

TOEFL Listening Lesson 2

Setting: Environmental Science class. A few students are seated in a small seminar-style classroom. The professor is facilitating the discussion.

Questions

1. What is the discussion mainly about?

- A. How waste is sorted in recycling plants
- B. The financial cost of waste removal on campus
- C. Strategies the campus could use to reduce waste
- D. Student complaints about campus cleanliness

2. What strategy does the professor say has been effective at other universities?

- A. Increasing janitorial staff
- B. Removing trash cans from campus entirely
- C. Setting up centralized waste disposal stations
- D. Fining students for improper waste disposal

3. Why does the female student mention composting food scraps?

- A. To explain why dining hall waste is hard to manage
- B. To offer a practical solution for reducing organic waste
- C. To criticize current waste disposal policies
- D. To suggest that composting is too complicated to implement

4. Why does the professor mention that some students misunderstand recycling rules?

- A. To highlight the need for clearer communication
- B. To show that students are not taking waste seriously
- C. To argue for more recycling bins around campus
- D. To recommend changing the types of materials accepted

5. What can be inferred about the professor's view on student involvement in waste reduction?

- A. Students should leave it to campus administration
- B. Student input is not needed for waste policy decisions
- C. Student-led initiatives are essential to success
- D. Students do not care enough about waste issues

Script

Professor:

All right, everyone—last class we talked about how much waste an average college campus generates per year. Today, I want us to brainstorm and evaluate strategies to reduce that waste. So, let's start simple. What are some types of waste we see a lot of here on campus?

Student 1 (male student):

Definitely single-use plastics. Like, take-out containers, plastic cups, utensils...

Professor:

Good observation. And where are those mostly coming from?

Student 1:

Mostly from the dining hall and campus cafes, I think.

Professor:

Exactly. So if we wanted to reduce that, what might be one approach?

Student 2 (female student):

Maybe encourage students to bring reusable containers? Like their own cups or lunch boxes?

Professor:

Yes, that's one of the more straightforward strategies. Reusable containers. What would be necessary to make that effective?

Student 2:

Probably some kind of incentive—like discounts for people who bring their own, or a charge for using disposable ones.

Professor:

Right. Behavioral nudges. Research shows small incentives or penalties can shift habits. Anyone else?

Student 3 (male student):

We could ban certain types of plastic on campus entirely. Some cities have done that.

Professor:

A more aggressive strategy—banning items outright. That could work, but what might be a drawback?

Student 3:

Pushback? People might not like being told what they can't use.

Professor:

Exactly. There's a balance between regulation and personal freedom. Also, enforcement could be tricky. Okay, let's move beyond plastic. What's another kind of waste we generate?

Student 4 (female student):

Paper? I mean, we still use a lot of paper in classes, handouts, flyers...

Professor:

Yes, and?

Student 4:

Some professors post digital versions of everything, but not all. Maybe make that a requirement?

Professor:

Now you're thinking about institutional policy. Requiring digital materials could reduce waste. But what could be a potential concern?

Student 1:

Not everyone likes reading on screens. Some people learn better with printed material.

Professor:

Exactly. There's a trade-off there—environmental benefit versus learning preference. What about food waste? That's another big category on campuses.

Student 2:

Oh yeah—like when students take more than they can eat in the dining halls.

Professor:

Right. Any strategies to reduce that?

Student 3:

Portion control? Smaller serving sizes so people can take only what they want?

Professor:

Good. Or even trayless dining—some schools have removed trays so

students can't overload their plates. It's been surprisingly effective. Anyone heard of composting programs?

Student 4:

Yeah! My old high school had compost bins in the cafeteria. But we don't really have that here, right?

Professor:

Not yet, no. Composting is a great strategy but needs infrastructure and student buy-in. What would we need to implement that?

Student 2:

Bins, signage, maybe volunteers to monitor them? And education—people need to know what goes where.

Professor:

Yes, and that's key—waste reduction isn't just about systems; it's about education. Okay, last question: What's the *most* important factor in the success of any campus waste reduction program?

Student 1:

Probably participation. If students don't buy in, it won't work.

Professor:

Bingo. Even the best-designed systems rely on user behavior. So it's not just what strategies we choose, but how we engage the campus community. Great ideas today, everyone. Next class, we'll look at some case studies from universities that have actually implemented these programs and see how effective they've been.

Answers

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