



Message in a Bottle Found after 50 Years!

What is a message in a bottle?

- A message in a bottle is a note or letter which has been sealed in a waterproof bottle.
- They have usually been dropped into the sea although many break apart and aren't found again.

A nine-year-old boy has found a message in a bottle 50 years after it was dropped over the side of a ship! He's also managed to track down the person who dropped it way back in 1969.

Jyah Elliott was fishing with his dad on Talia Beach in South Australia when they came across a rather unusual find.

Hidden in the **dunes** was a rather old-looking glass bottle with some paper in it. When they broke it open, they found there was a written message inside!

They saw that it came from a 13-year-old boy called Paul Gilmore. He was travelling on an **ocean liner** with his family from Britain to live in Australia.

The message describes his journey and the ship he sailed on. The date at the top of the letter read 17th November 1969. That's 50 years ago!

The letter said that he was 1000 miles away from Fremantle in Western Australia when he sent the letter.

It also told whoever found the letter to reply and even gave an address so they could send him a letter.

When Jyah found the letter, he was very excited. His family shared a picture of the bottle and managed to find the letter's author. Paul Gilmore is now 63 years old.

According to his family, Paul doesn't know that his letter's been found as he's on holiday on a cruise ship.



Photo: A washed-up message in a bottle.

"He'll be chuffed to bits," Paul's sister said.

This letter isn't the oldest message in a bottle! Last year, a woman in Western Australia found a bottle with a letter which was 132 years old!

People have been sending messages in bottles through the sea for thousands of years. The ancient Greeks used them to explore how water flowed into the Mediterranean Sea.

However, as plastic **pollution** has become a real problem for our oceans, many think it's time to stop this practice or switch to **biodegradable** alternatives.

Glossary

dunes	A mound of sand formed by the wind, often by the sea.
ocean liner	A large ship used to take people on long journeys.
pollution	The presence of harmful things in an environment, such as plastic.
biodegradable	Able to easily be broken down by bacteria.

Questions

1. 'He's also managed to track down the person who dropped it.'

Tick the word which is closest in meaning to 'track down' in this sentence.

- uncover
- find
- meet
- reveal

2. Do you think Paul Gilmore will be surprised that someone has found his message in a bottle? Use the news story to explain your answer.

3. "He'll be chuffed to bits," Paul's sister said.
What do you think Paul's sister means by 'chuffed to bits'?

4. How did the ancient Greeks use messages in bottles?

5. Number these events in the order in which they happened. One has been done for you.

- The bottle is buried in the dunes in South Australia.
- 1 Paul Gilmore's family leaves for Australia.
- Jyah Elliot finds the message in a bottle.
- Paul Gilmore drops a message in a bottle off the side of a ship.

6. Summarise this news story in 20 words or fewer.

7. Do you think people will be sending messages in plastic bottles in another 50 years?
Explain your answer.

Answers

1. 'He's also managed to track down the person who dropped it.'

Tick the word which is closest in meaning to 'track down' in this sentence.

- uncover
 find
 meet
 reveal

2. Do you think Paul Gilmore will be surprised that someone has found his message in a bottle? Use the news story to explain your answer.

Accept any reasonable answer which refers to the news story, e.g. I think Paul would be surprised as messages in bottles often break apart and aren't found again.

3. "He'll be chuffed to bits," Paul's sister said.

What do you think Paul's sister means by 'chuffed to bits'?

I think Paul's sister means that Paul will be very excited.

4. How did the ancient Greeks use messages in bottles?

The ancient Greeks used to drop messages in bottles to explore how water flowed into the Mediterranean Sea.

5. Number these events in the order in which they happened. One has been done for you.

- 3** The bottle is buried in the dunes in South Australia.
1 Paul Gilmore's family leaves for Australia.
4 Jyah Elliot finds the message in a bottle.
2 Paul Gilmore drops a message in a bottle off the side of a ship.

6. Summarise this news story in 20 words or fewer.

Accept any reasonable summary which is 20 words or fewer, e.g. Jyah Elliot found a message in a bottle. It was dropped in the ocean by Paul Gilmore in 1969.

7. Do you think people will be sending messages in plastic bottles in another 50 years?

Explain your answer.

Accept any reasonable answer which refers to the news story, e.g. I don't think people will be sending messages in plastic bottles in 50 years' time as we are more aware now of the damage plastic pollution does to our oceans.