

Plastic Problem



● Warm-up Questions

1. When was the last time you went to a beach?

2. What is the biggest pollution problem in Japan?

3. Who is in charge of the garbage at your home?

4. Do you think products have too much packaging?

VOCABULARY

● WRITE THE CORRECT WORD IN THE SENTENCES BELOW

charge, predict, single-use plastic, extra, ban, instead, reduce, blamed, sorting, a petition, plastic tray insert, crack, incident, individual packaging, unsolved case

1. The fortune-teller _____ed that it would rain this year, and she was right.
2. My sister _____ me for breaking the TV, and it was kind of true.
3. If you ever want _____ homework, please ask me.
4. In 1968, a man stole 300 million yen, and wasn't caught. It is an _____.
5. Tough guys _____ their knuckles (ナックル) before they fight.

Plastic Problem

Recently, Japanese stores started to charge customers for plastic bags. Even though this won't stop the damage these bags do to our environment, maybe that is a good thing. Scientists predict that there will be more plastic bags than fish in our oceans by the year 2050.

Plastic is cheap to make and has many uses. Because of this, it has become an environmental problem. Over 50% of the plastic we make is single-use plastic.

Close to 40% of plastic is used for packaging. Of course, Japanese cookies, rice crackers, or tiny sweets are delicious, but they aren't good for the environment. All of that extra packaging has made Japan the second largest plastic polluter in the world.

Japanese consumers use about 30 billion plastic shopping bags a year. So, does all of this plastic get recycled? The answer is no.

The EU passed laws to ban single-use plastic by 2021. Japan and the US, the world's top plastic polluters, did not agree to do this. Instead, the Japanese government agreed to reduce single-use plastic by 25% before 2030.

This may be too late for Japan's oceans. Osaka University found that Osaka Bay has about 3 million plastic shopping bags and 6 million other pieces of plastic.

This problem became clear to one high school student in Tokyo, and she decided to do something about it.

The 16-year-old student blamed chocolate maker Bourbon and Kameda Seika as the biggest reasons for this packaging problem. Because of Covid-19, she and her family stayed home and ate a lot of their products.

The student says she was sorting the plastic with her mother one day when she was shocked to see the amount of plastic food packaging her family had. When more appeared the next day, she decided to start a petition to stop the two snack brands. Close to 20,000 people have signed the petition.

Even though her idea got lots of support, others were not happy about this idea. People sent her messages such as:

"Younger people eat more snacks than older people, so older people don't waste so much."

"If the plastic tray insert is removed, the crackers will crack — is that what you want?"

"She's probably too young to know about the Glico Morinaga incident."

To this day, many people believe the individual packaging used in Japanese snacks is because of this unsolved case.

Talking Ideas

1. What do you think about paying for plastic bags?
2. Should Japan ban all plastic bags?
3. What surprised you most from the story?
4. What do you remember about the Glico Morinaga incident?
5. Who is to blame for pollution, people, companies, or the government?
6. What products made of plastic don't you like to buy?
7. What do you think will happen to all the plastic in the oceans?
8. What is 1 advantage and 1 disadvantage of not using plastic anymore?

Grammar Practice

Fix the sentences below. All of them have around 3 mistakes.

1. I am hoping that in future, the ocean will be more cleaner than now.

2. Even though the oceans are clean, I will not want to swim in it.

3. In my holiday, I went to the Ranjima Beach, and it was a lot of plastics along the beach.

PREPOSITION PRACTICE

Fill in the blanks using: in, by, to, for, with, around, on, from, of, about, at, away

Write a proper preposition for each sentence. Sometimes, there is more than one answer.

1. Having pollution _____ our water is dangerous _____ our health.
2. Doctors say that high levels _____ plastic in water can lead _____ sudden death.
3. So, I started an NGO, which stands _____ Non-Governmental Organization _____ my friend Sami.
4. Sami and I met _____ a bar _____ Ko Samui Island _____ Thailand.
5. The next day, we went fishing _____ kinki fish. We are both crazy _____ kinki.
6. _____ the boat, we saw an island of plastic floating _____ the water.
7. _____ that moment, we decided _____ something: we would dedicate our lives _____ saving the oceans _____ the world _____ taking plastic _____ our oceans.
8. When Sami told his wife _____ our plan, she left him _____ another man.
9. And when I told my wife that I would be _____ her _____ many months every year, a big smile appeared _____ her face.
10. So now, Sami and I are traveling _____ the world _____ search _____ plastic.

WRITING SENTENCES

1. damage: _____
2. plastic: _____
3. second: _____
4. clear: _____
5. shocked: _____
6. amount: _____