



Debate

Directions: Read the article. Study the facts. Decide what you think. Go to www.scholastic.com/storyworks for more debates!



Is Bottled Water Really Better?

... or are we wasting our money?



Last year, Americans bought 31 billion bottles of water. Stack those up, and the plastic tower would stretch from Earth to the moon and back—eight times!

Why do we love bottled water so much? It's convenient. Just grab a bottle and go. Then toss it out when you're done. It's healthy too, compared with sugary sodas and drinks. And it's much better than tap water.

Or is it?

In fact, one third of all bottled water is tap water. Many top-selling brands, such as Dasani and Aquafina, sell tap water that has been run through a filter.

It turns out that waters bottled from springs and streams—like Fiji—aren't necessarily "better" than the water you can get from your kitchen sink. In taste tests, tap water often wins. And chances are that the water flowing from your tap has been tested more than what you are guzzling from a bottle. That's because most cities regularly test tap water to make sure it doesn't contain dangerous germs or chemicals. Bottled-water companies don't have to test as rigorously.

But the main criticism of bottled water isn't the quality of the water—or even the fact that Americans are paying for water they can get for free. It's those plastic bottles. Though they can be recycled, few actually are. Eighty percent are thrown into the trash—that's 33 million bottles a day that wind up in landfills, where they will sit for hundreds of years.

These mountains of trashed plastic bottles have inspired a growing number of communities to take action. The town of Concord, Massachusetts, plans to ban the purchase of

bottled water. Some college campuses are doing the same. At Cherry Tree Elementary School in Indiana, kids get reusable water cups with their lunch. Bottled water is still for sale, but most kids simply raise their hands at lunch and hold up three fingers—Cherry Tree's sign for "I want water, please." The four-year-old program has been a big success.

But not everyone can simply choose to avoid bottled water. Around the world, 1 billion people do not have access to safe water. If they drank from the tap or from local supplies, they could get seriously sick—or even die. For them, bottled water isn't a convenience. It's a life-or-death necessity.

In addition, banning bottled water could lead people to drink more unhealthy beverages, like soda. And these sugary drinks contribute to America's growing problem with obesity.

Still, it seems that America might be losing its thirst for bottled water. Sales are dropping. Sales of reusable water bottles are soaring. And many towns want to ban the sale of bottled water, as Concord plans to do.

Miss our No-Sweat Bubble Test? Find it online!



What Do You Think? Is Bottled Water Better?

Go back to the article and find information to support each side. Write the information on the lines below.

YES Keep those bottles in the stores!

1 _____

 2 _____

 3 _____

NO Ban those bottles!

1 _____

 2 _____

 3 _____

Study the points on both sides of the argument—and think about your own opinion. Then decide what you think about this issue. State your opinion in one sentence below. This can become a thesis statement for an essay on this topic.



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