Writing Task

Unit 8

Express your opinion about the future of ocean exploration

What is deep-sea exploration? And what can happen to these delicate ecosystems living here?

New technologies have developed to promote the exploration of the deep sea. The development of underwater drones has the potential to map sea floors and explore depths humans can not reach. Some drones have even been developed to measure ocean wave patterns. The use of drones would allow us to study the deep sea without disrupting the ecosystem.

Advancements have also been made to promote drilling within the deep sea. Japan has developed a research vessel, used in the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program, that is capable of drilling into the seafloor reaching depths of 23,000 feet. The drill is used to measure the history and the properties of earth's crust. The hope is that this research vessel may one day drill into earth's mantle.

While this drilling is used for scientific purposes, we are most familiar with another form of drilling: offshore oil drilling. Oil companies have in recent history used drills to extract oil from reserves in the deep sea. The process of offshore oil drilling leads to environmental destruction including the production of runoff water, brine wastes, possible oil leaks and drilling muds. Drilling muds are comprised of excess fluids and metal shavings that lead to toxic waste entering our oceans.

Bottom trawling the ocean floor is another form of deep sea destruction. Bottom trawling is the process of dragging weighted nets across the ocean floor to catch everything in its path. It's a fishing method used to target bottom fish living close to the seafloor. These nets destroy vast expanses of the seafloor, ripping up all life and vegetation in their path.

Bottom trawling and offshore oil drilling can be detrimental to deep sea ecosystems. The organisms found in the deep sea are slow growing and have a slow reproduction rate. The destruction of their habitat and incidental deaths can lead to a rapid decline in their populations and difficulties in repopulation.

Although deep sea exploration is important, it is also crucial to take proper protocols to ensure the survival of deep sea life.