



Protect Our Valuable Oceans

by Deepak Mallavarpu

We live in a watery world. It has five oceans: the Pacific, the Atlantic, the Indian, the Arctic, and the Antarctic. Water makes up more than 70% of the surface of our planet. No wonder astronauts see Earth as a beautiful blue world!

Oceans do more for us than just make the world look pretty from space. They give us fish, seaweed, and shellfish. Tons of food are taken from the oceans each year. Some of our salt, fertilizers, and minerals come from the sea. A great deal of the world's oil is drilled offshore. That means it comes from beneath the ocean floor. We get some of our natural gas this way too.

Oceans provide us with transportation. Freight and fuel travel by boat. Oceans are also used for recreation. They allow us to explore, swim, snorkel, study wildlife, and ride waves.

The oceans help make our weather. They play a huge role in spreading the sun's warmth all over our planet. Oceans fuel storm systems, too. And storms bring fresh water to land.

Even though our oceans do so much for us, we have not been taking care of them. They are getting more and more polluted. Some kinds of fish are dying out. Coral reefs are being damaged by water that is too warm.

Pollution may be the biggest problem. Some pollution results from things people dump into the oceans. For example, cruise ships dump waste into the ocean every day. Other pollution comes from industries dumping their waste into rivers. The rivers carry it to the sea.

Often, we harm the oceans without knowing it. For example, nitrogen gets into the oceans from fertilizers. Nitrogen is carried to the oceans as runoff. As water “runs off” the ground, it flows into our streams and rivers. The rivers and streams carry it out to sea. Other pollutants go into the air. Later, they reach the water. For example, most of the mercury found in the ocean comes from power plants that use coal.

When pollutants reach the oceans, problems occur. For example, nitrogen reduces the amount of oxygen in the ocean. Less oxygen can kill some sea animals or cause diseases. Sometimes pollution upsets the balance of nature. Too much nitrogen can make algae, tiny plants, grow so much that they hurt other plants and animals.

Luckily, there are things we can do to protect the oceans. A good start is by learning about the oceans. Another thing that we can all do is get rid of waste properly. You should always use water wisely. And finally, we can ask our government to get involved. The oceans do a lot for us, but they won’t last if we don’t take care of them.



What You Can Do to Protect Our Oceans



Conserve water.

Don't be wasteful when washing your car or watering your lawn.



Reduce household pollutants.

Properly dispose of chemicals and cleaning products.



Reduce waste.

Dispose of trash properly, and don't leave fishing lines, nets, or plastic items in or near the water.



Reduce automobile pollution.

Use fuel efficient vehicles, carpool, recycle motor oil, and repair oil and air conditioning leaks.



Protect ocean wildlife.

Be considerate of sea-life habitats. Don't feed sea birds, mammals and turtles, or disturb their nesting grounds.



Get involved.

Take part in a beach cleanup or other ocean-oriented activities.

Tip

Keep reading. The answer may be in more than one place.

Directions: Answer the questions.**1. Which of the following solutions would NOT help protect our oceans?**

- A conserving salt
- B conserving water and reducing waste
- C informing people about environmental problems
- D reducing nitrogen “runoff”

2. What is the BEST reason for learning about oceans?

- A There is more water than land on Earth.
- B We need to keep the water clean and blue.
- C People enjoy water sports and boating.
- D We depend on oceans for food and our climate.

3. What can you do to protect our oceans?

- A Reduce automobile pollution and protect ocean wildlife.
- B Ask people not to fish or catch seafood.
- C Dump chemicals and waste products into the water.
- D Kill algae and eat seaweed.

4. Read the poster. How is the information it presents the same as or different from the information in the article?**5. What can you do to protect the oceans? Include information from the article in your response.****Writing Prompt**

Write an essay to your principal about an issue at school you care about, such as a safer playground or a better cafeteria. State your opinion and support it with reasons. Write three paragraphs.

