

A million bottles a minute: world's plastic binge 'as dangerous as climate change'

A million plastic bottles are bought around the world every minute and the number will jump another 20% by 2021, creating an environmental crisis some campaigners predict will be as serious as climate change. Most plastic bottles used for soft drinks and water are made from polyethylene terephthalate (Pet), which is highly recyclable. But as their use increases rapidly across the globe, efforts to collect and recycle the bottles to keep them from polluting the oceans are failing to keep up.

Fewer than half of the bottles bought in 2016 were collected for recycling and just 7% of those collected were turned into new bottles. Instead most plastic bottles produced end up in the ocean. Between 5m and 13m tonnes of plastic enter the world's oceans each year to be ingested by sea birds, fish and other organisms, and by 2050 the ocean will contain more plastic by weight than fish, according to research by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. Experts warn that some of it is already finding its way into the human food chain. Scientists at Ghent University in Belgium recently calculated people who eat seafood ingest up to 11,000 tiny pieces of plastic every year.

The majority of plastic bottles used across the globe are for drinking water, according to Rosemary Downey, head of packaging at Euromonitor and one of the world's experts in plastic bottle production. China is responsible for most of the increase in demand. The Chinese public's consumption of bottled water accounted for nearly a quarter of global demand, she said. In 2015, consumers in China purchased 68.4bn bottles of water and in 2016 this increased to 73.8bn bottles. "This increase is being driven by increased urbanisation," said Downey. "There is a desire for healthy living and citizens have expressed strong concerns about groundwater contamination and the quality of tap water, which all contribute to the increase in bottle water use," she said. India and Indonesia are also witnessing strong growth.

Plastic drinking bottles could be made out of 100% recycled plastic, known as RPet – and campaigners are pressing big drinks companies to radically increase the amount of recycled plastic in their bottles. But brands are hostile to using RPet for cosmetic reasons because they want their products in shiny, clear plastic, according to Steve Morgan, of Recoup in the UK.

Fragment adapted from The Guardian, July 2017

1. Say whether the following sentences are TRUE or FALSE according to the text. COPY the evidence from the text. No marks will be given without the evidence. (1.5 points)

- a) Activists have announced that an excessive use of plastic will aggravate climate change.
- b) Not only China plays an important role in the increase in plastic bottle consumption.
- c) Drinks companies reject recycled polyethylene terephthalate because of its appearance.

2. ANSWER the questions below in your own words.

answer each question. (1.5 points)

- a) How many of the plastic bottles picked up in 2016 were actually recycled?

b) Which is one of the reasons why people in China are drinking more bottled water?

c) Who may be consuming more than 10,000 pieces of plastic every year?

3. WRITE a synonym (=), an opposite (≠), a definition or a sentence for each of the following words to show that you understand their meaning in the text. Use your own words. (1 point)

a) soft drink

b) to warn

c) expert

d) radically

4. READ this conversation and COMPLETE your part. Write the numbers (1-6) and complete each sentence on your paper. (1.5 points)

You've just arrived home and your mum is in the kitchen

Mum: Did you buy the rice, dear?

You: (1) _____.

Mum: Oh, darling! I only asked you to do one thing.

You: I know, I know. It won't happen again. Next time (2) _____.

Mum: That's a good idea! And apart from your phone alarm, you'll get three WhatsApp messages from me instead of one.

You: (3) _____.

Mum: Don't worry! It is not necessary. I'll change the menu. We'll have spaghetti instead.

You: (4) _____. Just give me five minutes and I'll bring the rice.

Mum: No, I can't wait five minutes. It doesn't matter that we had spaghetti on Sunday. We need to eat early today because your brother has class in the afternoon.

You: But it's still 13.00, he has plenty of time to get to university. (5) _____.

Mum: It's OK. You'll eat your spaghetti with a different sauce today. Don't complain!

You: (6) _____?

Mum: Salad. Grandad brought tomatoes yesterday from his vegetable garden and I've prepared a lovely salad with them.

You: A very healthy diet we're having in this house, mum!

5. Read the following situations and WRITE what you would say in each one to show that you

understand the context of the situation. Write between 10 and 25 words. (1.5 points)

- a) Your sister's dream has always been to be a doctor, but her marks are not good enough to study medicine. Give her some suggestions for her future.
- b) You get home after a party and your mum says you smell of alcohol. Give her an explanation.
- c) Your 80 year-old grandma has been using Facebook for a few years, now she wants to have an Instagram account. Tell her your opinion about her decision.

6. WRITE a composition of about 120-150 words on the following topic (3 points):

Our planet would be a better place if we all were much more careful. What can we do to help save the planet?