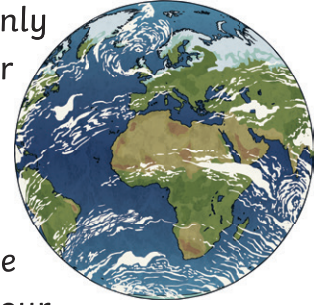


# End Plastic Pollution

## Our Planet

Our planet is incredibly important to us and, as it is the only one we have, we must ensure we look after it and care for everything in it. There are many national and international initiatives aimed at raising awareness for the protection of our planet including Earth Days, Environment Days and Recycling Weeks. These projects all aim to tell people the importance of looking after the earth and how we can do our bit to protect it. One of the many focuses that these initiatives have been looking at is the use of plastics and how we all have a responsibility to help prevent plastic pollution. Even the Government is working with national agencies to help combat this global problem.



## What Is Plastic Pollution?

The biggest problem with unwanted plastic is the damage it causes to the environment.

Because plastic is cheap and easy to make, humans buy and use a lot of it.



They then throw this away.



But, plastic is strong and hard-wearing because it was made to last. So when it is thrown away, it takes hundreds of years to rot away.

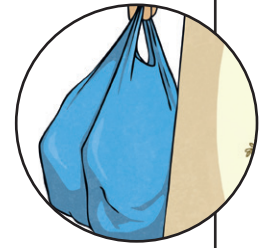


It breaks into tiny pieces, which then get blown around by the wind and the rain. Lots of the plastic ends up in our streams, rivers and the ocean.

The amount of plastic on the planet is increasing more and more rapidly, meaning it is threatening our planet through poisoning and injuring sea life, littering beaches and landscapes, clogging rubbish landfills and making humans (and other animals) ill.

### Did You Know...?

- 160,000 plastic bags are used across the world every second!
- 5 trillion plastic bags are produced each year.
- Side by side, they could go around the world 7 times!



### What Can You Do to 'End Plastic Pollution'?

There are lots of things we can all do to help end plastic pollution. Most importantly, we need to remember the three Rs in order: reduce, reuse, recycle. We should first try to 'reduce' our use of plastics, then 'reuse' where possible. The last resort is to 'recycle' as this still has a negative impact on the environment.

**Reduce:** Avoid single-use plastics, such as straws and takeaway cups, instead choosing to use alternatives, such as bamboo. Avoid buying plastic toys unless they are second-hand. You can't do this alone, so it is important to talk to your family, headteacher or school council about how your school and family can use less plastic.



**Reuse:** If you have plastic items, ensure that you use them multiple times. For example, refill and reuse water bottles and lunch bags. Also avoid using plastic bags for shopping, using strong, long-lasting fabric bags instead. When you no longer enjoy a toy, make sure you take it to a charity shop so that someone else can enjoy it.



**Recycle:** Check for the recycling symbol before you buy plastic and make sure that you always recycle plastic when you can, instead of throwing it away with the normal rubbish. Currently, less than half of all plastic bottles bought in the UK are recycled, however, the new plastic bottle return scheme should hopefully increase this amount.



# Questions

1. 'Most importantly, we need to remember the three Rs in order: reduce, reuse, recycle.' What does **reduce** mean? Tick one.

- ☐ increase
- ☐ lessen
- ☐ use again
- ☐ recover

2. Match the question to the correct answer.

How many plastic bags are made every year?

5 trillion

How many plastic bags are used every second across the world?

7

How many times could the plastic bags in the world reach around the Earth?

160,000

3. Name two issues created by plastic.

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4. What alternative could you use rather than plastic?

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5. Find and copy a word or phrase which tells you that plastic is **long-lasting**.

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6. Why should you use fabric shopping bags?

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# Questions

7. How could you alter your choice of toys? Explain your answer.

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8. Do you think it is possible to help solve the problem of plastic pollution?

Explain your answer.

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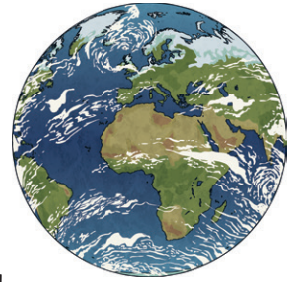
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# End Plastic Pollution

## Our Planet

Our planet is incredibly important to us and, as it is the only one we have, we must ensure we look after it and care for everything in it. There are many national and international initiatives aimed at raising awareness for the protection of our planet including Earth Days, Environment Days and Recycling Weeks. These projects all aim to tell people the importance of looking after the earth and how we can do our bit to protect it. They work with local councils, schools, supermarkets and other organisations to help increase people's understanding of environmental issues and to spread the word of what everyone can or should be doing to help address these issues. Over the past few years, people have begun to realise the impact that plastics have on the environment and how it is seriously damaging our earth and the things living in it. These initiatives and organisations have been looking at plastic pollution and what can be done about it. Even the Government is working with national agencies to help combat this global problem.



## What Is Plastic Pollution?

The biggest problem with unwanted plastic is the **pollution** and damage it causes to the environment.

Because plastic is cheap and easy to make, humans buy and use a lot of it, which they then dispose of. But, plastic is strong and **durable** because it was made to last, so when it is thrown away it takes hundreds of years to **decompose**. It breaks into tiny pieces, which then get blown around by the wind and the rain and lots of the plastic ends up in our streams, rivers and the ocean.



The amount of plastic on the planet is increasing **exponentially**, meaning it is threatening the environment through poisoning and injuring **marine** life and littering beaches and landscapes. The making of plastic, as well as the **incineration** of it when it is thrown away, releases toxic chemicals into the air, land and water. These chemicals can make both humans and animals ill. Because plastic does not **decompose** quickly (if at all), it fills up **landfills** and spreads out into the environment.

## Did You Know...?

In the UK, a new plastic bottle tax, of up to 22p, will aim to reduce the number of plastic bottles that people throw away. This money will be returned to people if they return their bottles to the shop they bought them from.

## What Can You Do to 'End Plastic Pollution'?

There are lots of things we can all do to help end plastic pollution. Most importantly, we need to remember the three Rs in order: reduce, reuse, recycle. We should first try to 'reduce' our use of plastics, then 'reuse' where possible. The last resort is to 'recycle' as this still has a negative impact on the environment, due to the initial manufacturing of the plastic.

**Reduce:** Avoid **single-use** plastics, such as straws and takeaway cups, instead choosing to use alternatives, such as bamboo. Avoid buying plastic toys unless they are second-hand. You can't do this alone, so it is important to talk to your family, headteacher or school council about how your school and family can use less plastic.



**Reuse:** If you have plastic items, ensure that you use them multiple times. For example, refill and reuse water bottles and lunch bags. Also avoid using plastic bags for shopping, using strong, long-lasting fabric bags instead. When you no longer enjoy a toy, make sure you take it to a charity shop so that someone else can enjoy it.



**Recycle:** Check for the recycling symbol before you buy plastic and make sure that you always recycle plastic when you can, instead of throwing it away with the normal rubbish. Currently, less than half of all plastic bottles bought in the UK are recycled, however, the new plastic bottle return scheme should hopefully increase this amount.



## Glossary

**decompose:** Rot away.

**durable:** Hard-wearing.

**exponentially:** More and more rapidly.

**incineration:** The destruction of something by burning.

**journalists:** A person who writes for newspapers or magazines or broadcasts news.

**landfill:** An area filled with waste.

**marine:** Relating to, or found in, the sea.

**pollution:** Something harmful or poisonous within the environment.

**single-use:** Designed to be used only once.

# Questions

1. Which of these are problems caused by plastic? Tick **two**.

- ☐ poisoning and injuring sea animals
- ☐ taking hundreds of years to decompose
- ☐ a new plastic bottle tax
- ☐ filling landfills and spreading into the environment

2. Draw a line to match the activity with its name.

Ensure that you do not throw plastic items away, putting them in the correct bin so they can be remade into something else.

reduce

Avoid buying anything made of plastic; choose alternatives instead.

reuse

Utilise plastic items that you own more than once.

recycle

3. Name 2 awareness initiatives that help promote environmental issues.

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4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:

It breaks into \_\_\_\_\_, which then get blown around by the wind and the rain, and lots of the plastic ends up in our \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Find and copy a phrase from the text which shows that this is **not a problem which you can solve on your own**.

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6. Why is 'recycling' the last of the three Rs?

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# Questions

7. Do you think that the new plastic bottle tax will help the problem of plastic pollution? Explain your answer.

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8. How do local councils, supermarkets and the Government help to combat environmental issues?

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9. Do you think the awareness days can help? Explain your answer.

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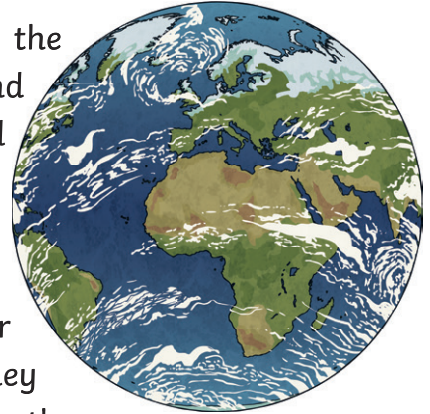
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## What Is Plastic Pollution?

The biggest problem with unwanted plastic is the pollution and damage it causes to the environment. Because plastic is cheap and easy to make, humans buy and use a lot of it, which they then throw away. But, plastic is strong and durable (hard-wearing) because it was made to last. When it is disposed of, it takes hundreds of years to decompose (rot away), first breaking into tiny pieces (micro-plastics), which get blown around by the wind and the rain, ending up in our waterways (streams, rivers and the ocean).



The amount of plastic on the planet is increasing exponentially (more and more rapidly), meaning it is threatening our planet through poisoning and injuring marine life and littering beaches and landscapes. The making of plastic, as well as the incineration (burning) of it when it is disposed of rather than recycled, releases toxic chemicals into the air, land and water. These chemicals can make both humans and animals ill. Because plastic does not decompose, it fills up landfills and spreads out into the environment.

## What Can You Do to 'End Plastic Pollution'?

To help End Plastic Pollution we need to remember the three Rs in order: reduce, reuse, recycle. We should first try to 'reduce' our use of plastics to lessen the amount in the world, then 'reuse' existing plastic products where possible. The last resort is to 'recycle' as this still has a negative impact on the environment, due to the initial manufacturing of the plastic.

**Reduce:** Avoid single-use plastics (designed to be used only once), such as straws and takeaway cups, instead choosing to use alternatives, such as bamboo. Avoid buying plastic toys unless they are second-hand. You can't do this alone, so it is important to talk to your family, head teacher or school council about how your school and family can use less plastic. There are many alternatives available for your school, such as wooden rulers and clipboards, bins and baskets made from natural materials and refillable dry-erase pens.



**Reuse:** If you have plastic items, ensure that you use them multiple times. For example, refill and reuse water bottles and lunch bags. Also avoid using plastic bags for shopping, using strong, long-lasting fabric bags instead. When you no longer enjoy a toy, make sure you take it to a charity shop so that someone else can enjoy it. Also encourage your school to use glass, china crockery and metal cutlery, rather than plastic cups, dishes and cutlery.



**Recycle:** Check for the recycling symbol before you buy plastic and make sure that you always recycle plastic when you can, instead of throwing it away with the normal rubbish. Currently, less than half of all plastic bottles bought in the UK are recycled, however, the new plastic bottle return scheme should hopefully increase this amount.



### Did You Know...?

In the UK, a new plastic bottle tax, of up to 22p, will aim to reduce the number of plastic bottles that people throw away. This money will be returned to people if they return their bottles to the shop they bought them from.





# Questions

1. The biggest problem with unwanted plastic is the pollution and damage it causes to the environment. What does **pollution** mean? Tick one.
  - ☐ something harmless or poisonous
  - ☐ something harmless or poised
  - ☐ something harmful or poisonous
  - ☐ something harmful or poised
2. What are the effects of plastic pollution? Tick one.
  - ☐ poisoning and injuring sea life
  - ☐ littering beaches and landscapes
  - ☐ making humans and animals ill
  - ☐ all of the above
3. How much is the new plastic bottle tax?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Name three things that your school could do to help end plastic pollution.
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
5. Find and copy a word or phrase from the text which shows that **the amount of plastic is growing quickly**.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Why is it important to talk to your family and school council or head teacher about plastic pollution?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Summarise what you have read in the third paragraph in 30 words or less.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Questions

8. Why should people demand that governments control plastic pollution?

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9. Explain what you can do to End Plastic Pollution at home.

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10. Which of the three Rs is most important? Give evidence to support your answer.

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