Student resource sheet: Exposition example

Phase of learning
Years 5 - 6, Years 7 - 8

WA Curriculum
K-10 English

Region
West Coast, South Coast

Summary
This student resource sheet is associated with the Lessons: Exposition and Debate.

Councils should take seaweed off beaches

I strongly disagree with the above statement; councils should not remove seaweed from beaches. When seaweed and seagrass are washed onto the beach, they are called 'sea wrack'. Sea wracks are vitally important to the health of our oceans and a sign of a healthy ecosystem. The nutrients that sea wracks produce provide food for other marine organisms and, when washed back into the water by the tide, wind and waves, provide a safe habitat for juvenile fish.

To begin, the decomposition of sea wrack is incredibly important. The pungent smell you experience when visiting a beach where sea wracks are on the shore is a very clear indication that the bacteria that break them down are doing their job. The dead and decaying material in the wracks provide the best feeding place for millions of insects, crustaceans and larvae. This decomposition assists in maintaining the health of the ecosystem, keeping the associated food web intact. I feel that because sea wracks keep our oceans and the organisms that live in them healthy, councils should not take them off beaches.

In addition, sea wracks provides food for other marine organisms. After completing some research, I found that as the wracks break down, the tide, wind and waves constantly move it back into the ocean, transferring the nutrients into the ocean with it. Plants and animals such as seagrass, sea weed and fish depend on these nutrients for survival. Without these wracks, our oceans will not have the variety and abundance of fish and animal life that we see in them today.

Furthermore, sea wracks should not be taken off beaches because they move into the shallow coastal environment and provide important protection for juvenile fish. These fish seek shelter in amongst the wracks to hide from predators such as crabs, squid and larger fish. If councils remove sea wracks from beaches, this amazing form of natural shelter will be lost, causing a dramatic reduction in the number of fish species living in our coastal environment.

I understand that some people would be in favour of councils removing sea wracks from popular beaches because of the odour they produce and being regarded as an 'eye sore'. However, I wonder if these people are fully aware of the impact that removing the wracks would have on our precious marine ecosystem. It seems to me that councils would be spending a lot of money clearing and relocating the wrack to landfill, just in an effort to make beaches more appealing to swimmers and beach goers.

In conclusion, I feel that the removal by councils of sea wrack from beaches is a mistake. It will disrupt the fragile ecosystem that exists in coastal environments and end-up reducing our fish numbers. It is also a costly way to make a beach prettier and more attractive to swimmers. What is the point of swimming in an ocean with no living organisms in it?

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