Baoviet Nguyen P6

The Unwanted Souvenir

When I was younger I would love going to the beach, the cool waves, the slight breeze, and sunblock, lots and lots of sunblock. I would play in the waves until nighttime when we had to go home, but little did I know, I brought back with me a little visitor. I opened my backpack and there it was, I took off my shoes and there it was, I looked down into my shorts...and there it was, that visitor was the ever dreaded “Sand”. If you’ve ever been to the beach, you know the dilemma, sand gets everywhere and by everywhere I mean *everywhere*. In OUR food, in OUR drink, in OUR PHONES, in OUR clothes, in OUR hair! Basically any place WE can imagine, but today the only place “sand” will be getting stuck to is OUR minds. Because sand doesn’t just get stuck in between OUR toes, it can also swallow cities and harm US throughout the world. So first, we’ll build a castle full of the different types of sand, then we’ll sculpt some details about how sand is used, and finally we’ll brush off how sand affects us.

Beaches are the most popular destination if you want to find sand and we are all familiar with the boring drab tan-colored sand, but sand actually comes in as many colors as the rainbow. Beach sand can range from the bright pink beaches of Bermuda to the pristine white beaches of Hawaii. Speaking of Hawaii’s white beaches, you might be a bit surprised and a little grossed out to find out how those beaches get so white. That pristine white sand comes from parrotfish… or more specifically, their bottoms. Parrotfish are key players in regulating algae and reef life. Their parrot-like beaks are used for biting dead coral, but because parrotfishes do not have stomachs that sand passes straight through them exploding in a cloud of sand out the backdoor producing as much as 840 pounds of pure white disgusting sand per year. That pristine white sand also appears on many different movies, I mean if sand that has passed through an animal can make it onto a movie, I’m sure we can as well!

But movies also star sand’s ugly cousin, quicksand. Many movies, such as those scientifically embarrassing Tarzan things, associate quicksand as some sort of monster that engulfs people whole, but this is far from the truth. (Start sinking below the tables) Quicksand is not quite the fearsome force of nature that you see on the big screen, in reality, that “man hungry monster” is rarely deeper than a few feet, What?. Even if you do find yourself in a pit of quicksand-- don’t worry-- it can’t swallow you and it’s not nearly as hard to escape from as many movies portray. You just have to do nothing! Seriously, don’t do anything, the more you move the angrier it gets. Because the density of quicksand is greater than that of the human body, you just need to lie still and you will float to the top.

Even though quicksand might not be the man-eating monster you thought it was, there’s still the real monster and it separates you from the parking lot and the beach, it's the dreaded burning hot sand. Beach sand can get so hot that lifeguards have to mark their boards with “hot sand” warnings so that visitors don’t burn their feet. Beach sand can reach up to 120-130 degrees fahrenheit, meaning that it can cause up to third degree burns. This can be just as dangerous as sunburn. Joanne Hall, a college student who wanted to spend a day at the beachIN WHAT STATE, but unfortunately she forgot to wear sandals. She underestimated the heat of the sand and suffered blisters to the bottom of both feet, she was quickly rushed to the burn care unit and now has to spend the rest of her summer on a wheel chair. Turns out, the sand was over 100 degrees fahrenheit that day.

Now we may not be able to walk on the beach during the burning hot day, but how about a long romantic beach walk at night, just me LOVE THIS LOVE THIS LOVE THIS>>and my expos posters (caresses posters). But for some reason, every time I walk on the beach I get tired so easily, and no it’s not because I’m out of shape. Turns out, walking on sand is a lot more difficult and straining on your muscles. Because your feet sink into the sand when you walk, your muscles work harder to lift out of it for every step. CAN WE GET A NUMBER COMPARING THE DIFFERENCE? A GENERAL PERCENTAGE? HOW MANY MORE CALORIES? THAT LITTLE NUMBER WILL MAKE THIS EVEN MORE OF A GENIUS ADD. This extra effort translates to extra fat and calories burned so it makes for a great workout.

You know I could use a break, I mean look at the time! (Points at clock) but who needs those new fancy clocks when you could use the old fashioned hourglass. Before the hourglass became the dreaded symbol of a program stalling on your PC, the hourglass spent centuries as a symbol of the sciences. By letting a specific amount of sand trickle down it’s neck, one can accurately tell time. Oh wow, i’ve already been up here for 5 minutes? Hourglasses aren’t even that old-fashioned, seeing that they are still being made and manufactured today. With the highest retailing hourglass costing over 6 million dollars. Since time is so precious to us, a shop in Thailand decided to make the best of it by replacing the sand in an hourglass with diamonds, 10,000 carats of them to be exact, setting the price to up to $6,400,000.

Sand isn’t always the solution to all of our problems, but can sometimes be the root of those problems. Deserts around the world are growing each year by Desertification. Desertification is the process by which an area becomes a desert as the result of land mismanagement or climate change. It’s becoming a global problem. According to Zafar Adeel of the United Nations, "There are serious gaps in our understanding of how big deserts are, and how they are growing." Drylands make up more than 40% of the world’s land surface and reports already show that up to 20% of those areas have been affected by these growing deserts and it won’t be  long until the rest of the land becomes affected as well. You might be thinking “Hey! This can’t possibly affect me,” but think again. Desertification in Africa and Asia has been linked to respiratory problems in North AmericaNEED THE POSTER TO SHOW THAT RELATIONSHIP, THANKS, the dust from the Gobi and the Sahara enter the atmosphere and travel to North America where it settles down and enters our lungs. The problems don’t stop there, desertification is ever so present even here in California. With California’s drought well into it’s fifth year, crop rates are decreasing and jobs are being lost. According to UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences, due to the drought, California has roughly 14 percent less surface water supply for crops which could lead to up to the loss of 78,800 acres of crops and 4,700 lost jobs, and those numbers will only grow if we don’t do something about it.

It may look hopeless, but there is a solution. We can fight sand with sand, burning hot sand can actually be used to fight against this growing desert, the Italian company the Magaldi Group is using sand to produce and store energy. The company uses mirrors to focus sunlight and putting sand’s heat to good use for a change. The hot sand then produces steam which can run turbines and generate renewable and clean energy. We may not have fancy generators or turbines but we can fight back with these simple methods, simply using less water and making every drop count can help with this crisis, in addition to producing as little pollution as possible. With these measures, we can fight back against these growing deserts and eventually stop them in their tracks. But we must act soon, because if we don’t, we could very well be living on a desert planet. MAYBE A LIGHT LINE HERE TO BREAK THE HEAVINESS—I.E., “AND THEN NOT EVEN ALL THE SUNBLOCK IN THE WORLD WILL HELP US.” OR SOMETHING ABOUT THE SHORTS? JUST TO GET YOU BACK INTO A SNAPPY DELIEVERY AND KEEP THE AUDIENCE ON A ROLLER COASTER RIDE WITH TONE.

So today we first, poured out some of the different types of sand, then we felt the sand between our toes to learn about the different uses of sand, and finally we played with how sand affects us today.After my beach day, I had sand everywhere, yes even there. But thankfully I got it all off by covering myself in baby powder. And you can too! the baby powder dries the skin and any wet sand, making it a breeze to brush off. On that beach my footprints were left on the sand, but quickly washed away, but now I can see, sand has left it’s own footprint on our lives, one that won’t wash away. Sand has changed our society and without it, we could very well not be here today. We just need to take a step in the right direction and leave a footprint that won't wash away.