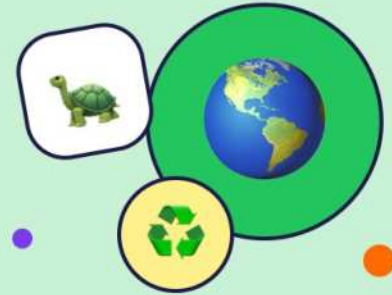


Science

Grade 3

Earth Day reading comprehension: plastic in the ocean

Read how plastic reaches the ocean and what we can do, then find causes and effects.



I can explain causes and effects of ocean plastic using the text.

1



Where does the plastic go?



Plastic is useful. It is light, strong and cheap. But those same things make it a problem when it ends up in the ocean.

Each year, millions of tons of plastic reach the sea. Some is dropped as litter on beaches. Some blows out of trash cans, and rain washes it into streams and rivers that flow to the ocean.

Plastic does not rot like food or leaves. Instead, sunlight and waves break it into smaller and smaller pieces. Some pieces are so tiny that fish eat them. A plastic bag can stay in the water for hundreds of years.

Plastic can hurt sea animals. A sea turtle may think a floating bag is a jellyfish and try to eat it. Birds and seals can get tangled in old nets and rings.

People can help. We can use refillable water bottles and cloth bags, recycle, and pick up litter. Every piece of plastic that stays out of the ocean helps.

2



Cause and effect

Draw a line from each cause to its effect.

☐

Rain washes litter into rivers. ●

☐

Sunlight and waves hit plastic. ●

☐

A turtle sees a floating bag. ●

☐

People use cloth bags. ●

●

A. It may think the bag is a jellyfish.

●

B. Less plastic is thrown away.

●

C. The plastic flows to the ocean.

●

D. The plastic breaks into tiny pieces.

3



Helps or harms?

Write each action in the right column.

using a refillable bottle

dropping litter on the beach

recycling a jug

leaving trash can lids open

picking up litter

letting balloons fly away

Helps the ocean

Harms the ocean

4

**Check your reading**

Circle the best answer.

1. What happens to plastic in the ocean?

A It rots like leaves.

B It breaks into smaller pieces.

C It turns into sand right away.

2. How long can a plastic bag stay in the water?

A a few days

B one year

C hundreds of years

3. What is the author's main purpose?

A To explain the plastic problem and how to help

B To sell plastic bags

C To tell a funny story

5

**True or false**

Circle the right answer. Look back at the text.

1. Plastic is light, strong and cheap.

True

False

2. Plastic rots quickly, like food.

True

False

3. Rain can wash litter into streams and rivers.

True

False

4. Some plastic pieces are so tiny that fish eat them.

True

False

5. Sea turtles never mistake bags for food.

True

False

6. Recycling can help keep plastic out of the ocean.

True

False

6

**Key words**

Use the text to fill in each blank.

1. Each year, millions of _____ of plastic reach the sea.

2. Sunlight and _____ break plastic into smaller pieces.

3. A plastic bag can stay in the water for _____ of years.
4. A sea turtle may think a bag is a _____.
5. Birds and seals can get tangled in old _____ and rings.

7



A bottle's trip

Write 1 to 4 in the boxes to show how litter can reach the ocean.

☐

The river carries the bottle to the ocean.

☐

Someone drops a bottle on the ground.

☐

Waves and sunlight break it into tiny pieces.

☐

Rain washes the bottle into a stream.

8



Solve the problem

Circle the best answer.

1. Which choice keeps the MOST plastic out of the ocean?

A Buying a new plastic bottle every day

B Using one refillable bottle every day

C Throwing bottles in a stream

2. Why is it a problem that plastic does not rot?

A It stays in the ocean for a very long time.

B It turns into food.

C It makes the water warm.

3. Which word from the text means 'able to be filled again'?

A tangled

B useful

C refillable

4. A class picks up 12 pieces of litter each day for 5 days. How many pieces is that?

A 17

B 50

C 60

9



Your Earth Day plan

Write two things you can do this week to keep plastic out of the ocean. Explain why each one helps.

How did it go?



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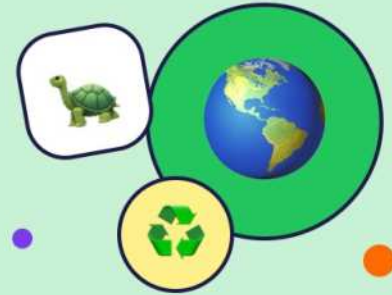
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Grade 3

Answer key

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D Sunlight and waves hit plastic. ●

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B People use cloth bags. ●

● **A.** It may think the bag is a jellyfish.

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picking up litter

letting balloons fly away

Helps the ocean

using a refillable bottle, recycling a jug, picking up litter

Harms the ocean

dropping litter on the beach, leaving trash can lids open, letting balloons fly away

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Your Earth Day plan

Write two things you can do this week to keep plastic out of the ocean. Explain why each one helps.

Answers vary. Example: I can bring a refillable bottle, so fewer plastic bottles are thrown away. I can pick up litter at the park, so rain cannot wash it into rivers.

How did it go?



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