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Vocabulary: the environment 词汇: 环境

How many **plastic carrier bags** have you got in your house? I seem to have cupboards full of them and it feels like they're taking over my home! The **ubiquitous** shopping bag is just one example of the million things we use made from this useful material, plastic. But unfortunately, it's not the easiest thing to recycle and this is causing an environmental problem.

Most of our everyday plastic items end up in landfill, left to rot away for many years. But some of it blows away, **blighting** the countryside and causing damage to the natural environment and harming **wildlife**. The problem is most **acute** in our oceans. Research has found an uninhabited island in the South Pacific **is littered with** the highest **density** of plastic waste anywhere in the world. Henderson Island, part of the UK's Pitcairn Islands group, has an estimated 37.7 million pieces of **debris** on its beaches.

The study, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, described how remote islands act as a '**sink**' for the world's rubbish. They become collecting points for fishing items and everyday things including toothbrushes, cigarette lighters and razors; things that we throw away. Dr Jennifer Lavers from the University of Tasmania says "Almost every island in the world and almost every species in the ocean is now being shown to be **impacted** one way or another by our waste."

This highlights the potentially deadly effect of our **disposable culture**. When we throw something away, it doesn't just disappear, it goes somewhere and because of the **durable** nature of plastic, it takes a long time to **decompose** and stays there causing great damage to the ocean's **ecology**. Some other recent worldwide research estimates that 90% of all seabirds have swallowed plastic. And worse still, this plastic is broken down into tiny **particles** over a long period by the wind and the waves, then sea creatures at the bottom of the food chain **ingest** them. These creatures are eaten by the fish that we eventually consume.

The solution to this problem would be to use less plastic. Several countries now charge for using plastic carrier bags which reduces the amount used and some products now use natural and **recyclable** materials but it seems inevitable that plastic will continue to be necessary in many of the gadgets that we demand.

So next time you pick up a carrier bag, or buy a plastic bottle of water, **spare a thought** for the birds and animals on the remote Henderson Island. What do you do to help the environment?

词汇表

plastic carrier bag	塑料购物袋
ubiquitous	感觉无处不在的
blight	(使) 破坏
wildlife	野生动植物
acute	十分严重的
be littered with	在公共场合到处乱扔垃圾
density	密度
debris	碎片
sink	池子, 坑
impacted	受影响的
disposable culture	丢弃文化
durable	持久的
decompose	(使) 分解
ecology	生态
particle	微粒
ingest	咽下, 摄取
recyclable	可回收利用的
spare a thought for somebody	替某人着想

测验与练习

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. Which area of our planet is most affected by plastic waste?
2. According to the article, how many species of animals are now affected by plastic waste?
3. Why does plastic take a long time to decompose?
4. What have some countries done to reduce the use of plastic carrier bags?
5. True or false: *Only the islands of the South Pacific have been affected by plastic waste so far.*

2. 请你在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. The new motorway has now opened, _____ the peace and quiet of the village.

littering	blighting	decomposing	ingesting
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2. The coastguard has found _____ from the shipwreck washed up on the beach.

ingest	debris	decompose	ecology
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3. A restaurant owner has been fined £25,000 after health inspectors found a _____ pigeon in the kitchen.

decompose	decomposition	decomposed	decomposes
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4. Conservationists fear that if the weeds are not removed they could threaten the _____ of the park.

durability	impact	ecology	density
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5. The face cream is for rubbing on your skin but make sure you don't _____ it, as it could make you sick.

ingesting	ingested	ingestable	ingest
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答案

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. Which area of our planet is most affected by plastic waste?

The problem is most acute in our oceans.

2. According to the article, how many species of animals are now affected by plastic waste?

Dr Jennifer Lavers from the University of Tasmania says "...almost every species in the ocean is now being shown to be impacted one way or another by our waste."

3. Why does plastic take a long time to decompose?

It is durable.

4. What have some countries done to reduce the use of plastic carrier bags?

Several countries now charge for using plastic carrier bags which reduces the amount used.

5. True or false: *Only the islands of the South Pacific have been affected by plastic waste so far.*

False. Dr Jennifer Lavers from the University of Tasmania says "Almost every island in the world and almost every species in the ocean is now being shown to be impacted one way or another by our waste."

2. 请你在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. The new motorway has now opened, **blighting** the peace and quiet of the village.

2. The coastguard has found **debris** from the shipwreck washed up on the beach.

3. A restaurant owner has been fined £25,000 after health inspectors found a **decomposed** pigeon in the kitchen.

4. Conservationists fear that if the weeds are not removed they could threaten the **ecology** of the park.

5. The face cream is for rubbing on your skin but make sure you don't **ingest** it, as it could make you sick.