

World Oceans Day is a day to think about the extremely important role that the oceans play in all our lives, the dangers that are facing our oceans and the actions we can take to protect them.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. to officially recognise
2. a clean-up
3. conservation
4. marine life
5. single-cell organisms
6. majority
7. oxygen
8. climate change

Definition

- a. a natural gas which is essential to life
- b. protection of the natural environment
- c. to accept that something exists
- d. the bigger part of something
- e. plants and animals that live in the ocean
- f. an organised event to collect rubbish (especially plastic waste)
- g. the smallest living animals
- h. the fact that weather patterns are changing around the world

World Oceans Day

There is only one global ocean. This is divided into five geographical regions: the Pacific Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean, the Arctic Ocean and the Southern Ocean.

Introduction

Seventy per cent of our planet is covered by one huge, continuous body of seawater – the ocean. It holds 1.35 billion cubic kilometres of water. Nearly half of the ocean is more than 3 kilometres deep. The deepest known point of the ocean is in the Mariana Trench, 11 kilometres below sea level. But there may be deeper points that we have not seen, as we have only explored five per cent of the ocean to date.

World Oceans Day

The government of Canada suggested the idea of World Oceans Day at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. In 2008 the United Nations officially recognised the date and it has been growing ever since, from 100 events in 2008 to over a thousand events in more than

120 countries ten years later. The day is celebrated in a variety of ways, including special events at aquariums and zoos, beach and river clean-ups, school activities, conservation programmes, art contests and film festivals.

The importance of our oceans

One of the main aims of the day is to remind people of the important role the ocean plays in our lives. Life began in the ocean. And the ocean is home to the majority of plants and animals on Earth, from single-cell organisms to the blue whale. Marine plants provide us with 70 per cent of the oxygen we breathe. The ocean controls the climate, providing heat in winter and cool air in summer. It also provides us with food and medicines as well as transport. No matter where you live on the planet, no matter how far from the sea, your life is dependent on the ocean.

The problems facing our oceans

The most urgent problem facing the ocean at the moment is plastic pollution. Reducing one-use plastic, including plastic bags and plastic bottles, has been an important theme for World Oceans Day for a number of years. Climate change and rising sea temperatures are also a huge problem. Rising sea temperatures have a direct influence on weather patterns and are seen as partly responsible for an increase in extreme weather conditions. An increase in carbon dioxide is increasing the acid levels of seawater and putting many marine organisms at risk.

What we can do to help

On World Oceans Day, wear blue, go on a march, find a beach or river clean-up near you, organise a local event, print a poster and put it in your window, or use the hashtag #worldoceansday on social media. There are so many things you can do on 8 June to join in the celebrations, to remind people about the importance of the ocean in our lives and to make a difference!

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. The ocean is 3 kilometres deep.	True	False
2. World Oceans Day was first suggested more than 25 years ago.	True	False
3. More animals and plants live under the sea than live on land.	True	False
4. Plastic pollution is a new theme for World Oceans Day this year.	True	False
5. The temperature of the ocean is getting warmer.	True	False
6. People generally wear green on World Oceans Day.	True	False

Task 2

Match the subjects (a–f) to the number they refer to (1–6).

Numbers

1. 70%
2. 11km
3. 5%
4. 120
5. 1
6. 8

Subjects

- a. The number of times we use a plastic bag or plastic bottle.
- b. The deepest known point in the ocean.
- c. The amount of oxygen we get from the sea.
- d. The percentage of the ocean that has been explored.
- e. The date when we celebrate World Oceans Day.
- f. The number of countries that took part in recent World Oceans Days.

Discussion

What role does the ocean play in your life? What would you prefer to do to celebrate World Oceans Day?

Answers

Preparation task

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

Task 1

1. False – Approximately half of the ocean is more than 3km deep.
2. True – It was first suggested in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro.
3. True – The majority of plants and animals on Earth live in the ocean.
4. False – It has been an important theme for a number of years.
5. True – Ocean temperatures are rising.
6. False – People wear blue as a symbol of World Oceans Day.

Task 2

1. c
2. b
3. d
4. f
5. a
6. e