental care.

3.2 (a) Insect = r-selected; elephant = K-selected. (b) The elephant (K-selected) —it reproduces slowly, so its population cannot recover quickly from overharvesting.

3.3 They mature fast and produce many offspring, so they multiply and spread rapidly to fill the empty, disturbed habitat.