

# TRASH OR TREASURE?



## CREATIVE CRABS

Hermit crabs in the wild are ditching their shells and finding new homes—in our plastic litter.

**LEXILE:** 1060L (900L alternate reading level)

**SCIENCE (NGSS) STANDARD:** Earth and Human Activity

**COMMON CORE (CCSS) STANDARDS:** RI.6-8.1, RI.6-8.3, RI.6-8.6, RI.6-8.7

## ENGAGE THE READER

Start the lesson with a scavenger hunt. Have students walk around the room or the school and note all the things they can find that are made of plastic. Bring students back together and have them share a few things from their notes. Then prompt a discussion with the following question: How has plastic affected the world? Highlight some positive and negative responses. Then show students the cover of *Trash or Treasure?* and have them share their reactions before reading.

## QUESTIONS FOR CLOSE READING AND DISCUSSION

- Why are hermit crabs using trash as shells?
- What is the overall tone of this article?
- What is iEcology? What are some benefits and drawbacks?
- What fact(s) from this article do you find most surprising? Why?

## EXTEND LEARNING

Reread the paragraph before the section “New Homes” aloud. Explain that there’s a system for dating events on a timeline going back to Earth’s beginnings. It’s called the geologic timescale, and it’s broken down into lengths of time such as eras, periods, and epochs. Have students learn about these time periods on the National Park Service website [here](#). Read through the timeline as a class. Check for understanding with questions about different eras and events, and how long ago they occurred. Show them the illustration by Ray Troll to aid understanding ([ti.me/AgesOfRock](http://ti.me/AgesOfRock)). Then discuss as a class which geologic era we are currently in and whether our impact on the Earth is great enough to qualify as a new epoch.

Return to the quote from Zuzanna Jagiello about a hermit crab in a plastic shell being an icon of our time. Invite students to research and share another image that helps define the period in which we’re living.

## COVER STORY QUIZ + ANSWER KEY

The cover quiz can be found on page 3 of this guide.

To create a digital quiz, you can use our template [here](#).

1. A (RI.2) 2. A (RI.6) 3. B (RI.1) 4. D (RI.4) 5. C (RI.3)

6. C (RI.5) 7. Answers will vary. (W.2)

## LEARNING THE LINGO

Below is an excerpt from the fifth and final lesson in our media-literacy unit plan. Check out the full lesson at [ti.me/MediaLitLesson5](https://ti.me/MediaLitLesson5). Or find the full unit plan at [ti.me/MediaLitUnit](https://ti.me/MediaLitUnit).

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are some words that journalists use in their work?
- How can understanding journalists' vocabulary help us better understand journalism?

### INTRODUCTION

Have students share some vocabulary and definitions they've learned in the previous four lessons. List these on the board. Explain that they'll be assessing their knowledge of these terms and learning about additional journalist vocabulary. Provide students with the "Vocabulary Self-Assessment" chart ([ti.me/newsVocab](https://ti.me/newsVocab)). Open the "Newsroom Lingo" slide deck from the News Literacy Project ([ti.me/lingoSlides](https://ti.me/lingoSlides)) and go through the first two slides. For the second slide, have students use the sheet to assess their understanding of some key terms in previous lessons. Then go through the slides of new terms and have students assess their understanding as you introduce these terms.

### SMALL GROUP WORK

Have students work in groups and go through the TIME Edge website and see if they can apply their knowledge of these terms by finding some examples. Then bring the class together and ask groups to share what they found. Then ask: How can we tell if one of these writers has a beat? (Hint: Try googling Jeffrey Kluger.) Ask students to consider how understanding these terms helps them better understand journalism. Invite them to share their thoughts.

TIME  
KIDS

## TFK KID REPORTER CONTEST

Do you dream of being a reporter? Do you want to write, to review books and movies, and do cool interviews? If so, you might have what it takes to be a Kid Reporter for TIME for Kids. We're looking for up to 10 students from around the nation to be members of the TFK Kid Reporter team for the 2024–2025 school year. This year's contest is now open.

Here's what some former Kid Reporters have to say about their experience:

- **"Being a Kid Reporter transformed my life. It gave me amazing opportunities and taught me skills I can use for the rest of my life."**  
—Ninis Twumasi, TFK Kid Reporter 2023–2024
- **"I met so many different, exciting people, and learned so much about being a reporter!"**  
—Sophia Zhang, TFK Kid Reporter 2023–2024



TFK Kid Reporter Audrey Owolo visits the White House in February for an exclusive interview with Doug Emhoff, the Second Gentleman of the United States.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Use this week's cover story, "Creative Crabs," to answer the questions below. For questions 1–6, circle the letter next to the best answer. If you need more space to write your response to question 7, you may use the back of this page.

<p><b>1.</b> Which sentence best captures the main idea?</p> <p><b>A.</b> At least 386 hermit crabs have been documented wearing garbage.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Hermit crabs are small, soft-bodied crabs that live near oceans.</p> <p><b>C.</b> For their study, researchers scanned the Internet for photos.</p> <p><b>D.</b> Hermit crabs could be turning to litter because they can't find enough seashells.</p>	<p><b>4.</b> Which word is used as a synonym for <i>garbage</i>?</p> <p><b>A.</b> litter</p> <p><b>B.</b> rubbish</p> <p><b>C.</b> waste</p> <p><b>D.</b> all of the above</p>
<p><b>2.</b> Why does Zuzanna Jagiello say a hermit crab in a plastic shell could be an icon of our times?</p> <p><b>A.</b> It shows humans' impact on the natural world.</p> <p><b>B.</b> It shows interesting new animal adaptations.</p> <p><b>C.</b> It shows the decline in the snail population.</p> <p><b>D.</b> It shows the benefits of plastic.</p>	<p><b>5.</b> Which of the following is not a theory as to why scientists believe hermit crabs are choosing trash for shells?</p> <p><b>A.</b> There are not enough snail shells.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Plastic is light and easy to carry.</p> <p><b>C.</b> Crabs find food in the trash.</p> <p><b>D.</b> They're attracted to the colorful garbage.</p>
<p><b>3.</b> According to the study, how many hermit crab species have been documented wearing garbage?</p> <p><b>A.</b> nine</p> <p><b>B.</b> 10</p> <p><b>C.</b> 16</p> <p><b>D.</b> 386</p>	<p><b>6.</b> Why was the sidebar "Internet Ecology" included?</p> <p><b>A.</b> to teach others how to find pictures of hermit crabs online</p> <p><b>B.</b> to persuade others to add photos online</p> <p><b>C.</b> to explain the method by which researchers conducted their study</p> <p><b>D.</b> to describe the many flaws with the current study</p>

**7.** What are some other examples of humans' impact on nature or wildlife?

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