

Teaching News Is Elementary

Date: **May 19, 2017**

Article: **Remote island in Pacific is awash in plastic**

Print Replica: **Wednesday, May 17, 2017**

Section: **MAIN, A1**

Each week, this lesson will share some classroom activity ideas that use the newspaper or other NIE resources. You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some classrooms may be able to use this as a worksheet and others might need to ask and answer the questions in a class discussion.

Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for all of your students.

Materials you will need for this lesson: The Seattle Times print replica, computer or smart board, pencils or pens, paper

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will read an article, and search for personal connections they see in their own lives.

Pre- Reading Discussion:



- What do you see in the pictures?
- Where do you think this beach is located?
- How would you feel if Washington beaches looked like this?
- Can you explain what a “vortex of ocean currents” mean?
- Do you ever litter? Why or why not?
- How can garbage thrown into our oceans hurt both the environment and ocean animals?
- What material do you think is found most often on this island?
- What do you think the article will be about?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A *context clue* is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

Write your guess and then look up the definition and write it below your guess. How close did you come to the correct definition?

“The researchers say the ***density*** of trash was the highest recorded anywhere in the world, despite Henderson Island’s extreme remoteness.”

***Density* Guess:**

***Density* Definition:**

Reading Comprehension:

1. When researchers traveled to a tiny, uninhabited island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, they were astonished to find an estimated _____ million pieces of trash washed up on the beaches.
2. Almost all of the garbage they found on Henderson Island was made from what material? What types of trash was found?
3. Where is the island located?
4. Lavers said Henderson Island is at the edge of a vortex of ocean currents known as the South Pacific gyre, which tends to do what?
5. Lavers and six others stayed on the island for 3½ months in 2015 while conducting the study. What did they find?
6. What were the two most common items found?
7. What animals did they find who became imprisoned by plastic?
8. By clearing a part of a beach of trash and then watching new pieces accumulate, Lavers said they were able to estimate what?

Group Discussion Questions/Journal Prompts:

- What surprised you in this article?
- What can be done to eliminate so much plastic in our oceans?

Melissa Bowen, an oceanographer at the University of Auckland in New Zealand who was not involved in the study, said that winds and currents in the gyre cause the buildup of plastic items on places like Henderson Island.

“As we get more and more of these types of studies, it is bringing home the reality of plastic in the oceans,” Bowen said.

- Do you think this should be a world concern?
- Where do you think the majority of plastic is coming from?
- What can be done to help this environmental problem?

Extension Activity:

If you see trash, please pick it up. If you have something to throw away, use a garbage can. Your challenge this week is to pick up litter when you see it on the ground. Help keep our environment clean. Hopefully, this will become a lifelong habit of yours, if it isn't already.

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