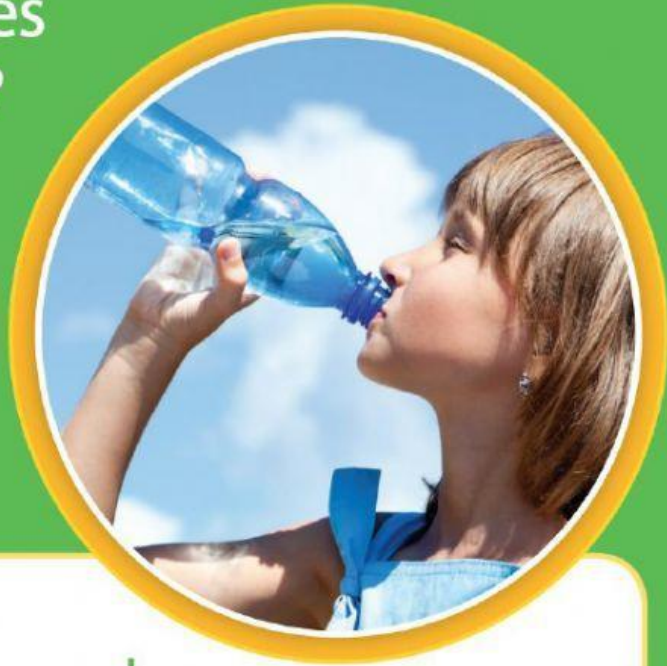


# Should plastic water bottles be banned?



## You will read:

- **An Editorial**  
*Ban the Bans on Plastic Water Bottles*
- **An Infographic**  
*Problems with Plastic*
- **A Graphic Feature**  
*Out of Every 100 Plastic Bottles Made in 2012...*

## You will write:

- **An Opinion Essay**  
*Should plastic water bottles be banned?*

# Ban the Bans on Plastic Water Bottles

By Ruth Amnell



Plastic water bottles are a necessary part of modern life. They are the easiest way to access water when we're on the go. But they're getting a bad reputation. The town of Concord, Massachusetts, has even banned the sale of some types of plastic bottles. Environmentalists want to get rid of plastic bottles, but they might see things differently if they consider the points below.

People in favor of plastic bottle bans say that we  
10 can get water from water fountains. When was the last time you saw a water fountain? It's probably been a long time. Water fountains are a thing of the past. If you want a sip of water while you're out, don't expect to find a water fountain.

Even if you could find a water fountain, you wouldn't want to drink from it! Water fountains are covered in germs. People put their mouths on the spout, spreading whatever germs they might have. The bacteria that collects can make people sick.  
20 Why take that chance when you can use a water bottle? Grabbing a plastic water bottle before you leave the house can help you avoid these germ-filled sources of water.

Some parts of the world don't have clean water to drink. If you are traveling to a place where the water isn't safe to drink, a plastic water bottle is the best way to get water. You could boil the water, but only if you have access to a stove. How likely is that? When health is involved, you don't want to risk  
30 drinking water that isn't safe.

If water bottles are banned from indoor and outdoor events, other healthy drink options need to be made available. Most of these bans are directed at plastic bottles that contain water, but the bans don't apply to plastic soda bottles! If you want to buy a beverage from a food truck vendor, for example, soda will be the only option. If you don't want to drink soda, you're out of luck.

What about the chemicals in plastic water  
40 bottles? Yes, there are some. But there are no cases of people getting sick from those chemicals. There are chemicals in many items that we use every day. So don't worry about it!

Plastic water bottle bans have not been adopted by many cities yet. Perhaps, if the decision to ban these bottles is carefully considered, no other cities will institute the ban.



## Source 2: Infographic

### Problems with Plastic

Where does the water in bottled water actually come from? The pictures of mountains and fresh lakes on some water bottles may make us think that the water in those bottles comes from these places, but that may not be the case. The water in your plastic bottle may actually be tap water. Here are some other bottled water facts.



Plastic bottles can take many hundreds of years to break down.

In 2009, Bundanoon, a city in Australia, became the first city in the world to ban bottled water from stores. Water fountains were put up around the city.

In 2013, Concord, Massachusetts became the first town in the United States to ban plastic water bottles.



The infographic features a scenic background of a lake and mountains. In the foreground, three plastic water bottles are shown. Above them, several blue water droplets are falling. A large blue splash in the top right corner contains text. A large blue water droplet in the top left corner also contains text. Each bottle has a white label with black text.

**It takes  
three liters  
of water to  
produce each  
one-liter bottle  
of water.**

**22% of bottled  
water brands  
tested contained  
chemicals above  
state health  
limits.**

**In 2011, sales of  
bottled water in  
the United States  
totaled \$21.7  
billion.**

**Americans buy 29  
billion bottles of  
water a year.**

**A 60-watt light  
bulb can be  
powered for six  
hours with the  
energy saved  
from recycling  
one plastic  
bottle.**

**For every six  
water bottles  
we use, only  
one is recycled.  
The rest are  
sent to landfills.**



## Source 3: Graphic Feature

Out of every **100** plastic bottles made in 2012 . . .

**69** were thrown in the trash and **31** were recycled.

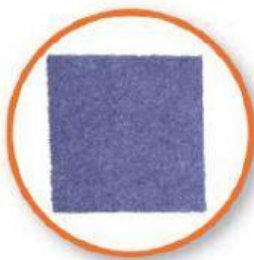


If we had recycled these 69 bottles, we could have made:

a sweater



or 5 square feet of carpet.



The recycled plastic from these 31 bottles makes fiber for:

2 extra-large t-shirts



or the fill for 2 ski jackets.



## Respond to Questions

These questions will help you think about the sources you've read. Use your notes and refer to the sources to answer the questions. Your answers to these questions will help you write your essay.

- 1 According to the sources, which of the following is a reason to ban bottled water?
  - a. There are chemicals in plastic water bottles. (Source 1)
  - b. Plastic water bottles can help you avoid drinking unsafe water. (Source 1)
  - c. Some bottled water is tap water. (Source 2)
  - d. In 2012, 31% of plastic bottles were recycled. (Source 3)
- 2 According to Source 1, why should people avoid using water fountains?
  - a. The water that comes from fountains is dirty.
  - b. Water fountains have been banned in some cities.
  - c. Bacteria can collect on water fountains.
  - d. There are harmful chemicals in water fountains.
- 3 Which sentence best supports your answer to Question 2?
  - a. "People put their mouths on the spout, spreading whatever germs they might have." (lines 17–18)
  - b. "When health is involved, you don't want to risk drinking water that isn't safe." (lines 29–30)
  - c. "If you don't want to drink soda, you're out of luck." (lines 37–38)
  - d. "There are chemicals in many items that we use every day." (lines 41–42)



- 4 Which sentence best supports the idea that banning plastic water bottles may have harmful consequences?
- "When health is involved, you don't want to risk drinking water that isn't safe." (Source 1)
  - "Plastic water bottle bans have not been adopted by many cities yet." (Source 1)
  - "Plastic bottles can take many hundreds of years to break down." (Source 2)
  - "The recycled plastic from these 31 bottles makes fiber for 2 extra-large t-shirts." (Source 3)
- 5 Which source(s) agree that plastic water bottles should be banned? How do you know? Record your reasons in the chart.



| Source                                                                        | Agrees with the Ban?                                     | Reasons |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Editorial</b><br>Ban the Bans on Plastic Water Bottles                     | <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |         |
| <b>Infographic</b><br>Problems with Plastic                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |         |
| <b>Graphic Feature</b><br>"Out of every 100 plastic bottles made in 2012 ..." | <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |         |

- 6 **Prose-Constructed Response** What information in Source 3 can support the writer's opinion on plastic water bottles in Source 1? Cite evidence from the text in your response.

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## Write the Essay

Read the assignment.

### Assignment

You have read about the use of plastic water bottles. Now write an opinion essay explaining why you agree or disagree with the ban of plastic water bottles. Support your opinion with details from what you have read.

## Plan

Use the graphic organizer to help you outline the structure of your opinion essay.

