

Very peculiar practice

Look closely at crying, and you will see just how strange it is. For one thing, it encompasses two very different processes: vocal ... (1) and tearing.

Human babies excel at the former, and for good reason – bawling is a very effective way of getting ... (2) from caregivers. For their first few weeks, babies don't even shed tears, because their ... (3) are still developing. But as they grow, crying becomes less vocal and more tearful. This could be an evolutionary adaptation, suggests Ad Vingerhoets at Tilburg University in the Netherlands. Wailing advertises vulnerability to everyone around, including ... (4), so once a child can move around, it is wiser to use the more covert signal of tears.

Another puzzle is that we cry throughout our lives. Intriguing changes in crying behaviour seem to reflect its changing functions as we age. Around adolescence, we begin to cry less over physical pain and more over emotional pain. Many people also start to exhibit '... (5)', in reaction to acts of bravery, self-sacrifice, and altruism. Why we do this is still a mystery. Also mysterious is why, as we age, we increasingly shed tears over things that are ... (6). Robert Provine at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, has a suggestion. 'Given that emotional tearing is recently evolved, it's a very crude estimate of emotional expression,' he says. 'We also produce tears when we yawn, when we sneeze, when we laugh, when we cough.'

Another theory is that so-called tears of joy do not actually reflect happiness at all; events such as weddings and holidays are often bittersweet because they remind us of the passage of time and ... (7). This may be why children usually do not cry out of happiness: they don't yet make the associations with sacrifice, loss, and impermanence.

Then there's the question of why some people cry more than others. In a recent review of research, Vingerhoets reported that neurotics and people who are highly ... (8) cry the most. The former use tears manipulatively – as do narcissists, psychopaths, and tantrum-throwing ... (9). Sociopaths are thought most likely to cry fake or 'crocodile' tears. And, although boys and girls cry frequently until puberty, in Western cultures women cry at least twice as often as men. Men are culturally conditioned to restrain their tears, but there may be more to it than that. Studies in ... (10) suggest the hormone testosterone might have a tear-suppressing effect.

Assignment 54

Summarising

10



You have just read some extra information about crying. Use the technique of underlining the most important sentences to summarise the text in Assignment 53 too (use a maximum of 100 words). Add this summary to the one you wrote for Assignment 52.

Ocean plastic clean-up ★★ ★

pages 20-21

Reading • Language Organiser • Speaking

Assignment 55

Pre-reading

10



How much do you know about plastic litter? Before reading the whole article, do this quiz.

- How many plastic bags do Americans throw away every year?
A 1 billion
B 10 billion
C 100 billion
- Plastic is made of ...
A chemicals.
B paraffin.
C petroleum.
- What happens to plastic over time?
A It is broken down completely.
B It is broken down in small bits.
C Nothing happens.
- How much of the world's plastic is recycled?
A 5%
B 10%
C 20%
- Harvard scientists have created a bioplastic made from...
A corn starch.
B gelatine.
C shrimp shells.

Now go on the Internet, and watch this video to check your answers: bit.ly/wr-plastic.

Assignment 56

Speaking

5



Discuss the following questions with a classmate or in a small group before reading the article.

- How many different plastic items do you use in a day?
- How many of these are disposable or single-use?
- What are the advantages of plastic, and what are the disadvantages?
- Do you think we could do without plastic (articles)? Why (not)?
- How can we reduce the amount of plastic waste? Make a list of solutions.

Assignment 57

Reading

20



Read the text. Answer the following questions in correct English sentences. Use your own words.

- 1 Do we know the exact size of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch? Explain.
- 2 Read lines 23-34. What is said about the extent of pollution of the trash vortex?
- 3 Why is 'the ratio of plastic to small animal matter' (ll. 36-37) so critical?
- 4 What is said about the size of the Great Garbage Patch in lines 57-63?
- 5 What triggered Boyan Slat to do something about the problem of ocean plastics?
- 6 Initially, most people rejected Slat's plans. Why was this?
- 7 What made Slat's concept unique?
- 8 'But the task confronting Slat and his team will require a great deal more than this' (ll. 121-124). What does 'this' refer to?
- 9 Read lines 137-155. How would you describe Slat's attitude?
- 10 What is the biggest problem of plastic in the oceans, according to Slat?
- 11 What is the threat to humans in the long run?
- 12 What is meant by 'a holistic approach'?

Assignment 58

Language Organiser

10



Reread the sentences in which the following words occur and match them with their descriptions. Note: there are two extra descriptions that you don't need.

A

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1 pristine (l. 6) | a a substance that makes something dirty |
| 2 debris (l. 14) | b food |
| 3 periphery (l. 29) | c a continuous movement of water in a river, lake, or sea |
| 4 contaminant (l. 30) | d considering a person, thing, or problem as a whole, rather than as separate parts |
| 5 vortex (l. 40) | e a calculation of the value, size, or amount of something made using the information that you have |
| 6 nourishment (l. 43) | f spread in different directions over a wide area |
| 7 ingest (l. 47) | g a gradual increase in numbers or amount until there is a large quantity in one place |
| 8 disperse (l. 78) | h a subject or problem that is often discussed or argued about, especially a social or political matter that affects the interests of a lot of people |
| 9 consensus (l. 101) | i not spoiled or damaged in any way |
| 10 current (l. 109) | j the process of breaking up into very small pieces |
| 11 estimate (l. 125) | k a mass of wind or water that spins quickly and pulls things into its centre |
| 12 accumulation (l. 139) | l stay or move on the surface of a liquid without sinking |
| 13 albeit (l. 148) | m the edge of an area |
| 14 holistic (l. 156) | n take food or other substances into your body |
| 15 degradation (l. 160) | |

- o pieces of waste material, paper, et cetera
- p although
- q an opinion that everyone in a group agrees with or accepts

B

Read the text and fill in the blanks. Choose from the words in exercise A.

Plastic is everywhere. This light and durable material helps to keep our food fresh and is used in everything from clothing fibres to medical supplies to paint. But precisely its durability has made plastic the culprit of the problem: it is resistant to natural bio-... (1) processes. Instead, plastic breaks down into tiny particles that can be deadly to marine life.

Plastic litter ends up in the sea, where it is transported by winds and ocean ... (2). Over time, it ... (3) at the centre of major ocean vortices, forming 'garbage patches': large masses of ever-growing floating ... (4) fields, which are ... (5) over a wide area.

The problem appears as vast as the ocean. A solution involves a dramatic behavioural change on our part ... as we are the problem and the solution. Therefore, a new ... (6) needs to happen. A culture of behavioural changes needs to be implemented at all levels: individual, associative, governmental, legislative, industrial, technological, educational, philosophical, national, and international.

Assignment 59

Language Organiser

5



Find the collocations by matching the words from the left column with the appropriate words in the right column. They can all be found in the article.

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 to make | a a degree |
| 2 to provide | b a prototype model |
| 3 to catch | c data |
| 4 to drop out of | d an unwelcome discovery |
| 5 to pursue | e the tap |
| 6 to gain | f a study |
| 7 to test | g nourishment |
| 8 to conduct | h the food chain |
| 9 to gather | i an idea |
| 10 to close off | j your imagination |
| 11 to enter | k a trial |
| 12 to publish | l worldwide fame |

Assignment 60

Pre-speaking

30



Work with a classmate. In the next assignment, you are going to give a short (2-3 minute) presentation.

Choose one topic from the list (or think of one yourself):

- 1 Plastic: why we love it
- 2 Plastic: why it is a problem
- 3 The Great Pacific Garbage Patch
- 4 Plastic degradation: effects on marine life and humans
- 5 The Ocean Clean Up Foundation
- 6 Ban the bag: European ban on plastic bags
- 7 Ban the bead: UK ban on microbeads in cosmetics
- 8 Dirty laundry: plastic microfibres in clothes
- 9 Solutions: bioplastics, natural fibres
- 10 Solutions: prevention (& tips for everyday life)
- 11 Solutions: raising awareness
- 12 Solutions: legislation

Start by making a framework (a preparation web of keywords and ideas) for your presentation. You can use your notes from Assignment 56. Of course, you may also use information that you have just read in the article, or do some more research on the Internet.

Make sure your presentation has:

- 1 a goal Do you want to provide information, entertain, or persuade your audience?
- 2 an introduction Start your presentation in a way that grabs the attention of your listeners straight away, for example by using a funny anecdote.
- 3 an outline Try not to read out your presentation. Make a prompt card with keywords to structure your talk.
- 4 a conclusion

Practise your presentation at least once. Focus on questions that may be asked by your classmates.

Assignment 61

Speaking

15



Hold your talk in a small group. You should be able to answer questions! Alternatively, record your presentation and send it to your teacher.



Web task

Do you want to find out more about the topic of the article? Go to www.waspreporter.nl for a web task.

Life after man ★★ ★

pages 22-23

Reading • Exam Training • Language Organiser • Speaking

Assignment 62

Pre-reading

10



Step 1

Before reading the article 'Life after man', decide (individually)

when the following would occur if there were no more humans – after: 2 days – 7 days – 1 year – 3 years – 20 years – 300 years – 100,000 years – 10,000,000 years.

- a Bronze sculptures are still recognisable, as are the faces on Mount Rushmore. Life still thrives on Earth, but in new forms.
- b CO₂ in the atmosphere returns to pre-industrial levels. Microbes evolve to biodegrade plastic. Plutonium bombs made during the age of humans become safe to handle.
- c Fuel runs out at the emergency generators that pump coolant into nuclear power plants. Approximately 450 reactors around the world begin to melt down.
- d Human head and body lice go extinct, while cockroaches in cities at temperate latitudes freeze to death. Domestic and farm animals perish in enormous numbers.
- e Most of the world's bridges fall. Dams silt up and overflow, washing away entire cities. Suburbs become forests as endangered species rebound.
- f The Panama Canal closes, rejoining North and South America. Many crops disappear, outcompeted by wild varieties.
- g The pipes burst in colder regions, flooding cities with water. Buildings lose structural integrity as they expand and contract with temperature changes.
- h Without active maintenance and pumping, New York City's subways flood with water and become impassable.

Step 2

Now compare your findings with a partner. Try to agree on what would happen when.

Step 3

Having established this post-apocalyptic timeline as a pair, check it in a larger group.

Assignment 63

Exam Training

30



Your teacher will give you the multiple-choice questions that go with this article.

Assignment 64

Language Organiser

10



A

Below you will find a list of, possibly unfamiliar or unknown, words taken from the text. They are listed in the order in which they appear. Write down in the right-hand column whether you knew this word or not (add + or –). If it is a word you do not know the meaning of, look it up. You need to know all the meanings for assignment B.

1 epoch	
2 cataclysms	
3 magnitude	
4 vacate	