

OCEAN PLASTIC POLLUTION

PREVIEWING

Key Questions

1. How widespread is the problem of ocean plastic pollution?
2. How does ocean plastic pollution affect wildlife?
3. What are governments doing to reduce the amount of plastics in the ocean?
4. What can you do to help?

What Do You Already Know?

What do you know about plastics in the ocean? Select the letter of the answer you think is correct.

1. What percent of the trash floating in the world's oceans is plastic?
 - a. At least 30%
 - b. At least 45%
 - c. At least 60%
 - d. At least 75%
2. How many fur seals die each year as a result of getting caught in plastic nets and ropes?
 - a. About 30,000
 - b. About 40,000
 - c. About 50,000
 - d. About 60,000
3. How much trash do commercial and merchant fishing vessels dump into the world's oceans each year?
 - a. At least 1.3 million pounds
 - b. At least 13 million pounds
 - c. At least 130 million pounds
 - d. At least 13 billion pounds.
4. Where does international law prohibit ships from dumping plastics?
 - a. Anywhere at sea.
 - b. Less than 3 miles offshore.
 - c. Less than 12 miles offshore.
 - d. Less than 25 miles offshore.

Essential Words to Know

The *italicized* words in each of the following sentences are all used in the sentences below. Read the sentences and suggest your own definition for each word.

1. The houses along the shore suffered water damage from the *deluge*.
deluge: _____
2. After the air crash, rescue workers searched the *debris* for survivors.
debris: _____
3. When the food went down her throat, she started to *choke*.
choke: _____
4. The animal died because it had *ingested* poison.
ingest: _____
5. The doctor *autopsied* the body to determine the cause of death.
autopsy: _____
6. It may take hundreds of years for some plastics to *degrade*.
degrade: _____

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Phrasal Verbs

Complete each sentence with a phrasal verb from the list. Be sure to change the verb tense if necessary.

call for keep track run across wash up

1. As any of us who has spent any time on the water at all know, it is no longer a surprise to _____ something plastic floating in it.
2. Researchers from the University of Texas Marine Science Institute are trying to _____ of plastic that _____ on Mustang Island.
3. Bills have been introduced in Congress to tighten restrictions on disposals of plastic and _____ expanded use of new plastics that degrade in weeks or months instead of centuries.

Vocabulary Check

Match the *italicized* words and phrases with their equivalents from the list (a-f).

a. not slowing down or lessening in amount, speed, intensity, etc.	d. plans for laws, written down for a government to consider
b. cause (a rule or law) to be carried out	e. something very unpleasant to look at
c. scientist that studies the effect of oceans on the earth as a whole	f. follow the course, line, history, development, etc. of

- ____ 1. The French *oceanographer* Jacques Cousteau has found plastic bottles floating in the Antarctic.
- ____ 2. The Texas Gulf Coast off Corpus Christi – beautiful vacation land, is an ugly *eyesore*.
- ____ 3. It is an *unrelenting* deluge of debris.
- ____ 4. Counting and cataloguing it with a computer, they hope, will help *trace* the plastic and lead to solutions.
- ____ 5. *Bills* have been introduced in Congress to tighten restrictions.
- ____ 6. A treaty goes into effect at the end of this year prohibiting the dumping of plastic at sea, a treaty that will be hard to *enforce*.

Word Forms

Choose the correct word form to complete each sentence.

1. *restrictions* *restrict*
 - a. New laws could _____ the production of plastic.
 - b. New laws could also call for _____ on the disposal of plastic.
2. *polluter* *polluting*
 - a. Fishermen are not the only people who are _____ the water.
 - b. Nearly everyone who uses the ocean is a _____.
3. *prohibitions* *prohibits*
 - a. There are prohibitions against the improper disposal of plastic.
 - b. An international treaty _____ dumping plastics in the ocean.

POSTVIEWING

What Do You Think?

Write your answers to the following questions. Then discuss your answers with the class.

1. Do you think the dumping of plastics in the ocean will increase, continue as is, or slow down in the next ten years? Explain your reasons.

2. In the place where you live now, is there anything similar to the problem under discussion? If so, what problems exist?

3. What animals could be harmed by plastics in the ocean?

4. What efforts, if any, do you think should be made to reduce ocean plastic pollution?
