

## **Kenya disposes of disposable bags**

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**14 July, 2005**

## THE ARTICLE

### **Kenya disposes of disposable bags**

**BNE:** Kenya has introduced a new system to make shopping more eco-friendly. The Environment Ministry has launched a campaign to encourage the use of biodegradable shopping bags across Kenya. The *East African Standard* reported that the Environment and Natural Resources minister launched the new bags, which are designed to reduce litter and prevent pollution. A spokesperson said: "This will make our landscape less of an eyesore."

It was difficult to introduce the new bags in Kenya. Manufacturers complained that changing from the traditional plastic bags would cost 20,000 jobs. Environmentalists argued that reducing litter and pollution was far more important. The new biodegradable bags will also help reduce Kenya's high rates of malaria. The new "green" bags decompose and thus prevent breeding grounds for mosquitoes. A nationwide ban on plastic bags is next on the agenda in Kenya.

## **WARM-UPS**

**1. PLASTIC BAGS:** In pairs / groups, talk about plastic bags from supermarkets and stores. Do you ever think about the damage these bags cause the environment? Do you take your own bag? Is there a policy in your country to reduce the use of plastic shopping bags?

**2. QUICK ROLE PLAY:** Students A are the bosses of companies that manufacture plastic shopping bags. You don't care about the environment. You only care about profits. Students B are environmentalists. You think plastic bags are a huge environmental threat. In pairs, role play a discussion between manufacturers and environmentalists.

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Kenya / supermarkets / shopping bags / eco-friendly / natural resources / eyesores / litter / pollution / malaria / mosquitoes / plastic*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. PLASTIC:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "plastic". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**5. PLASTIC OPINIONS:** In pairs / groups, discuss how far you agree with these opinions on plastic:

- a. Plastic should be banned worldwide.
- b. Countries should educate people about how to correctly dispose of plastic.
- c. Plastic shopping bags are very, very useful.
- d. Supermarkets shouldn't provide any bags. Lazy customers should bring their own.
- e. Litter bugs should be fined a lot of money for throwing bags onto the street.
- f. The biggest problem is that there aren't enough public rubbish bins / trash cans.
- g. Environmentalists worry too much.
- h. If people had to pay 10 cents for a plastic bag, the litter problem would disappear.
- i. I hate it when the handle of the bag breaks or there's a hole at the bottom.
- j. Plastic bags are a huge threat to the ozone layer.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. The Kenyan government has banned plastic shopping bags.               | T / F |
| b. Kenya's government is encouraging the use of "green" shopping bags.   | T / F |
| c. Kenya's shopping bag policy is aimed at reducing pollution.           | T / F |
| d. Plastic bags cause irritation to the eyes that can lead to blindness. | T / F |
| e. Shopping bag manufacturers were happy with the new campaign.          | T / F |
| f. Environmentalists were very worried about job losses.                 | T / F |
| g. Plastic shopping bags encourage malaria to spread.                    | T / F |
| h. A nationwide ban on plastic toys is next in Kenya.                    | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| a. launched   | stop        |
| b. encourage  | list        |
| c. reduce     | much        |
| d. prevent    | promote     |
| e. eyesore    | problematic |
| f. difficult  | rot         |
| g. complained | started     |
| h. far        | mess        |
| i. decompose  | moaned      |
| j. agenda     | lessen      |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                  |                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. introduced a                  | prevent pollution              |
| b. launched                      | more important                 |
| c. encourage the use             | to introduce the new bags      |
| d. designed to reduce litter and | a campaign                     |
| e. make our landscape            | 20,000 jobs                    |
| f. It was difficult              | the agenda                     |
| g. cost                          | new system                     |
| h. far                           | grounds for mosquitoes         |
| i. prevent breeding              | of biodegradable shopping bags |
| j. next on                       | less of an eyesore             |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces.

### Kenya disposes of disposable bags

**BNE:** Kenya has \_\_\_\_\_ a new system to make shopping \_\_\_\_\_ eco-friendly. The Environment Ministry has launched a \_\_\_\_\_ to encourage the \_\_\_\_\_ of biodegradable shopping bags across Kenya. The *East African Standard* \_\_\_\_\_ that the Environment and Natural Resources minister launched the new bags, which are \_\_\_\_\_ to reduce litter and prevent \_\_\_\_\_. A spokesperson said: "This will make our landscape less of an \_\_\_\_\_."

*designed*

*eyesore*

*more*

*use*

*pollution*

*introduced*

*campaign*

*reported*

It was \_\_\_\_\_ to introduce the new bags in Kenya. Manufacturers \_\_\_\_\_ that changing from the traditional plastic bags would \_\_\_\_\_ 20,000 jobs. Environmentalists argued that \_\_\_\_\_ litter and pollution was \_\_\_\_\_ more important. The new biodegradable bags will also help reduce Kenya's high \_\_\_\_\_ of malaria. The new "\_\_\_\_\_" bags decompose and thus prevent breeding grounds for mosquitoes. A nationwide ban on plastic bags is next on the \_\_\_\_\_ in Kenya.

*cost*

*complained*

*green*

*reducing*

*agenda*

*rates*

*difficult*

*far*

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'plastic' and 'bag'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT PLASTIC BAG SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about plastic bags and the environment.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- new system
- encourage
- across
- reported
- designed
- eyesore
- introduce
- jobs
- far
- malaria
- grounds
- agenda

## DISCUSSION

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What did you think when you first saw this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What is your opinion on plastic shopping bags?
- d. Have you ever thrown a plastic bag on the street?
- e. Would you say anything to someone you saw throw litter on the street?
- f. Are you a litter bug?
- g. What do you do to recycle?
- h. What would you think if supermarkets charged a fee for shopping bags?
- i. What is the best way to deal with the problem of plastic?
- j. Which is more important, jobs or the environment?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. What do you think of the new system in Kenya?
- d. Does your country need to clean up its environment?
- e. Are there any parts of your town that are an eyesore?
- f. Do you think you should take your own shopping bag when you go to the supermarket?
- g. In what other ways do you use your plastic bags?
- h. Do you agree with a nationwide ban on plastic shopping bags?
- i. What other environmental issues should be on the agenda?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## SPEAKING

### GOODBYE PLASTIC

In pairs / groups, find alternatives to the use of plastic in the products below. What are the alternatives? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives?

PRODUCT	ALTERNATIVES	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Shopping bags			
Food wrapping			
Pens			
Children's toys			
Bottles			
Your choice _____			

After you have finished, change partners and discuss your alternatives and their advantages or disadvantages compared with plastic. Decide whether or not an alternative material should replace the plastic.

Return to your original partner(s) and compare the decisions you made.



## LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### Kenya disposes of disposable bags

**BNE:** Kenya has \_\_\_\_\_ a new system to make shopping more eco-friendly. The Environment Ministry has \_\_\_\_\_ a campaign to \_\_\_\_\_ the use of biodegradable shopping bags across Kenya. The *East African Standard* \_\_\_\_\_ that the Environment and Natural Resources minister launched the new bags, which are \_\_\_\_\_ to reduce litter and prevent pollution. A spokesperson said: "This will make our landscape \_\_\_\_ of an \_\_\_\_\_."

It was difficult to \_\_\_\_\_ the new bags in Kenya. Manufacturers \_\_\_\_\_ that changing from the \_\_\_\_\_ plastic bags would cost 20,000 jobs. Environmentalists argued that \_\_\_\_\_ litter and pollution was far more important. The new biodegradable bags will also help reduce Kenya's \_\_\_\_\_ of malaria. The new "green" bags \_\_\_\_\_ and thus prevent breeding grounds for mosquitoes. A nationwide \_\_\_\_\_ on plastic bags is next on the \_\_\_\_\_ in Kenya.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on plastic. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. RECYCLE:** Make a poster that shows the best way to recycle the things you throw away every day. Show and explain your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you put similar things on your posters?

**4. LETTER:** Write a letter to the head of Kenya's Environment Ministry to tell him / her what you think of the decision to promote biodegradable shopping bags. Read your letter to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

a. F      b. T      c. T      d. F      e. F      f. F      g. T      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

a. launched	started
b. encourage	promote
c. reduce	lessen
d. prevent	stop
e. eyesore	mess
f. difficult	problematic
g. complained	moaned
h. far	much
i. decompose	rot
j. agenda	list

### PHRASE MATCH:

a. introduced a	new system
b. launched	a campaign
c. encourage the use	of biodegradable shopping bags
d. designed to reduce litter and	prevent pollution
e. make our landscape	less of an eyesore
f. It was difficult	to introduce the new bags
g. cost	20,000 jobs
h. far	more important
i. prevent breeding	grounds for mosquitoes
j. next on	the agenda

### GAP FILL:

#### Kenya disposes of disposable bags

**BNE:** Kenya has **introduced** a new system to make shopping **more** eco-friendly. The Environment Ministry has launched a **campaign** to encourage the **use** of biodegradable shopping bags across Kenya. The *East African Standard* **reported** that the Environment and Natural Resources minister launched the new bags, which are **designed** to reduce litter and prevent **pollution**. A spokesperson said: "This will make our landscape less of an **eyesore**."

It was **difficult** to introduce the new bags in Kenya. Manufacturers **complained** that changing from the traditional plastic bags would **cost** 20,000 jobs. Environmentalists argued that **reducing** litter and pollution was **far** more important. The new biodegradable bags will also help reduce Kenya's high **rates** of malaria. The new "**green**" bags decompose and thus prevent breeding grounds for mosquitoes. A nationwide ban on plastic bags is next on the **agenda** in Kenya.