

Questão 21

When will the Amazon hit a tipping point?



Deforestation in Altamira, Pará state, Brazil.

Scientists say climate change, deforestation and fires could cause the world's largest rainforest to dry out. The big question is how soon that might happen. Seen from a monitoring tower above the treetops near Manaus, in the Brazilian Amazon, the rainforest canopy stretches to the horizon as an endless sea of green. It looks like a rich and healthy ecosystem, but appearances are deceiving. This rainforest — which holds 16,000 separate tree species — is slowly drying out.

Over the past century, the average temperature in the forest has risen by 1-1.5 °C. In some parts, the dry season has expanded during the past 50 years, from four months to almost five. Severe droughts have hit three times since 2005. That's all driving a shift in vegetation. In 2018, a study reported that trees that do best in moist conditions, such as tropical legumes from the genus *Inga*, are dying. Those adapted to drier climes, such as the Brazil nut tree (*Bertholletia excelsa*), are thriving.

At the same time, large parts of the Amazon, the world's largest rainforest, are being cut down and burnt. Tree clearing has already shrunk the forest by around 15% from its 1970s extent of more than 6 million square kilometres; in Brazil, which contains more than half the forest, more than 19% has disappeared. Last year, deforestation in Brazil spiked by around 30% to almost 10,000 km², the largest loss in a decade. And in August 2019, videos of wildfires in the Amazon made international headlines. The number of fires that month was the highest for any August since an extreme drought in 2010.

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According to the first paragraph, the Amazon rainforest

- (A) might eventually dry out due to climate change, deforestation and fires.
- (B) has already regenerated itself since it looks green and healthy.
- (C) has lost over 16 thousand tree species over last decade.
- (D) appears large and resilient, so deforestation and fires will have a mild impact.
- (E) has already reached a state that makes it difficult to recover from fires and deforestation.

ALTERNATIVA A

Pois o texto diz que, devido a mudanças climáticas, desmatamento e incêndios, a floresta amazônica poderá secar. O uso de “could” no texto e “might” na alternativa A indicam possibilidade de acontecimentos no futuro.