

WORLD OF LANGUAGE ACADEMY

WOLA-READING SAMPLE-2

READING SAMPLE-2

What a Waste!

- A** Every day, all over the world, unwanted waste is disposed of from both domestic and commercial sources, usually with insufficient attention paid to the resulting problems. The increase in excess refuse and how to dispense with it has become a major headache for the government and the environmental agencies.
- B** This has certainly been the case in Britain where there has been a steady rise in the amount of rubbish generated in recent years. In industry, the mining, agriculture, and construction sectors are the biggest culprits, being amongst the greatest producers of waste. Also, household waste has grown at a rate of 3% a year as a consequence of society becoming more affluent and thus consuming more goods, resulting in more rubbish to discard. As this waste is economically and environmentally costly to deal with, local authorities have been required to ensure that the arrangements made to dispose of the surplus detritus are efficient and practicable, considering social as well as economic implications.
- C** For many years, the preferred option for refuse disposal in Britain has been the landfill. In fact, the UK, more than any other European country, makes use of landfills to get rid of its biodegradable waste. However, problems have arisen with this method and alternative solutions have had to be researched.
- D** One of the biggest drawbacks to landfills is the cost. In the past this was not the case as land was plentiful and cheap with abandoned quarries and mines often being utilised. But by 2016, since space for approved and licensed landfills will have run out, viable alternatives to waste disposal have to be found. Another disadvantage is the environmental impact made by the acids and hazardous chemicals that are leaked from the landfills. Older sites depended on these substances being diluted naturally by rain but this often did not occur and surrounding agricultural land was affected and livestock poisoned. Nowadays, more modern landfills use liners within the pits to contain any dangerous material and the liquid is then collected, treated and discharged within the site itself. But perhaps the most apparent annoyance for the general public living in the immediate vicinity of the landfill is the nuisance that results from the traffic, the noise, the dust and the unpleasant odours emanating from the site. Although no risks to human health have been verified, symptoms such as headaches, drowsiness and exhaustion have been reported by people living close to landfills. These may have been caused by toxic emissions from the site but they may be connected to the impact that living next to the sites can have on stress and anxiety.
- E** In order to reduce the amount of waste being sent to the landfill, a special tax was introduced in 1996, to discourage this practice. The charges range from two to eleven pounds per tonne depending on the type of rubbish being discarded and due to this tax the amount of waste from the construction industry has been markedly reduced. Other targets have been set to reduce biodegradable waste deposited in these sites by 2006 but it is thought that the greatest impact could be made through the introduction of more intensive recycling, which could be funded from the proceeds of the landfill tax.

- F** In Europe, Britain is bottom of the recycling table with the lowest rate of 8% compared to the Netherlands where they recycle 72% of their detritus. According to government research, only 7% of plastic was salvaged, as was only 22% of the six billion glass containers manufactured annually in Britain. On the other hand, the same sources found that 90% of car batteries and 66% of lead is recycled. This proportion is high because of the economic value of the material and so reprocessing is an opportunity to gain an income from an environmentally friendly undertaking. Also, of the thirteen billion steel cans produced yearly, about a quarter come from recycled metal. These goods only consume 25% of the energy needed to make the same products from raw materials.
- G** Biodegradable wastes can be made into organic compost to use as fertiliser for the land. At present, less than half the local authorities have facilities for this and about a fifth of municipal waste is being treated but in some areas, schemes are being set up to collect waste from both domestic properties and supermarkets to help effect this procedure.
- H** Yet even now in the 21st century, less progressive authorities are still constructing and employing incinerators to dispose of waste despite the subsequent health hazards. They also have to confront opposition from the public over a policy which has proved to be the most unpopular technology since the introduction of nuclear power.
- I** So, what can be done to encourage more recycling? Probably what should be the government's priority is the reduction in the number of landfills in regular use. Even materials that are biodegradable such as paper cannot easily be broken down as the landfill pits are constructed to keep air out and moisture in, thus slowing down the process to degrade this matter. Therefore, more reprocessing plants for refuse must be constructed to replace the outmoded landfills. Also, companies should be encouraged to take a more responsible approach to the packaging of their products, only using the minimum and environmentally friendly recycled materials. Then, the public must be convinced of the benefits of recycling and be made aware of the ecological consequences of not recycling. In Britain, more intensive reprocessing would lower the production of gases harmful to the ozone layer by 12.8 million tonnes of carbon a year, the equivalent of taking nearly five million cars off the road. Also, a strong incentive for the public to support recycling is the prospect of higher employment. In Germany, it has been estimated that 150,000 people are employed in the recycling business, a number greater than those employed in the steel industry. It is believed that up to 50,000 jobs could be created in Britain if recycling was adopted.
- J** What will happen in the future regarding the disposal of waste matter very much depends on the attitude and party policies of the particular government in power. Yet, if reforms to the methods of waste disposal are not made, serious environmental problems will arise in the immediate future, the consequences of which are too dire to contemplate.

Part A: Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with information from the text.

1. More household waste is produced because

2. Recycling is preferred over landfills because

Part B: Complete the following summary. (0.5 points for each gap)

Solutions to the problem of how to dispose of excess rubbish must be found. With the dramatic increase in both (3) _____ and industrial rubbish, the (4) _____ must devise new policies to deal with the matter. The well-established (5) _____ are now considered (6) _____ so it is preferable to send the refuse to (7) _____ works in order to (8) _____ the waste products which could then be used to manufacture (9) _____ goods. Also the general public must be better informed of the worrying environmental (10) _____ the planet faces if this matter is not addressed urgently.

Part C: Answer the following questions according to the information in the text.

8. How does increase in wealth contribute to increase in waste?

9. Landfills are not approved of because

- a. they use agricultural land.
- b. they have always been expensive to run.
- c. they need to have a licence.
- d. they produce dangerous emissions.

10. A tax was imposed in order

- a. to encourage recycling.
- b. to dissuade people from using landfills.
- c. to punish the building industry.
- d. to gather money for the government.

Answer Key

Part A: Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with information from the text.

3. More household waste is produced because *as the population becomes wealthier, their capacity to consume more increases.*
4. Recycling is preferred over landfills because *it could reduce the cost of waste disposal, lower the production of gases harmful to the ozone layer, and create more job opportunities.*

Part B: Complete the following summary using NO MORE THAN ONE WORD. (0.5 points for each gap)

Solutions to the problem of how to dispose of excess rubbish must be found. With the dramatic increase in both (3) *domestic* and industrial rubbish, the (4) *government* must devise new policies to deal with the matter. The well-established (5) *landfills* are now considered (6) *outmoded* so it is preferable to send the refuse to (7) *reprocessing/recycling* works in order to (8) *degrade* the waste products which could then be used to manufacture (9) *recycled* goods. Also the general public must be better informed of the worrying environmental (10) *consequences* the planet faces if this matter is not addressed urgently.

Part C: Answer the following questions according to the information in the text.

11. How does increase in wealth contribute to increase in waste?
As the population becomes wealthier, their capacity to consume more increases resulting in more rubbish to discard.
12. Landfills are not approved of because
 - a. they use agricultural land.
 - b. they have always been expensive to run.
 - c. they need to have a licence.
 - d. *they produce dangerous emissions.*
13. A tax was imposed in order
 - a. to encourage recycling.
 - b. *to dissuade people from using landfills.*
 - c. to punish the building industry.
 - d. to gather money for the government.