

Very hungry, plastic-eating caterpillars

Pre-listening

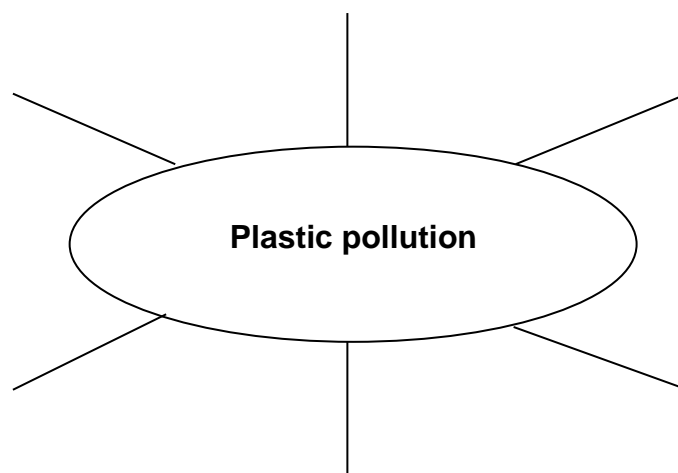


Photo: Getty Images

1. Did you read, or did your parents read you, the book “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” when you were little? In the story, the caterpillar eats different food every day of the week. Can you remember what the hungry caterpillar ate each day?

Get together with a partner and write down everything you can remember. Then, together with the rest of the class, see if you can make a complete list of all the foods the caterpillar eats.

2. **What comes to mind when you think about plastic pollution?**



3. Discuss what actions you currently take to reduce your plastic consumption.

4. These English words or phrases are in the text you are going to hear. Match them with their corresponding German definitions. Write your answers in the grid below.

a) to break down (para. 0)	A in etwas eindringen
b) to turn out (para. 1)	B Darm
c) digest (para. 1)	C nichtsdestotrotz
d) packaging (para. 2)	D sich herausstellen
e) fungus (para. 2)	E zersetzen
f) the most common ... (para. 2)	F der/die/das am häufigsten eingesetzte ...
g) gut (para. 3)	G Verpackung
h) to invade something (para. 4)	H verdauen
i) nevertheless (para. 5)	I umgehen mit; bewältigen
j) to manage (para. 5)	J Pilz

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j

Listening comprehension

1. Listen to the text and decide whether the following statements are true or false or not in the text.

- a) The hungry caterpillar ate through three plums.
- b) Caterpillars can digest plastic bags.
- c) Polyethylene is similar to a caterpillar's natural food.
- d) Plastic-eating bacteria can grow outside of caterpillars.
- e) Caterpillars can eat all of our plastic waste with no negative effects.
- f) The greater wax moth invades beehives and eats wax.
- g) We should reduce the amount of plastic we use.

True	False	Not in the text

2. Listen to the text and match the following sentence fragments.



a)	Scientists think learning about this process	A	it would be disastrous for bee colonies.
b)	Polyethylene normally takes hundreds of years to decompose,	B	in the same way they digest beeswax.
c)	They break down the plastic	C	could help fight plastic pollution.
d)	But having these caterpillars eat all our plastic	D	isn't really a practical solution.
e)	If there were more beeswax-eating caterpillars,	E	to find new ways of managing plastic waste.
f)	They hope they can learn from this natural degradation process	F	but the wax moth caterpillar can make holes in a plastic bag in under an hour.

a) _____ b) _____ c) _____ d) _____ e) _____ f) _____

3. What is the most common form of plastic? What kinds of products are created with it?

4. What do scientists want to learn about plastic decomposition from caterpillars?

5. In what ways could the “solution” of plastic-eating caterpillars be a problem in the future?

Vocabulary

Find a word or expression that means the same as each of the words (a–i) below. The paragraphs where you can find the words in the article are indicated in brackets.

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Von dieser Vorlage ist die Vervielfältigung für den eigenen Unterrichtsgebrauch gestattet.

a) typical (para. 2)	
b) dissolve (para. 2)	
c) disintegrate (para. 3)	
d) live (para. 3)	
e) deterioration (para. 3)	
f) realistic (para. 4)	
g) generate (para. 4)	
h) terrible (para. 4)	
i) made (para. 4)	

Grammar

Use the word given in capitals at the end of the lines to form a word of the same word family that fits the sentence.

- a) The hungry caterpillar ate through four _____ . STRAWBERRY
- b) When you have gas and bloating, your _____ DIGEST
isn't working very well.
- c) Not stressing bees is important to their _____ . SURVIVE
- d) It is important to _____ the amount of plastic we use. REDUCE

Answer key

Pre-listening

1. Complete list:

1. Monday: One apple
2. Tuesday: Two pears
3. Wednesday: Three plums
4. Thursday: Four strawberries
5. Friday: Five oranges
6. Saturday: one piece of chocolate cake, one ice cream cone, one pickle, one slice of Swiss cheese, one slice of salami, one lollipop, one piece of cherry pie, one sausage, one cupcake and one slice of watermelon
7. Sunday: one nice green leaf

2. and 3. Individual answers

4. a) E • b) D • c) H • d) G • e) J • f) F • g) B • h) A • i) C • j) I

Listening comprehension

1. a) not in text • b) true • c) true • d) true • e) false • f) true • g) true

2. a) C • b) F • c) B • d) D • e) A • f) E

3. The most common form of plastic is polyethylene. It is used for making shopping bags, packaging and food wrappers. (para. 2)

4. Scientists want to understand how the digestive system of a caterpillar breaks down plastic, as well as how the bacteria living inside of their gut break down plastic. (para. 3)

5. It would take a huge number of caterpillars to decompose the amount of plastic pollution we have, and that would be bad for bees. Additionally, caterpillars excrete ethylene glycol when they eat plastic and it is toxic. (para. 4)

Vocabulary

a) common • b) decompose • c) break down • d) survive • e) degradation • f) practical • g) create • h) disastrous • i) produced

Grammar

a) strawberries • b) digestion • c) survival • d) reduce

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