

## **SAMPLE TASK**

Read the article discussing the issue of recycling disposable cups and plates. Choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D) for questions (1 - 8). There is an example (0) at the beginning.

### **Disposable cups and plates**

*This isn't a tempest in a disposable teacup, but it is a big problem.*



Fifty years ago, litter wasn't much of a problem. Cities didn't even have litter bins; people would go to restaurants or diners, sit down and drink out of mugs and eat off china plates.

Now, cities everywhere are overrun with the detritus of the fast-food industry, from food packaging to coffee and drink cups. According to Clean Water Action, quoted in Fast Company, 49 percent of San Francisco's litter is from fast-food restaurants. It all ends up in the streets or in the city's litter bins, which get emptied at taxpayers' expense. This is not paper that can be recycled. Many of these coffee cups are what Bill McDonough of "Cradle to Cradle" fame calls "monstrous hybrids" — paper cups lined with plastic to prevent leaks, but that also cannot be recycled. So these items have to be separated and landfilled.

In Vancouver, the city is considering a number of options, including deposits, take-back programs and even a ban on disposable coffee cups. From the report:

This report recommends that staff review options to target the distribution, use, and recycling of these items, including exploring options to restrict or ban their use, and report back to Council. Staff will also investigate potential options requiring producers, distributors, and retailers to take responsibility for the recovery of these materials, including possible take-back programs.

I will predict here and now that a ban ain't gonna happen. The industry is too huge and our habits are too ingrained. Years ago, the city of Toronto wanted the big coffee chain, Tim Hortons, to change its lids so that they didn't have to be manually separated from the cups for recycling; the company fought the city in court to a draw. At Starbucks, they claim that the problem is not just the company's problem but part of a larger issue:

Recycling seems like a simple, straightforward initiative but it's actually quite challenging. Our customers' ability to recycle our cups, whether at home, at work, in public spaces or in our

stores, is dependent upon multiple factors, including local government policies and access to recycling markets such as paper mills and plastic processors.

### **Keep it in the store, not in the streets.**

This is, I believe, disingenuous. Starbucks could put a deposit on the cups, so that customers would bring them back to the store. The company could charge more for coffee in a paper cup than it does for a ceramic mug to encourage people to drink from the mug in the store instead of leaving with it.

Before Christmas, Robin Shreeves made a moral case for getting rid of disposables; I've also previously written about other things businesses could do:

- **Producer responsibility.** Make the people who sell us stuff responsible from start to finish, whether by making their products reusable, having take-back programs like Dell and Apple do, or charging the producers for the cost of taking the stuff away instead of charging the consumer through taxes.
- **Deposits on everything.** In countries with returnable beer bottles, everyone takes them back for the deposit. In Ontario where there are deposits on wine bottles, it's an industry for the homeless and the poor. If there was a deposit on every Starbucks and Tim Hortons paper cup, a lot more people would use refillable containers.
- **Consumer education.** Really, how long have we been trying to get people to stop buying bottled water? We have to turn it into the new smoking. Make zero waste living the cool new thing.

This is not a tempest in a disposable teacup, but a very big problem that seems intractable. Of course people want their takeout, but perhaps we can make a dent in it. What do you think?

**EXAMPLE:** (0) Over half a century ago, people used to...

- A. recycle more.
- B. litter more.
- C. use ceramic cups, plates and bowls.
- D. use plastic cups, plates and bowls..

1. According to paragraph 2, how does the rubbish generated by the fast-food industry affect people most?
  - A. In the number of drink cups.
  - B. In the amount of food packaging.
  - C. In the use of taxpayers' money
  - D. In the use of non-recyclable paper.
2. The course of action, suggested by Vancouver city council, that surprised the author was the...
  - A. deposit system.
  - B. take-back program.
  - C. restriction on coffee cups.
  - D. prohibition of coffee cups.
3. The author speaks about the coffee chain, Tim Hortons, to provide an example of the...
  - A. responsibility of the industry.
  - B. power of the industry.
  - C. power of the people.
  - D. habits of the people.
4. Starbucks opinion on recycling is that it is...
  - A. complicated
  - B. easy
  - C. responsible
  - D. unavoidable.
5. The author thinks Starbucks should...
  - A. increase the price of coffee in paper cups.
  - B. increase the price of take-away coffee.
  - C. reduce the price of coffee in ceramic mugs.
  - D. reduce the price of coffee in refillable containers.
6. Producer responsibility means businesses will...
  - A. share responsibility for recycling costs.
  - B. take full responsibility for recycling.
  - C. tax all non-recyclable containers.
  - D. encourage consumers to recycle.
7. The author highlights added social benefits from using...
  - A. reusable products.
  - B. disposable bottles.
  - C. a deposit system.
  - D. an educational campaign.
8. The writer compares recycling to smoking because it is an issue which...
  - A. causes health problems.
  - B. causes environmental problems.
  - C. should be the new trend.
  - D. is taboo.

## KEY

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