
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Take Away English 随身英语

The problem with disposable coffee 外带咖啡纸杯的“回收难题”



Vocabulary: problems and solutions 词汇：问题与解决办法

Millions of us grab a coffee on our way to work. And when we do, it probably comes served in a branded, disposable, cardboard coffee cup. Once the coffee is done, just pop the cup into a recycling bin and forget about it. The cup will be taken away and turned into a new one for you to use again tomorrow. The system works, right?

There's a **hitch**. In the UK, we throw away an estimated 2.5 billion disposable coffee cups every year. And despite being recyclable **in theory**, in practice only very few of them are dealt with in a way that makes them sustainable. This makes them a bit of an **obstacle**. What **throws a spanner in the works** is the layer of polyethylene that makes the cup waterproof, and the lid, which is most often made of polystyrene. As a result, most of the cups end up in landfill.

But there are efforts underway to **tackle** this **issue**. One company, Biome Bioplastics, has **come up with** a fully compostable, recyclable cup that uses natural materials, such as potato starch, as waterproofing. Mr Mines, its chief executive, believes that this is the first time bioplastic has been used for disposable cups and lids that have to cope with hot liquid. And they're still fully recyclable.

Another **feasible** solution has been **proposed** by Frugalpac, who have patented a cup with a lightly-attached plastic lining. This can be easily separated during the recycling and **'offers a more pragmatic solution'** than changing our current recycling habits, says Frugalpac's founder Martin Myerscough.

Safia Qureshi says India has provided the **inspiration** for her solution. She **puts forward** that we use returnable and reusable cups, which are tracked and collected by her company Cup Club. They will be responsible for collecting, washing and redistributing the clean cups to participating retailers.

One final example of **lateral thinking** comes from Cupffee. This trio from Bulgaria have combined cereals to form a cup which can be eaten once the drink is finished. It is apparently sweet and crisp, can hold a coffee for up to 40 minutes and will biodegrade within weeks.

Whether any of these innovative ideas are a **perfect fit** for this disposable issue, only time will tell. It's possible that a more **viable** solution has yet to be **ventured**, though it may not be long in coming. All it may require is a little more **thinking outside the box**... or should that be coffee cup?

词汇表

hitch	小问题
in theory	理论上
obstacle	障碍
throw a spanner in the works	从中捣乱，打乱计划
tackle	解决，处理
issue	问题
come up with	提出、想出（主意）
feasible	行得通的，可行的
propose	提出
offer a solution	给出解决方案
pragmatic	实用的，重实效的
inspiration	灵感
put forward	提出（建议、想法等）
lateral thinking	横向思维，发散式思维
perfect fit	完美的答案
viable	可行的，可望成功的
venture	冒险去做，大胆尝试
thinking outside the box	以新的眼光看问题，跳出传统思维框架

测验与练习

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. How many disposable coffee cups are thrown away in the UK each year?
2. Why are the disposable coffee cups not recycled?
3. In what way are Biome Bioplastics' cups different?
4. Where did Safia Qureshi find inspiration for her Cup Club idea?
5. What advantages are there to Cupffee's edible cup?

2. 请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 construction has met a _____. The steel we used won't hold the weight of the roof. We'll need to change it.

hitch	issue	proposed	viable
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2. Thank you for coming to the meeting. I'd like to _____ an idea that I think you will like.

tackle	proposed	put forward	inspire
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3. I'm sorry, but the return on the investment doesn't cover the expenses, which means it's not economically _____.

issue	proposed	pragmatic	viable
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4. Using your belt to repair the broken handle on your bag was great _____.

offer a solution	pragmatic	lateral thinking	in theory
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5. So by using the food supermarkets are throwing away to feed the homeless, we solve both problems. It's a _____.

inspiration	feasible	perfect fit	issue
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答案

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Biome Bioplastics has come up with a fully compostable, recyclable cup that uses natural materials, such as potato starch, as waterproofing.

4. Where did Safia Qureshi find inspiration for her Cup Club idea?

Safia Qureshi says India has provided the inspiration for her solution.

5. What advantages are there to Cupffee's edible cup?

It is apparently sweet and crisp, can hold a coffee for up to 40 minutes and will biodegrade within week.

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2. Thank you for coming to the meeting. I'd like to **put forward** an idea that I think you will like.

3. I'm sorry, but the return on the investment doesn't cover the expenses, which means it's not economically **viable**.

4. Using your belt to repair the broken handle on your bag was great **lateral thinking**.

5. So by using the food supermarkets are throwing away to feed the homeless, we solve both problems. It's a **perfect fit**.