

Why are American national parks filled with plastic?

Level: Advanced – Teacher's notes

Article summary: Who is responsible for the single-use plastic littering national parks in the US? What can realistically be done to resolve this problem?

Time: 90 minutes

Skills: Reading, speaking, writing

Language focus: Vocabulary, speaking, writing

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

Key:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. resonant | 9. eyesore |
| 2. mature | 10. sanctuaries |
| 3. distributed | 11. entangled |
| 4. convenience | 12. remnants |
| 5. discard | 13. address |
| 6. accumulating | 14. combat |
| 7. escalate | 15. outpace |
| 8. contractors | |

- b. Before reading the article carefully, students use some of the key words to fill the gaps in the sentences to ensure that they understand and know how the words are used in other contexts.

Key:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. discarded | 5. escalated |
| 2. entangled | 6. eyesore |
| 3. address | 7. convenience |
| 4. remnants | 8. distributed |

1. Warmer

- a. Students discuss the warmer questions and share their answers.

Key:

1. Students' own answers. According to the article, the top environmental threats are: climate change, greenhouse gas emissions caused by coal, and single-use plastic.
2. 82% according to a recent poll
3. Students' own answers. See paragraph 9 for some reasons why this is not 100%.
4. Students' own answers.

2. Key words

- a. Students write the correct word from the wordpool next to the definitions on the lines provided. Then students find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

Note: some word pairings, such as *accumulate* and *escalate* and *address* and *combat*, have at first glance similar meanings making it worth to compare and contrast them.

3. Understanding the article

- a. Students read the statements and decide whether they are true or false according to the article and correct any that are false.

Key:

1. False. There are 423 national parks in the US.
2. False. A policy was issued in 2011 to install water-bottle refill stations, but this policy was reversed in 2017 by the US government.
3. True
4. False. They want retailers in the parks not to sell food that requires plastic packaging or utensils, or to provide plastic bags with purchases.
5. True
6. False. The oldest US National Park, Yellowstone, was created 150 years ago. Single-use plastics have only been around in everyday products since the 1940s.

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4. Key language

- a. Students find two-word collocations that fit the meanings.

Key:

1. *unbridled nature*
2. *collective decision*
3. *throwaway culture*
4. *bottom lines*
5. *treasured areas*
6. *primary contributors*
7. *rare glimpse*

- b. Next they use the collocations to talk about the article.
- c. Then they use each of the collocations in sentences or short anecdotes of their own that are not related to the article.

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the questions related to the article, and give their reasons and justifications for each answer, referring to their own experiences wherever possible.

6. In your own words

- a. Follow the steps on the worksheet. Have students work on their own and fill the table in. Then, have them work with a partner and present their plan.
- b. Have a group or class discussion about the most common ideas, how practical and realistic they are, and students' experiences with similar changes.