

US beach town bans balloons to save the ocean

Level 1: Elementary – Teacher’s notes

Article summary: The article talks about a recent ban on balloons in Laguna Beach, California, and explains the dangers of balloons on marine life.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: relative clauses

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- This activity aims to get students to think about if and when they and their classmates use balloons to decorate.
- Encourage students to share their ideas and suggestions. You could make a mind map to organise students’ ideas. Remind students to elaborate on their suggestions if possible.

2. Key words

- Ask students to do the exercise individually and compare their answers in pairs or small groups. You may wish to point out that the opposite of *on purpose* is *by accident*.

Key:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. <i>ban</i> | 6. <i>hard</i> |
| 2. <i>plastic</i> | 7. <i>neck</i> |
| 3. <i>pay</i> | 8. <i>stomach</i> |
| 4. <i>soft</i> | 9. <i>careful</i> |
| 5. <i>break down</i> | 10. <i>on purpose</i> |

- 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:

- plastic*
- stomach*
- soft*
- careful*
- pay*
- on purpose*

3. Comprehension check

- Students first read the statements, decide whether they are true or false according to the article, and correct any false ones. Students may correct the sentences in different ways, e.g., in item 1, they may say, ‘Laguna Beach, a city in California, banned balloons,’ or similar. Suggested answers are provided below.

Key:

- False. A city in California (Laguna Beach) recently stopped the sale and use of balloons.*
- False. No balloons are allowed in public places or at city events.*
- True*
- False. There are no safe balloons.*
- True*
- False. There are fewer balloons than plastic bags on beaches.*
- True*
- False. Plastic pollution affects the whole ocean.*

4. Key language

- Students could be asked to do this exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs. You may wish to mention that another antonym for *more* is *fewer* if your description is a countable noun. Most of the words used are in the article (*soft, hard, long, more, less, safe, harmful, on purpose, ban, allow*). As an extension activity, you could ask students to go back to the text and find them.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. <i>d</i> | 5. <i>g</i> |
| 2. <i>a</i> | 6. <i>c</i> |
| 3. <i>f</i> | 7. <i>e</i> |
| 4. <i>b</i> | |

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- b. Students could be asked to do this exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs. Ask students to refer to task A and fill in the blanks.

Key:

1. *save; kill*
2. *soft; hard*
3. *short; long*
4. *more; less*

- c. Allow the class to personalise some of the words they have covered in the previous activity. Encourage students to choose the words they are interested in practising or unsure how to use correctly. Monitor and assist students as you walk around the class. Allow time for feedback, so students can share some of the sentences they have written.

Students could then present the information to the class. Encourage them to share the facts they’ve gathered and their opinions about the topic. As a follow-up activity, ask what questions they still have and if their feelings about plastic pollution in the ocean have changed.

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the statements 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. Tell students to imagine they are studying how plastic hurts animals in the ocean. They will use a K-W-L chart to explore the topic. First, ask students, ‘What do you already know?’ and have them fill in the chart’s ‘What I know’ column. If you prefer, this can be done in pairs or groups.
- b. Next, ask students, ‘What questions do you have?’ and ‘What more do you want to know about plastic pollution in the ocean?’ Have them write down their questions in the chart’s ‘What I want to know’ column.
- c. Then, have students use an internet search engine to find answers to their questions and more information about the topic. Use the data to fill in the chart’s ‘What I learned’ column.