

Picking up seashells, and plastic, on Washington state's beaches

By Seattle Times, adapted by Newsela staff

LONG BEACH, Wash. — Russ Lewis helps to keep the beaches near his home clean. He lives in the state of Washington, near the Pacific Ocean. At first, Lewis just walked on the beaches looking for fun things like seashells. Then he decided to clean up the sand. Now, he and his friends pick up trash along the coast a few times a week. Some of the trash comes from close by. Other pieces wash onto the beach from very far away across the ocean.

Much of the trash is a result of a big tsunami. It is a very high and large wave in the ocean. A tsunami is usually caused by an earthquake under the sea. Tsunamis are powerful and can wash away whole buildings as well as people. A tsunami hit Japan six years ago. The country is on the other side of the Pacific Ocean, far from Washington state.

Beach Plastic Comes From Near And Far Away

On the beach, Lewis finds pieces of houses, bottles, and bags with Japanese writing on them. Lewis even found a store's pretend human head. He and his friends collect thousands of pounds of trash each year. "Sometimes the truck looks like a covered wagon, it is so loaded down," he says. Lewis thinks that about half of the trash comes from Japan.

Most of the litter found along Washington's coast is plastic. The light, strong material is used to make many objects all around the world. Things we use every day like water bottles and plastic bags. Scientists say that tons of plastic ends up in the world's oceans each year.

Plastic hurts birds, fish and other sea creatures. They either get tangled up in it or eat it. Kathryn Sullivan works for a government group that cares for the oceans and the air. She says that scientists find plastic in the stomachs of dead sea animals and birds. "That's like a slow poisoning from within," Sullivan says.

Sea Animals Think Some Plastic Is Food

Some trash is washed into the ocean from nearby rivers or off of boats. Other trash spins off from a big current that swirls around in the North Pacific Ocean. The area is sometimes called the garbage patch. Scientists say the garbage patch is mostly made up of small pieces of plastic. Some of the pieces are tiny. They have been found in the stomachs of sea animals of all sizes, even whales.

New plants and sea creatures also arrive on pieces of trash. The tsunami sent them far out into the ocean. Then they came all the way from Asia. More than 350 kinds of plants and animals from Japan have been found on objects that floated across the ocean. About 100 were found in Washington state. Some arrived on two big docks swept away from Japan by the giant wave. Others were found on or in Japanese boats that washed onto the beaches. Scientists worry about how the new sea creatures and plants will mix with those already there.

Quiz: Picking up seashells, and plastic, on Washington state's beaches

1. How did Russ Lewis get involved in cleaning up beaches?

- A) He heard about a tsunami in Japan, and decided to help out by keeping the beaches clean.
- B) His friends were picking up trash a few times a week when he decided to join them.
- C) He had no more seashells to find, so he decided to keep the beaches near his home tidy.
- D) He was already looking for other things on the beaches when he decided to pick up trash.

2. Based on the section "Sea Animals Think Some Plastic Is Food," which of the following statements is TRUE?

- A) The ocean made a garbage patch in Washington state.
- B) The tsunami washed the trash off of Japan's rivers.
- C) The ocean carried new animals to Washington state.
- D) The tsunami swept away all of Japan's docks.

3. In the section "Beach Plastic Comes From Near And Far Away," Russ Lewis stated that his truck can get "so loaded down" with trash. Which answer choice BEST explains what Lewis meant?

- A) His truck can become very full with plastic and other trash.
- B) His truck can touch the sand when there is trash in it.
- C) His truck can turn into a wagon that is covered in plastic.
- D) His truck can contain about half of all trash from Japan.

4. Read the sentence from the section "Beach Plastic Comes From Near And Far Away."

"Scientists say that tons of plastic ends up in the world's oceans each year."

What does the author mean by "ends up" in this sentence?

- A) The plastic dies once it comes into the ocean.
- B) The plastic faces upward as it floats across the ocean.
- C) The plastic arrives in the ocean from other places.
- D) The plastic washes across the ocean after it leaves objects.

NEWSELA: Picking up seashells, and plastic, on Washington state's beaches


Answer Key: Picking up seashells, and plastic, on Washington state's beaches

1. D
2. C
3. A
4. C


READING: Practice

1 Read the article. In what part of the world did Gertrude Bell do most of her work?

- Oxford University and other areas of England
 Arabia and surrounding areas
 Cairo, Egypt



Gertrude Bell: Daughter of the Desert



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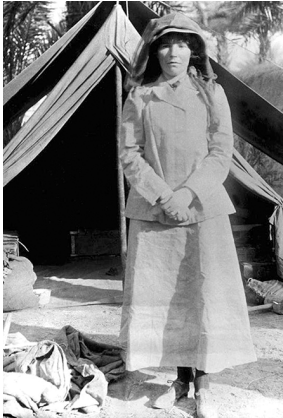
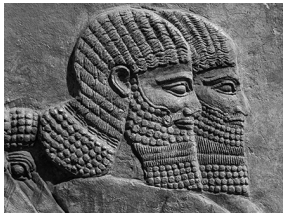
Gertrude Bell was born on July 14, 1868, in Durham, England. She was one of the first women admitted to Oxford University, where she studied history. When she was 37, she began exploring Arabia. She set off on an expedition to Syria and surrounding areas. Her explorations brought her such happiness that she decided to continue living in the Arab world.

The Arabs called Gertrude Bell a “daughter of the desert.” This is because Bell liked traveling throughout Arabia, Syria, and Asia Minor. She chose to travel in the area for about a decade. From 1905 to 1914, she studied ancient sites and artifacts used by people thousands of years before. She also mapped the sites of wells. The location of these springs was important because water is so hard to find in the desert. Perhaps most importantly, however, she established ties with people in Arabia. Many of these relationships were with the highest-ranking leaders of the Arab world. As Bell traveled, she took photographs, kept detailed notes and a diary, and wrote long letters. She used this material to write and publish a number of books and articles.

Bell had become such an authority on the languages, history, culture, and politics of Persia and Mesopotamia that she was asked to work as an expert for the British government. She worked in Egypt and Iraq. While in Iraq, she composed laws designed to protect Iraq’s many ancient artifacts. She also founded the country’s archaeological museum. In 1921, Prime Minister Winston Churchill invited her to participate in the Cairo Conference where Iraq’s boundaries would be determined.

Bell died on July 12, 1926. In recognition of her achievements and contributions, the British government gave her a full military funeral. She was buried in Baghdad, the city she had loved and lived in until the end.

—Adapted from *The Oxford Companion to World Exploration* edited by David Buisseret

2 Complete the sentences.

- 1 Gertrude Bell was one of the first women to go to _____.
- 2 When she was 37 years old, Gertrude Bell traveled to _____.
- 3 The Arabs called her a _____ because of her love of the desert.
- 4 She used her photos, letters, notes, and diary entries to write and publish _____.
- 5 Bell developed relationships with important _____ in the Arab world.
- 6 Bell studied the history, culture, _____, and _____ of the area where she was exploring.
- 7 When Bell died, she was honored by the _____.

3 Add the correct event from the box for each year.

Bell was born in England.	Gertrude Bell died.
Bell attended the Cairo Conference.	Gertrude Bell first set off for Syria.
Bell travelled throughout Arabia, Syria, and Asia Minor.	

- 1 1926: _____.
- 2 1868: _____.
- 3 1921: _____.
- 4 1905–1914: _____.
- 5 1905: _____.

READING SKILL: Working out meaning from context ▶ 3.2

4 Read the sentences. Choose the words or phrases that provide clues to the meaning of the words in bold. In some cases more than one option is correct.

- 1 From 1905 to 1914, she studied ancient sites and **artifacts** used by people thousands of years before.
 From 1905 to 1914 ancient used by people thousands of years before
- 2 She also mapped the sites of **wells**. The location of these springs was important because water is so hard to find in the desert.
 mapped the sites these springs water in the desert
- 3 She established **ties** with people in Arabia. Many of these relationships were with the highest-ranking leaders of the Arab world.
 people in Arabia these relationships highest-ranking the Arab world
- 4 As Bell travelled, she took photographs, kept notes, and wrote letters. She used this **material** to write and publish books and articles.
 Bell traveled photographs notes and letters write and publish
- 5 Bell had become such an **authority** on the languages, history, culture, and politics of Persia and Mesopotamia that she was asked to work as an expert for the British government.
 languages government Mesopotamia expert
- 6 Bell died on July 12, 1926. In recognition of her achievements and contributions, the British government gave her a full military **funeral**. She was buried in Baghdad, the city she had loved and lived in until the end.
 Bell died her achievements military buried

5 Use the context of the words in Exercise 4 to write the correct word from the box beside its definition.

artifact authority funeral materials ties well

- 1 a historical object made or used by people in the past _____.
- 2 a hole in the ground from which people obtain water _____.
- 3 connections between people or organizations _____.
- 4 facts and information that writers collect before writing a book or article _____.
- 5 a person with special knowledge _____.
- 6 a ceremony for burying a dead person _____.

6 Read the sentences. Then write each word's suffix and part of speech in the chart.

Her **exploration** brought her such **happiness** that she decided to continue living in the Arab world.

	Suffix	Part of Speech (adjective, adverb, noun, or verb)
1 exploration	-tion	noun
2 happiness	-	

Most **importantly**, she **established** ties with people in Arabia.

	Suffix	Part of Speech (adjective, adverb, noun, or verb)
3 importantly	-	
4 established	-	