

A Battle Over Bags

- 1 Shawntil Bailey was carrying a paper bag filled with groceries out of a supermarket in Austin, Texas. Suddenly, the bag ripped. Her groceries went crashing to the ground.
- 2 "I've lost loads of groceries lots of times," Bailey says. "The paper bags aren't as sturdy as the plastic ones."
- 3 Bailey isn't the only person in the Texas capital who's had to adjust to life without plastic bags. Since March 2013, stores in Austin haven't been allowed to give out disposable plastic bags at checkout counters. Instead, shoppers have to use their own reusable cloth bags or paper bags given out by the store.
- 4 A growing number of places in the United States have implemented bans on plastic shopping bags. The movement got a big boost in January 2013. That's when Los Angeles became the largest U.S. city to ban the bags. The same month, the Big Island of Hawaii adopted a similar law. There are now bans on plastic bags everywhere in the state.
- 5 Officials in places that have banned plastic bags say they're trying to cut down on garbage and protect oceans and wildlife. Will other cities and states follow their lead?

Plastic Problems

- 6 Americans use a lot of plastic bags—about 100 billion of them each year, according to the U.S. International Trade Commission. Most plastic bags end up in landfills, where they're buried with other trash under layers of dirt. Some experts say the bags may take up to 1,000 years to decompose, or break down, in landfills.
- 7 But many plastic bags never make it to landfills. Instead, they become litter on the street, wash down sewer drains, or blow into rivers and oceans. Once in the water, the bags pose a threat to marine animals.

Fish, sea turtles, and seabirds can get caught in the bags or mistake them for food and choke on them.

- 8 All these environmental problems have made plastic bags a target worldwide. At least six countries, including China and Italy, have banned them.
- 9 "The sheer number of plastic bags in the environment means that they're going to have a **detrimental impact**," says Robert Harris. He is the director of the Hawaii chapter of the Sierra Club, an environmental group.

Bag the Ban?

- 10 Many people, however, think plastic bags are getting a bad rap. Phil Rozenski works for Hilex Poly, the largest U.S. plastic-bag manufacturer. He says plastic bags are often reused for other purposes. A survey by the American Chemistry Council showed that 9 out of 10 people reuse plastic bags for things like lining trash cans and storing items. In addition, billions of the bags are recycled each year.
- 11 Rozenski argues that plastic-bag bans may also end up costing many Americans their jobs. He says that the plastic-bag industry employs 30,000 people.
- 12 "Thirty thousand families are pretty important," he says.

Changing Behavior

- 13 For now, people who live in places where plastic bags have been banned are learning to get along without them.
- 14 Olga Garcia, who lives in Austin, says she now brings reusable bags with her to the grocery store.
- 15 "When the ban first happened, I was upset," she says. "But it feels better now, because I'm not wasting any bags."

Name: _____

Directions: Read the article "A Battle Over Bags." Then answer the questions below.

1. Which of the following points does the author make in this article?

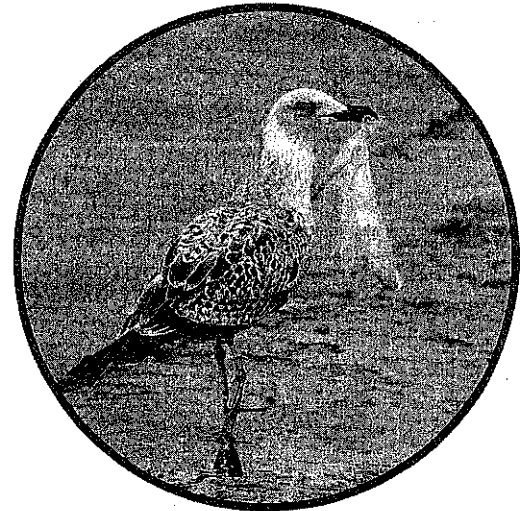
- A. No one wants to stop using plastic bags.
- B. Almost every U.S. state has banned the use of plastic bags.
- C. Every state should make recycling plastic bags a law.
- D. U.S. cities and states aren't the only places in the world trying to stop the problems caused by plastic bags.

2. Which sentence from the article best supports the answer to question 1?

- A. For now, people who live in places where plastic bags have been banned are learning to get along without them. (*paragraph 13*)
- B. At least six countries, including China and Italy, have banned them. (*paragraph 8*)
- C. A growing number of places in the United States have implemented bans on plastic shopping bags. (*paragraph 4*)
- D. In addition, billions of the bags are recycled each year. (*paragraph 10*)

3. What does the word *detrimental* mean as it is used in paragraph 9?

- A. Helpful
- B. Harmful
- C. Costly
- D. Important



4. Which sentence from the article best supports the answer to question 3?

- A. "The paper bags aren't as sturdy as the plastic ones." (*paragraph 2*)
- B. Many people, however, think plastic bags are getting a bad rap. (*paragraph 10*)
- C. Once in the water, the bags pose a threat to marine animals. (*paragraph 7*)
- D. Rozenski argues that plastic-bag bans may also end up costing many Americans their jobs. (*paragraph 11*)

5. How does the section "Bag the Ban?" contribute to the development of ideas in the article?

- A. It makes comparisons between plastic bags and paper bags.
- B. It describes the effects of plastic bags on the environment.
- C. It presents the point of view of those who think banning plastic bags is not necessary.
- D. It summarizes the reasons people want to ban plastic bags.

