



TRASH, THE WORLD AND ME

What's the problem?

In this unit, Jeremy will introduce us to the global problem we have created with the amount of waste we produce.

1 Read the text.

We live on a planet which gives us everything we need for life. Over recent centuries humans have drastically changed life on Earth. We are consumers and we produce a lot of waste. This unit will help you explore the problem of waste on a global scale. You will also begin to explore your own life and daily behaviour.

- Watch the introductory clip (*clip 01*).

The narrator says: 'Life on Earth looks perfect from space. It's only when we look more closely that we start to see some of the results of our consumption¹. Talk in groups of 3. What 'results of our consumption' do you think the film will show?

Now watch the next part of the film (*clip 02*). Did you see any more 'results of our consumption'?

2 Watch the next clip (*clip 03*) and answer the questions.

- What did we usually do with rubbish in the past?
- What are we doing with a lot of it now?
- What is the problem in Saida?
- How much waste is brought here every day?
- How high is the 'mountain'?

- Watch again and complete gaps 1-8 with a phrase A-H

I've always enjoyed beachcombing and as a child I would search for sea glass, bits of wood, but in the fifty years since then things have changed. The treasure I used to find in the sand has been (1) _____. I want to know why. No one knows exactly (2) _____. What we do know is that with 7 billion of us (3) _____ than at any other time in history. But does anyone know what happens to it all? How it's (4) _____ and ultimately us? Historically we've always buried our trash. But it seems that now (5) _____. Since 1975, waste from the ancient Lebanese city of Saida, now a suburb of Beirut, has been brought here, to (6) _____ on the edge of the city. Over 80 tons of it every day. What was a sandy beach, has been replaced by (7) _____, well over 40 metres in height. As the rubbish decomposes, (8) _____ ...

- A how much rubbish we produce
 B we sometimes don't dig, we just dump²
 C an uncontrolled dump³
 D chemicals leach into the ground
 E replaced by trash
 F we're making more garbage now
 G affecting the land, the air, the sea
 H a trash mountain

- Check your answers with a partner. Watch again to check your answers.

TRASHFACTS
 2.2 billion tonnes –
 the amount
 of rubbish
 we will soon make
 every single year!



1
consumption
 using up
 or eating food
 or resources

2
dump
 to get rid of
 something you
 do not want

3
dump
 a place where
 waste or rubbish/garbage is
 taken and left



TRASH, THE WORLD AND ME

3 Match the phrases 1-8 from the text with a phrase A-H which has the same or similar meaning.

1	replaced by trash	the amount of waste we make	A
2	how much rubbish we produce	changing the world around us	B
3	we're making more garbage now	a place where people leave rubbish without permission	C
4	affecting the land, the air, the seas	we don't bury it we just leave it sometimes	D
5	we sometimes don't dig, we just dump	substances filter into the earth	E
6	an uncontrolled dump	we're producing more rubbish today	F
7	a trash mountain	exchanged for rubbish	G
8	chemicals leach into the ground	an enormous pile of rubbish	H

- Check your answers with a partner.

4 Watch the next part of the clip (*clip 03*) and number the pictures in the right order.



TRASHFACTS

With only 4% of the world population, the USA produces 30% of the world's waste.



TRASH, THE WORLD AND ME

5 Now make phrases from the clip (*clip 03*) using the words in the first two columns. Write them in the box next to the correct explanation. Use the unit glossary to help you. Note - one of them has been done for you.

pernicious	fishermen	pernicious greenhouse gas -----	a harmful gas contributing to global warming
tumbling	run-off	-----	the number of people living in Saida
liquid	greenhouse gas	-----	rubbish falling into the sea
local	trash	-----	water-like substance that flows off the land
200,000	inhabitants	-----	people in the area who make a living catching fish

- Read the transcript of the clip to check your answers.

6 Watch the next part of the clip (*clip 03*).. The speaker mentions four countries affected by the pollution from the Saida rubbish dump in Lebanon. Circle the names of the countries.



- Now watch the rest of the clip (*clip 03*) and with a pen mark on the map the coastline affected by the pollution.

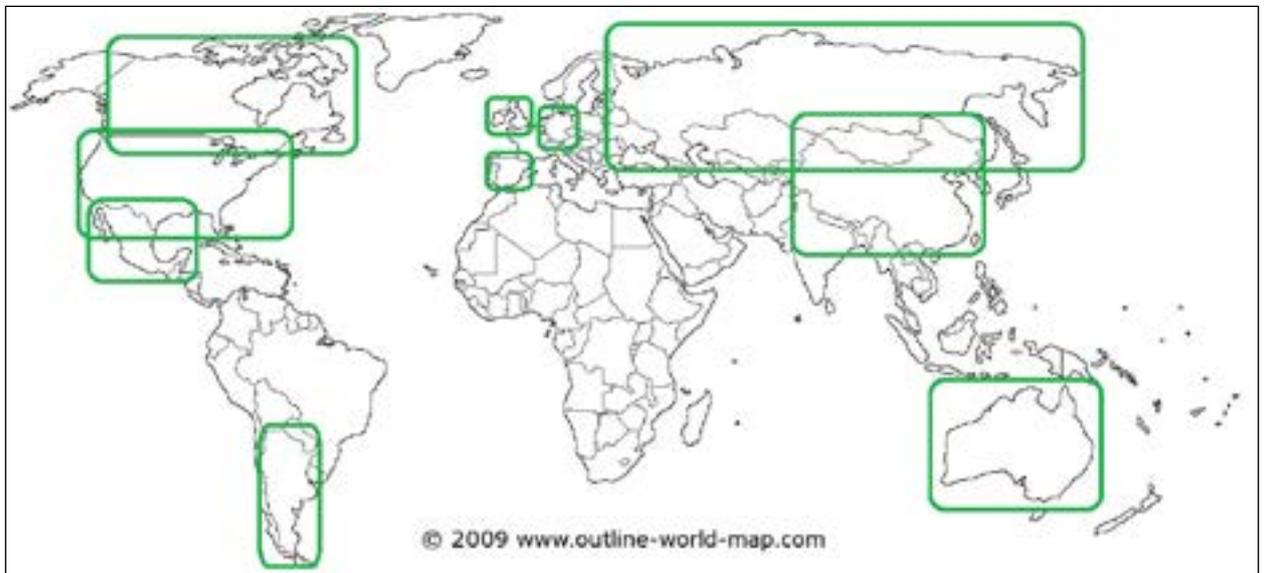


TRASH, THE WORLD AND ME

7 You can see that the area affected by pollution from the Saida rubbish dump is very large. Just imagine how much of the planet is being affected by dumps and landfill⁴ sites around the world. Is there a rubbish dump or landfill site where you live?

- Let's take a look at the world's largest producers of rubbish in our trashed world. Use your general knowledge (or an atlas) and write the amounts of waste produced in each of the countries given on the map. Then compare maps with your partner.

An area of land where large amounts of waste material are buried under the earth: USA – 230m tonnes per year; China – 300m tonnes per year; Russia – 200m tonnes per year; Germany – 51m tonnes per year; UK – 31m tonnes per year; Mexico – 39m tonnes per year; Spain – 21m tonnes per year; Argentina – 14m tonnes per year; Canada – 27m tonnes per year; Australia – 14m tonnes per year.



8 Now use the TrashedWorld Investigation Sheet for Unit 1.

- Find out how much waste your country produces every year.
- Also, find out where the main rubbish dumps and landfill sites are where you live. Are there any incinerators⁵ and recycling plants⁶?
- Make a simple outline map, or use a Google map, with the sites marked on it.

4
landfill
a place for disposing of rubbish by burying it in the ground

5
incinerator
a container which is closed on all sides for burning waste at high temperatures

6
recycling plant
a place where waste is processed so that it can be used again



TRASH, THE WORLD AND ME

Investigation Sheet

Do some research on the internet.

- Find out how much your country makes in waste every year. Use the latest data you can find.

- Also, find out where the main rubbish dumps and landfill sites are near where you live. Include recycling centres too. Write their names and addresses:

- Make a simple outline map of your town/city with the sites marked on it.



TRASH, THE WORLD AND ME

Unit glossary

affect	(v) to produce a change in somebody/something <i>The waste we are making is affecting the world around us.</i>
beachcomber	(n) a person who walks along beaches collecting interesting or valuable things, either for pleasure or to sell; beachcombing (noun) looking for things brought up by the sea onto the shore <i>Beachcombing gave me lots of fantastic things found washed up on the beach.</i>
blow	(v) to be moved by the wind <i>Methane, a pernicious greenhouse gas, regularly blows over the city's inhabitants.</i>
bury	(v) to cover somebody/something with soil, rocks, leaves, etc. <i>In the past our rubbish was mainly buried in the ground.</i>
coast	(n) the land beside or near to the sea or ocean <i>Many countries are affected by the pollution up and down the coast.</i>
complain	(v) to say that you are annoyed, unhappy or not satisfied about somebody/something <i>Countries are complaining about the garbage that floats up onto their beaches.</i>
consumption	(n) the act of using energy, food or materials; the amount used <i>We use more and more things. Our consumption of resources including plastic bags is increasing.</i>
decompose	(v) to be destroyed gradually by natural chemical processes <i>As the waste decomposes and mix with rainwater, chemicals go into the ground.</i>
dig	(v) to make a hole in the ground or to move soil from one place to another using your hands, a tool or a machine <i>Sometimes we don't dig a hole for our rubbish, we just dump it.</i>
dump	(v) to get rid of something you do not want, especially in a place which is not suitable <i>Sometimes we don't dig a hole for our rubbish, we just dump it.</i>
effects	(n) a change that somebody/something causes in somebody/something else; a result <i>It's easy to see the effects we're having on our planet when we look closely.</i>
enjoy	(v) to get pleasure from something <i>I enjoyed going to the beach as a boy.</i>
evidence	(n) the facts, signs or objects that make you believe that something is true <i>It's hard to see any evidence of mankind on earth from space.</i>
finite	(adj) having a definite limit or fixed size <i>The Earth's riches are finite, they won't last for ever.</i>
float	(v) to move slowly on water or in the air <i>A large amount of garbage floats up on to the beaches in Wales.</i>



TRASH, THE WORLD AND ME

Unit glossary

flow	(v) (of liquid, gas or electricity) to move steadily and continuously in one direction <i>The liquid run-off from the rubbish dump in Lebanon flows directly into the sea...</i>
garbage	(n) (especially North American English) waste food, paper, etc. that you throw away <i>A large amount of garbage floats up on to the beaches in Wales.</i>
greenhouse gas	(n) any of the gases that are thought to cause the greenhouse effect, especially carbon dioxide <i>Methane, a pernicious greenhouse gas, regularly blows over the city's nearly two hundred thousand inhabitants.</i>
incinerator	(n) a container which is closed on all sides for burning waste at high temperatures <i>Incinerators, where rubbish is burnt, can be used to make energy, but they can also pollute the air.</i>
inhabitant	(n) a person or an animal that lives in a particular place <i>200,000 inhabitants live in the city.</i>
landfill	(n) an area of land where large amounts of waste material are buried under the earth <i>The task is to find out where the main rubbish dumps and landfill sites are where you live.</i>
leach	(v) to remove chemicals, minerals, etc from something into something else by water passing through it <i>Chemicals leach into the ground from the rubbish dump in Lebanon.</i>
liquid	(n) a substance that flows freely and is not a solid or a gas, for example water or oil <i>Liquid run-off from the dump flows directly into the sea.</i>
livelihood	(n) a means of earning money in order to live <i>The trash affects the local fishermen and their livelihoods.</i>
mankind	(n) all humans, thought about as one large group; the human race <i>From Space it's hard to see any evidence of mankind on earth</i>
methane	(n) a gas without colour or smell, that burns easily and is used as fuel. Natural gas consists mainly of methane. <i>Methane is a greenhouse gas occurring naturally which has grown with population.</i>
particularly	(adv) especially; more than usual or more than others <i>Waste is particularly important because we don't talk about it enough.</i>
pernicious	(adj) having a very harmful effect on somebody/something, especially in a way that is gradual and not easily noticed <i>Methane is a pernicious gas because it has a destructive effect over a long time.</i>
rarely	(adv) not very often <i>The problem of waste is rarely talked about but we do need to talk about it.</i>



TRASH, THE WORLD AND ME

Unit glossary

recycling	(n) the process of treating things that have already been used so that they can be used again; recycling plant (noun) a place where waste processed so that it can be used again <i>Every city should have a recycling plant so that waste can be reused.</i>
regularly	(adv) at regular intervals or times <i>Methane regularly blows over the city.</i>
replace	(v) to remove somebody/something and put another person or thing in their place <i>A sandy beach has been replaced by a mountain of trash.</i>
resources	(n) a supply of something that a country, an organization or a person has and can use, especially to increase their wealth <i>We need to use the Earth's resources carefully.</i>
rubbish dump	(n) a place where waste or rubbish/garbage is taken and left <i>Waste from the Saida rubbish dump pollutes the neighbouring countries.</i>
run-off	(n) rain, water or other liquid that runs off land into streams and rivers <i>Liquid run-off flows directly into the sea.</i>
suburb	(n) an area where people live that is outside the centre of a city <i>Today, Saida is a suburb of Beirut.</i>
trash	(n) (North American English) things that you throw away because you no longer want or need them <i>Historically we've always buried our trash.</i>
treasure	(n) a collection of valuable things such as gold, silver and jewellery <i>It's possible to find jewellery and other treasure on the beach.</i>
tumble	(v) to move or fall somewhere in a relaxed, uncontrolled, or noisy way <i>The tumbling trash falls directly into the sea.</i>
ultimately	(adv) in the end; finally <i>Ultimately, the waste we throw away has an effect on us all.</i>
uncontrolled	(adj) that is not limited or managed by law or rules <i>The Saida dump is uncontrolled and is left to fall into the sea.</i>
waste	(n) materials that are no longer needed and are thrown away <i>Much of the waste we make today will stay for many, many years.</i>



TRASH, THE WORLD AND ME

Self-study links

Quizlet is a platform for creating self-study vocabulary activities. You will find all of the glossary lists of words and definitions available here for you to download free: <http://www.quizlet.com/>

Flashcardlearner is a free application for use with a smart phone and which can be used with the lists created in quizlet: <http://www.flashcardlearner.com/articles/tag/expert/>

Transcripts for clips 01-03

Clip 01

From Space it's hard to see any evidence of mankind on earth or the effects we're having on our planet's finite resources.

From up here it looks perfect.

Clip 02

It's only when we look more closely that we start to see some of the results of our consumption... particularly the one that's rarely talked about - waste.

Clip 03

I've always enjoyed beachcombing and as a child I would search for sea glass, bits of wood, but in the fifty years since then things have changed. The treasure I used to find in the sand has been replaced by trash. I want to know why.

No one knows exactly how much rubbish we produce. What we do know is that with 7 billion of us we're making more garbage now than at any other time in history.

But does anyone know what happens to it all? How it's affecting the land, the air, the seas and ultimately us?

Historically we've always buried our trash. But it seems that now we sometimes don't dig, we just dump.

Since 1975, waste from the ancient Lebanese city of Saida, now a suburb of Beirut, has been brought here, for an uncontrolled dump on the edge of the city. Over 80 tons of it every day.

What was a sandy beach, has been replaced by a trash mountain, well over 40 metres in height. As the rubbish decomposes, chemicals leach into the ground while methane, a pernicious greenhouse gas, regularly blows over the city's nearly two hundred thousand inhabitants and the tumbling trash and liquid run-off flows directly into the sea - affecting the local fishermen and their livelihoods.

This is not just a local problem because over there is Italy, up there is Cyprus, Syria's next door and north of Syria is the Turkish coast and there have been complaints from all those countries about the garbage that floats up on to their beaches, much of which comes from this garbage mountain here.