

Form 4: The Problem with Bottled Water

Part 1

My Name: _____

My Partner's
Name(s): _____

Today's Date: _____

My Teacher's Name: _____

My Grade (Circle One): 6th 7th 8th

Directions:

In this activity you are going to read an article from an environmental magazine. The author of the article is **Mark Acosta**. Mr. Acosta wants to persuade you. He wants you to agree with him. Your job is to read the article and answer questions. Later, you will read a letter from a reader named **Wendy Black**. Ms. Black disagrees with Mark Acosta. In the end, you have to decide who you agree with.

Before you read...

Look at the article by Mark Acosta. Look at the title, the photo, and the first sentence of each paragraph.

What do you think Mark Acosta’s article is going to be about? Talk to your partner and finish the sentence below.

I think this article is going to be about: _____

_____.

While you read...

Now read **Mr. Acosta’s** article. While you read the article:

- Underline any words that you don’t know.
- Try to guess the meaning of the words from the context.

After you have finished reading...

Now you will work with your partner to answer questions. **You will write down your own answers, but discuss them with your partner.**

Tips for working together:

- Discuss the questions to make sure you understand them.
- Try to agree on the answers before you write them down.
 - **Remember: You can look back at the article at any time.**
- Ask your partner about things you don't understand.

When you are ready, go to the next page.





Understanding Main Ideas and the Main Argument

Directions: For the questions on this page, think about the **topic** of the article, the **main idea**, and the author’s **main argument** (his main point or message).

Warm-up:

Put a check next to the **topics** that were included in the article. Discuss with your partner to make sure you agree.

- Where to recycle plastic bottles
- How plastic bottles harm ocean animals
- How glass and plastic bottles are different
- How to stop using so much bottled water

1 What is the author Mark Acosta’s **main argument** in the article? Discuss with your partner and circle the best answer.

- A. Bottled Water is safer and more convenient than tap water.
- B. People need to learn more about recycling plastic.
- C. People should not use bottled water so much because it causes many problems.

2 Look at **paragraph 1** again. The author mentions **three problems** caused by using too much bottled water. Underline the three problems that the author describes.

More than half of the people in the United States drink bottled water regularly. Bottled water is safe and it is considered convenient because it is portable. But that convenience comes with problems and a high environmental cost. The problems include: pollution created during the production and transportation of bottled water; injuries to marine life from discarded bottles; and ugly garbage dumps filled with empty bottles.

Directions: For questions 3 – 13 you will need to understand **details** (specific information) from the article.

The paragraph below is a summary of paragraphs 2 and 3.

- Use the **ANSWER CHOICES** to complete the sentences.
- Write the letters of the correct answer choices in the blank spaces in the paragraph.
- You may look back at the article at any time.

ANSWER CHOICES

- A. garbage dumps B. plastic bottles C. pollutants
D. barrels of oil E. dissolve into the soil

3

Nickel, benzene, and ethylene oxide are examples of _____. They

4

are released into the air when _____ are made. Most plastic bottles

5

wind up in _____ where it takes them hundreds of years to decompose.

6

Decompose is another way of saying _____.

Directions: Mark Acosta uses many **numbers** to show how big the bottled water problem is.

- Answer the questions on this page with **numbers** from the article.
- You can either spell the number out (e.g., one) or write the number (e.g., 1).

7 How many barrels of oil are used to make plastic water bottles each year? (paragraph 2)

8 How many tons of plastic are used to make water bottles each year?
(paragraph 3)

9 What percentage (%) of plastic bottles end up in garbage dumps?
(paragraph 7)

Directions: For questions 10 and 11, decide whether the sentences are correct or incorrect based on the information in the article.

- If a sentence is correct, circle **Correct**.
- If a sentence is incorrect, circle **Incorrect** AND quote the article to explain why it is incorrect.
- **Two examples have been done for you.**

SENTENCES	ANSWERS
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Ocean animals can be killed or injured by eating plastic that is floating in the water.</i></p>	<p>Correct  Incorrect</p>
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>An equal number of plastic bottles go to garbage dumps and recycling centers.</i></p>	<p>Correct  Incorrect</p> <p>The article says "Currently only about 30 percent of plastic bottles make it to a recycling center" </p>
<p>10</p> <p><i>If people switch from drinking bottled water to tap water, the environment will not change much.</i></p>	<p>Correct Incorrect</p>
<p>11</p> <p><i>People believe that bottled water is safer and more convenient than tap water.</i></p>	<p>Correct Incorrect</p>

Directions: For questions 12 and 13, look at the table below and decide if each sentence from Mark Acosta’s article expresses a **fact** or an **opinion**.

- Check (✓) “FACT” if the sentence expresses a fact.
- Check “OPINION” if the sentence expresses an opinion.
- **One example has been done for you.**

SENTENCES	FACT	OPINION
Example: Paragraph 2: “The plastic in a typical water bottle is made from crude oil.”	✓	
12 Paragraph 4: “Garbage dumps are often located near the ocean, and that is where many bottles wind up.”		
13 Paragraph 7: “It is time for major changes across the country.”		



Directions: For questions 14 – 17, read the definition and write the word that goes with it. Use the **ANSWER CHOICES**.

- Hint: Use context clues to guess the definition of words you don't know.
- The paragraphs with the answer choices are written below the words.
- **One answer choice will not be used.**

ANSWER CHOICES

Portable (paragraph 1) reusable (paragraph 6) tap (paragraph 5) consumer (paragraph 6) currently (paragraph 7) major (paragraph 7)

DEFINITION	WORD
Example: A person who buys something	consumer 
14 Happening right now	
15 Can be used again	
16 An opening that water comes out of	
17 Can be carried from place to place	

Directions: First read the definitions of *Environment*, *Environmentalist*, and *Environmentalism* in the example table.

WORD	DEFINITION
<i>Environment:</i>	The natural world, including the land, air, and water
<i>Environmentalist:</i>	A person who works to protect the environment from pollution
<i>Environmentalism:</i>	The activity of working for the protection of the environment

Now look at the table below.

- For questions 18 and 19, draw lines from the words in the WORD column to their definitions in the DEFINITION column.
- **One example has been done for you.**

WORD		DEFINITION
Example: <i>Pollute:</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> A person or company that makes the environment dirty
18 <i>Pollutant:</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> To make the environment dirty or unhealthy.
19 <i>Polluter:</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> A material or substance that makes the environment dirty, such as a dangerous chemical

20 Read this sentence from paragraph 7. Then, choose the sentence that has the **closest meaning**.

If every bottled water consumer in the U.S. made the switch to drinking tap water from reusable containers, the environment would be cleaner and safer for all living creatures.

- A. People will not switch from bottled water to tap water until the environment becomes safer.
- B. People who use reusable containers do not realize that there are better choices.
- C. When people start using tap water instead of bottled water, there will be less pollution.
- D. People need to stop using so much water in order to help the environment.

21 The main verb in this sentence is underlined. What is the **subject** that goes with the main verb?

Many people who use bottled water help protect the environment by recycling plastic bottles.

- A. "bottled water"
- B. "people"
- C. "the environment"
- D. "who"

Directions: For questions 22 and 23, look at the table below. The QUESTION column has questions about bottled water. The PARAGRAPH NUMBER column has paragraph numbers where the information to answer the questions can be found.

- Draw a line to match each question with the paragraph where the answer can be found.
- **One line has been drawn for you.**

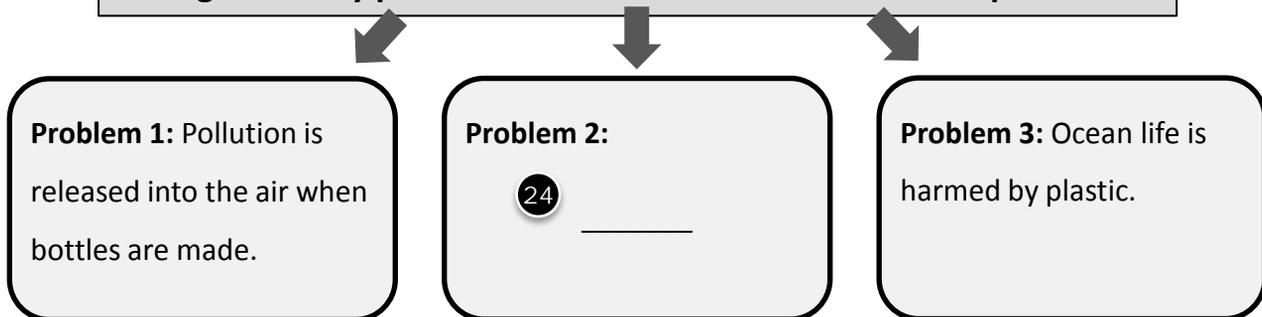
QUESTION		PARAGRAPH NUMBER
Example: <i>What would happen in the United States if people switched from bottled water to tap water?</i>		Paragraph 4
22 <i>How does plastic harm ocean animals?</i>		Paragraph 6
23 <i>What are some beliefs people have about bottled water?</i>		Paragraph 7

Directions: The graphic organizer below shows the author’s argument. Some parts of the graphic organizer are empty.

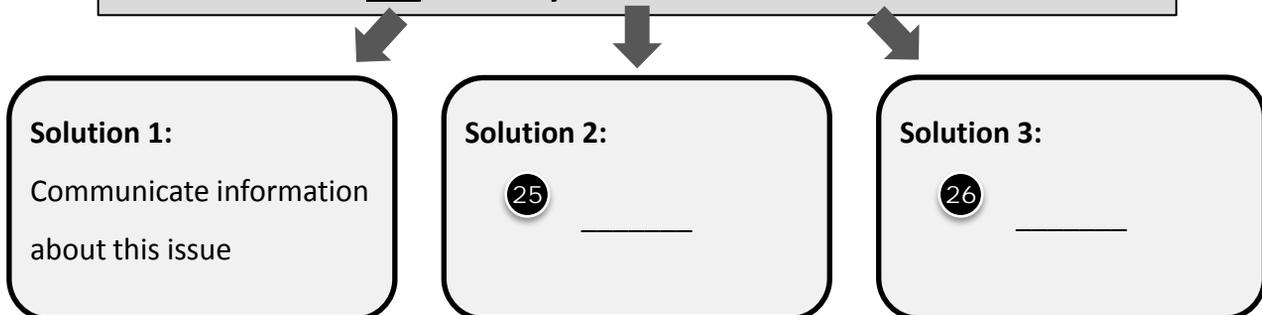
- For questions 24 – 26, use the ANSWER CHOICES to fill in the blank spaces.
- **One answer choice will not be used!**

ANSWER CHOICES
A. Use tap water in reusable containers
B. Recycle more of the plastic bottles we use
C. Tap water costs much less than bottled water
D. Plastic bottles wind up in ugly garbage dumps

Using too many plastic water bottles causes these three problems:



But, if we try these three solutions:



... We can improve the environment.



Before you go on, read Wendy Black's letter with your partner.

Directions: Wendy Black disagrees with Mark Acosta. What **reasons** does Ms. Black mention for preferring to drink bottled water?

- Write a check (✓) under **YES** if the reason is mentioned by Ms. Black
- Write a check under **NO** if it is not mentioned by Ms. Black.

REASONS	YES	NO
27 Bottled water tastes better than tap water.		
28 Sometimes tap water contains chemicals.		
29 The number of plastic bottles being recycled is increasing.		

Directions: In questions 30 and 31, think about what is **probably true** based on what you read in Mr. Acosta’s article. Discuss with your partner to choose the best answer.

30 Based on what you read in Mr. Acosta’s article, which of these projects would he **probably** support? Circle just one answer.

- A. Giving bottled water to student athletes.
- B. Giving free reusable water bottles to high school students.
- C. A television program about chemicals in tap water.
- D. A plan to lower the price of bottled water.

31 Based on what you read in Mr. Acosta’s article, which statement about Mark Acosta is **probably true**? Circle just one answer.

- A. Mr. Acosta cares about keeping the environment clean and safe.
- B. Mr. Acosta goes to the recycling center every day.
- C. Mr. Acosta is worried about pollutants in tap water.

Directions: You have read an article and a letter. Each author made an argument about bottled water.

- Choose the author who you agree with more.
- Use **specific information from what you read** to explain why you think their argument was the strongest.

32

Who do you agree with more about bottled water?

- I agree with Mark Acosta more.
- I agree with Wendy Black more.

Now write a paragraph to explain your choice.
Remember to use specific reasons from the articles you have read.
