



Environment and Conservation

Multiple choice: conservation action | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. What environmental problems can affect beaches or rivers?
2. Have you ever taken part in a clean-up event?
3. Can small local actions make a difference?
4. Why might environmental work be frustrating?

Exercise 4 at a glance

Read one longer text and answer six multiple-choice questions. Choose A, B or C. The correct answer may depend on attitude, purpose or a detail across a whole paragraph, not just one matching word.

2. Read for overall understanding

Read the article. What did Ruby learn from joining a beach clean?

Joining a beach clean

by Ruby Clarke

I joined my first beach clean because my friend needed volunteers for her geography project. I cared about the environment, but I imagined the event would mostly involve taking a few photos and collecting obvious rubbish. When we arrived, the beach looked fairly clean from the car park. I wondered whether the organisers had chosen the wrong day. Then one volunteer handed me a bag and told me to look closely at the line of seaweed near the rocks. I had brought an old pair of trainers and expected to finish quickly, so the serious gloves and recording sheets surprised me.

That was where the small pieces were hiding: bottle tops, fishing line, bits of plastic packaging and tiny coloured fragments that were hard to pick up with gloves. I had expected dramatic piles of rubbish, not hundreds of little objects mixed into sand and shells. The work was slow, and after twenty minutes my back hurt. Still, the bag became heavier, which was satisfying in one way and depressing in another. It proved we were helping, but also showed how much we had nearly missed. The organisers asked us to record different types of rubbish, which made the clean-up feel less like tidying and more like investigation.

During the break, a marine biologist explained why small plastic matters. Birds and fish may mistake it for food, and pieces can break down further without truly disappearing. She also said beach cleans are useful but not enough. If people keep using disposable items carelessly, volunteers will return to the same problem again and again. That made me think about my own habits more than I expected. I used a reusable bottle at school, but I still bought snacks with unnecessary packaging. Her explanation made the tiny fragments seem more serious than the larger objects, because they were easier for animals to swallow.

The strangest moment came when a tourist thanked us and then dropped a plastic spoon beside a bin that was already full. He looked embarrassed when he noticed us watching, and he picked it up. I realised then that most pollution is not caused by one person trying to damage nature. It often comes from small careless moments, repeated thousands of times. That idea made the problem feel both bigger and more possible to change. The full bin did not excuse the spoon, but it did show how poor facilities can make careless behaviour more likely.

By the end of the morning, our group had collected several bags of rubbish. The beach looked better, but I no longer thought the clean-up was the whole solution. I was proud of the work, yet I also felt impatient with the need for it. Since then, I have paid more attention to what I buy and where I throw things away. The beach clean did not make me an environmental expert. It made me harder to ignore. I also understood why campaigners talk about prevention as well as action, because collecting rubbish is only one part of the problem.

3. Strategy focus

Watch for true details

A wrong option may include a true detail from the text but answer the wrong question. Check that the option matches the exact question focus.

4. Exam-style multiple-choice questions

For each question, choose the correct answer, A, B or C.

Question 1

Why did Ruby first join the beach clean?

- A to help a friend's school project
- B to train for future environmental work
- C to photograph serious pollution

Question 2

What surprised Ruby when she began collecting rubbish?

- A The beach was more polluted than the organisers claimed.
- B Most rubbish was small and easy to overlook.
- C The volunteers had forgotten suitable equipment.

Question 3

Why did the heavy bag make Ruby feel both satisfied and depressed?

- A It proved the beach was too damaged for volunteers to improve.
- B It made her realise she was less fit than other volunteers.
- C It showed that their work helped but that much rubbish had been hidden.

Question 4

What point does the marine biologist make?

- A Small plastic is less dangerous when it breaks down.
- B Reusable bottles are the best solution to beach pollution.
- C Clean-ups need to be combined with changes in habits.

Question 5

Why does Ruby mention the tourist with the spoon?

- A to criticise tourists more than local people
- B to show how pollution can come from careless behaviour
- C to explain why bins should be removed from beaches

Question 6

What does Ruby mean when she says the beach clean made her 'harder to ignore'?

- A She is now more aware of environmental choices.
- B She wants other people to notice her volunteering.
- C She plans to become a marine biologist.

5. Follow-up tasks

1. Discussion: Which everyday habits create unnecessary waste?
2. Strategy: Review any wrong answers. Did the option go too far, or did it match the text exactly?
3. Writing: Write advice for students organising a clean-up event.
4. Vocabulary: Circle words and phrases connected to pollution, waste and conservation.

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2. Read for overall understanding

Suggested answer: She learned that small environmental actions matter, but prevention and changing habits are just as important as cleaning up.

4. Exam-style multiple-choice questions

1. A; 2. B; 3. C; 4. C; 5. B; 6. A

1. A - She says her friend needed volunteers for a geography project.
2. B - She expected obvious rubbish but found many small hidden pieces.
3. C - The heavy bag meant they helped but also showed how much they had nearly missed.
4. C - She says beach cleans are useful but not enough if disposable items keep being used carelessly.
5. B - The moment helps Ruby understand repeated careless actions.
6. A - She means she now pays more attention to buying and throwing things away.