

## Radical plans for waste could start a big clean-up

Level 2 | Intermediate

### 1 Pre-reading: Key Words

Fill the gaps using these key words:

**landfilling    incineration    recycling    zero waste**

- 1• Burning waste at very high temperatures is called \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 2• \_\_\_\_\_ is treating waste materials so that they can be used again
- 3• The idea of making everything from material that can be repaired, reused or recycled is known as \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 4• \_\_\_\_\_ means burying waste in a large hole in the ground.

### 2 Pre-reading: True or False

Decide whether these statements are True or False. Then check your answers in the text.

- 1• The UK currently produces 20m tonnes of rubbish every year.
- 2• The European Union wants to increase the amount of landfilling.
- 3• Countries like Canada, Australia and New Zealand believe zero waste can be achieved by 2015 at the latest.
- 4• 100% zero waste is possible.
- 5• Britain burns most of its waste.
- 6• Edmonton in Canada recycles 70% of its waste.
- 7• Most waste is organic.
- 8• Zero waste can make money.
- 9• 45-50% of waste is difficult or expensive to recycle.
- 10• Producers will be responsible for what happens to their products.

Now look in the text and check your answers:

## Radical plans for waste could start a big clean-up

Level 2 | Intermediate

# Radical plans for waste could start a big clean-up

Joanna Collins

Many local authorities in the UK have huge problems with waste. The amount of household rubbish is expected to rise to more than 40m tonnes a year by the year 2020. New European Union rules will also mean that countries will have to reduce landfilling. Incineration seems attractive, but there are political and financial problems with this option. Many local authorities around the world are turning to a system called zero waste, which would abolish landfills and reduce dramatically the need for incinerators. The idea is that everything we buy will be made from materials that can be repaired, reused or recycled. So governments, councils and industry should be working together to find ways either to turn waste into a profitable resource or to design it out of the system completely. Canberra, Toronto, California and, more recently, New Zealand - where 45% of all local authorities have introduced zero-waste policies - are convinced enough to make zero waste a target which they believe they can reach

by the year 2015 or even earlier. In Britain, Bath council is the first local authority to support the zero waste idea. Others are now following. "Zero waste is, to me, a movement that comes from local authorities and local people," says Bath councillor Roger Symmonds, "100% zero waste is not possible, but if we can get somewhere near that target, there will be enormous benefits for health and jobs". Britain currently recycles 11% of household waste, burns 8% and dumps the rest. Just six years after changing its policy on waste Canberra is recycling 59% of its rubbish and Edmonton, Canada, has reached 70%. Surprisingly, most waste in our rubbish bins is organic waste, which can be dangerous to our health when it rots and leaks from landfills. Many progressive cities and councils have introduced three-stream waste collection - they separate organic waste, dry recyclables such as bottles and plastics, and dangerous materials such as batteries. According to Robin Murray, a leading zero-waste economist in Britain, as soon as this is done

"they find suddenly that they are recycling more than 50%". Supporters of zero waste also say it can make money. Small businesses that recover and recycle waste can create jobs in areas where there is high unemployment. In New Zealand zero waste is not so much an environmental issue but something which helps local economic development. "This is a quiet revolution," says Warren Snow, of the New Zealand Zero Waste Trust. "Local people are turning waste into jobs". 15%-20% of waste is difficult or expensive to recycle. Zero waste proposes a new way of thinking that simply designs such materials out of the system. The reaction of industry is a key factor. "The multinational companies are reacting to this far quicker than governments or environmental groups," says Mr Murray. Many large companies, he says, have already foreseen new laws that will make producers take responsibility for what happens to their products at the end of the life cycle.

The Guardian Weekly 3-10-2002, page 25

## Radical plans for waste could start a big clean-up

Level 2 | Intermediate

### 3 Comprehension Check

Choose the best answer for each question:

- 1• Why will European countries have to reduce the use of landfilling?
  - a• because it's expensive
  - b• because the amount of waste is increasing
  - c• because of new European Union rules
- 2• When do local authorities in Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand believe they can reach the target of zero waste?
  - a• by 2015 at the latest
  - b• by the end of 2015
  - c• before 2015
- 3• How much waste is dumped in Britain?
  - a• 11%
  - b• 8%
  - c• 81%
- 4• What is the problem with organic waste?
  - a• It rots.
  - b• It rots and leaks from landfill sites.
  - c• It is poisonous.
- 5• In what way is zero waste more than an environmental issue?
  - a• It is good for big business.
  - b• It can help the local economy.
  - c• It is cheaper than using landfill sites.
- 6• What will happen to the 15-20% of waste that cannot be recycled?
  - a• It will be burnt.
  - b• It will be buried.
  - c• It will be designed out of the system.

### 4 Vocabulary: Word Building

Complete the table

| VERB         | NOUN  |
|--------------|-------|
| 1• reduce    | _____ |
| 2• introduce | _____ |
| 3• separate  | _____ |
| 4• recover   | _____ |
| 5• propose   | _____ |
| 6• react     | _____ |
| 7• produce   | _____ |
| 8• create    | _____ |

## Radical plans for waste could start a big clean-up

Level 2 | Intermediate

### 5 Vocabulary: Find the word

- 1• Find two words in the text which mean 'very large'.
- 2• Find a verb which means the opposite of 'increase'.
- 3• Find an adjective means 'certain that something is true'.
- 4• Find a noun which means 'aim' or 'goal'.
- 5• Find a verb which means to 'predict' or 'anticipate'.
- 6• Find a noun which is the opposite of 'disadvantage'.
- 7• Find a noun which means 'choice' or 'alternative'.
- 8• Find an adjective which means 'making a profit'.

### 6 Vocabulary: Collocations

Match the verbs with the nouns:

- |                |                               |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1• to reach    | a• a meeting/a conference     |
| 2• to support  | b• money                      |
| 3• to attend   | c• a situation                |
| 4• to make     | d• an idea                    |
| 5• to create   | e• a way/ways to do something |
| 6• to react to | f• a target                   |
| 7• to find     | g• responsibility             |
| 8• to take     | h• jobs                       |

### 7 Discussion

What is the best way to dispose of waste?  
What problems are associated with recycling everything?

## Radical plans for waste could start a big clean-up

Level 2 | Intermediate

### Key

#### 1 Key words

- 1 incineration
- 2 recycling
- 3 zero waste
- 4 landfilling

#### 2 True or False

1 T; 2 F; 3 T; 4 F; 5 F; 6 T; 7 T; 8 T; 9 F; 10 T

#### 3 Comprehension Check

1 c; 2 a; 3 c; 4 b; 5 b; 6 c

#### 4 Word-building

- 1 reduction
- 2 introduction
- 3 separation
- 4 recovery
- 5 proposal
- 6 reaction
- 7 production
- 8 creation

#### 5 Find the word

- 1 huge; enormous
- 2 reduce
- 3 convinced
- 4 target
- 5 foresee
- 6 benefit
- 7 option
- 8 profitable

#### 6 Collocations

1 f; 2 d; 3 a; 4 b; 5 h; 6 c; 7 e; 8 g