Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson 4: Text a

Directions: Read the following text. Then answer questions 1 through 3.

The Plastic Predicament

How do we get rid of so much plastic trash?

Try to get through a day without using plastic. For that matter, try to go just one hour without it. From food and drink packages to cell phones and toothbrushes, plastic is nearly impossible to avoid. You can't even turn on a light without flicking a plastic switch.

Plastic doesn't exist in nature. It's created from chemicals. Mass production of plastic started in the 1940s. Since then, it has become supremely popular—and for good reason. Plastic is lightweight, cheap, and convenient. It also lasts for a very long time. That can be good—you don't want your laptop to fall apart as you type—but it can be bad, too.

Plastic can remain in the environment for thousands of years. It piles up, filling garbage dumps and polluting the land and the ocean. Each year, more than 300 million tons of new plastic are created worldwide. Clearly, we have a plastic problem.

Trash Soup

Natural products such as food, paper, and wood are biodegradable; they're broken down by bacteria and are absorbed by the environment. Plastic, on the other hand, is photodegradable. Light from the sun causes it to break into smaller pieces over time. It never dissolves completely, however. It often winds up littering the land and the ocean.

In the Pacific Ocean, plastic waste has collected in a swirling "soup" of trash called the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. It's huge—four times as big as Texas! It's just one example of an ocean garbage patch. Plastic pollutes all the world's seas. The United Nations estimates that plastic kills 100,000 marine mammals and turtles and 1 million seabirds

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every year. Some become tangled in plastic debris. Others die after eating plastic trash that they can't digest. Scientists estimate that 80 percent of the ocean's plastic started out on land.

Now the good news: You can help by tossing plastic into the recycling bin instead of the trash. A measly 28 percent of plastic bottles were recycled in 2009, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. You can help drive that number up.

Reduce, Reuse

Still, recycling won't solve our plastic problem by itself. Not all types of plastic can be recycled. And those that can may not be recycled in the way you'd expect. Plastic water and soft-drink bottles are some of the most commonly used plastics in the United States. They are hardly ever turned into new bottles. Instead, they're recycled into carpet, furniture, and fleece clothing. When those products wear out, they often can't be recycled a second time.

So what can you do? One of the best ways to tackle the problem is to reduce the amount of plastic you use. Carry reusable water containers instead of single-use plastic bottles.

Bring your lunch in recyclable aluminum foil instead of a plastic sandwich bag. Ask your family to carry reusable tote bags to the grocery store. Every little bit helps.

Plastic will probably always be part of our lives. But by making smart choices, we can keep it from burying us.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson 4: Practice Test a

Chunking Long Sentences

Directions: Use "The Plastic Predicament" to answer the questions.

1. **This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.**

Part A: Circle the statement that tells why plastic is a problem.

A) Plastic is extremely popular.

B) We do not recycle many plastic bottles.

C) Plastic damages the environment.

D) Biodegradable products are better than plastic products.

Part B: Write a sentence in your own words based on evidence from the text to support your answer to Part A.

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2. Circle the piece of evidence from the text that best reflects the idea that plastic can be dangerous to many kinds of animals.

A) "Plastic can remain in the environment for thousands of years."

B) "Scientists estimate that 80 percent of the ocean's plastic started out on land."

C) "The United Nations estimates that plastic kills 100,000 marine mammals and turtles and 1 million seabirds every year."

D) "Others [birds] die after eating plastic trash that they can't digest."

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3. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A: Circle the statement that is a key idea from the article about plastics and the environment.

A) Recycling plastic will eliminate the ocean's "Garbage Patches."

B) Most plastic is used for water bottles.

C) Reducing the amount of plastic we use will make the biggest difference in plastic pollution.

D) Second-use plastic items cannot be recycled again.

Part B: Keeping in mind the main idea of the whole article, what do you think is the purpose of the first paragraph? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

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