

Plastic Planet - KS2

Let's explore how much plastic we make, how much we throw away and where it ends up

- Every day we use items made from plastic. Probably far more than you might think. As a planet, how many plastic bottles do you think we buy every minute?

- A) 100
- B) 10,000
- C) 100,000
- D) 1,000,000



- You probably have a few plastic bottles around you right now. You have two minutes to count how many plastic bottles you can find in your house or classroom! (Don't forget the bathroom)

How many did you find?

- A lot of the plastic in our homes and schools will be used once then thrown away, these are called 'single-use plastic'. We are surrounded by these items every day. Not just drinks bottles but straws, shopping bags, shampoo bottles, coffee cups and crisp packets.

We use a lot of plastic day to day but where does it actually go when we are done with it?

- Items such as plastic bottles, pots and trays go into your recycling bin and picked up by bin lorries that bring them to the recycling centre to use the material to make something brand new.
- Plastic crisp packets, straws and bags can't be recycled so they need to go in the black bin bag. Since we can't recycle these items the best thing to do is to try to use less of them.

Reduce, reuse, recycle

Plastic in our oceans

- However if we are not careful with our rubbish it can become a serious problem for our planet. If people litter, just dropping their bottles and crisp packets on the ground, they end up being washed down drains and into rivers which then flow out into the ocean. This is dangerous for ocean animals as they get injured by plastic waste or accidentally swallow it. Often rubbish can stay floating in the ocean for long periods of time.

See if you can guess how long these items would stay in the ocean for if littered



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Reduce, reuse, recycle

8 million tonnes of plastic waste enters our oceans every year.
By 2050, if we don't make any changes, the weight of plastic in the ocean
could outweigh all the fish



So how can you help?

Three simple ways to help limit single use plastic waste and look after our planet are the 3Rs

 reduce

 reuse

 recycle

Reduce, reuse, recycle

reduce

Reducing our waste just means to throw less away. It is the simplest, most effective way to look after the planet. How could we buy less, use less and throw less plastic away?



For example when we go shopping, most of the food we buy is wrapped in plastic packaging. All that plastic will end up in the bin once you get home and likely never be used again.

Spot the difference between these two packs of bananas. What has been done to reduce the amount of packaging and why do you think the picture on the right is the better choice?

reuse

Reuse means to use something again. There are many ways we can use plastic more than once. Using the same bags for each shopping trip, filling up the same bottle with water rather than buying a new one or reusing a lunch box every day are all great ways we can Reuse plastic rather than



Reduce, reuse, recycle



When something does need to go in the bin, it can often be **recycled**. This means you can put certain plastics in the recycling bin along with paper, cardboard, glass bottles and tin cans and send them off to be made into something brand new!



Clean plastic yogurt pots, bottles and plastic trays can all be recycled. All you need to do is make sure they are clean and they go in the correct bin and we can do the rest. We can make an amazing range of different things from old materials, a plastic bottle could simply come back as a brand new plastic bottle or it could be used to make the stretchy material in football shirts! Did you know that the England football teams' kits are made using old recycled plastic bottles?!

Not everything can go into the recycling bin however. It's important to make sure that no 'scrunchy' plastic goes into your recycling. 'Scrunchy' plastic is any thin plastic that you could crush into a ball such as crisp packets, Clingfilm or plastic bags, These can't be recycled and so its particularly important to reuse your bags!





Reduce, reuse, recycle

So how can you help?

Here are some ideas for how you could use the 3Rs to help.

Tick the ones you, your family or your school do already or could plan to do in the future. Write down any other ideas you can think of!

- Buy loose fruit and veg rather than packaged
- Buy food in bulk rather than in small packets e.g. bags of rice
- Ask for drinks without straws at cafés or shops
- Use soap that doesn't come in a plastic bottle

- Reuse water bottles when you want a drink (also saves you money!)
- Swap to a thick plastic or metal bottle that will last longer
- Reuse your bags when shopping or get a 'bag for life'
- Pack a lunch box rather than carrying food in a plastic bag
- Ask your school not to use plastic plates or cutlery
- Chose cardboard packaging over plastic if shops have a choice

- Make sure plastic tubs and pots are clean before going in the recycling
- Tell your family that crisp packets and plastic bags can't be recycled
- Makes sure your school has recycling bins in each class
- Make a poster to show what can and can't be recycled
- Reuse plastic for craft rather than throwing it away
- Make sure your friends and family know not to litter!
- Write a school newsletter to help other learn about the 3Rs

Reduce, reuse, recycle

What could YOU do?

So we know that we use too much plastic and that throwing so much of it away can be a danger to our planet. To help we should use less of it, use things again rather than chucking them out and finally recycle what we can to make something new from something old.

On the next page there is an outline of a plastic bottle to cut out and decorate. On the bottle we want you to try to make three pledges (promises) you can make to do your part to protect the planet. Your ideas could involve any of the 3Rs

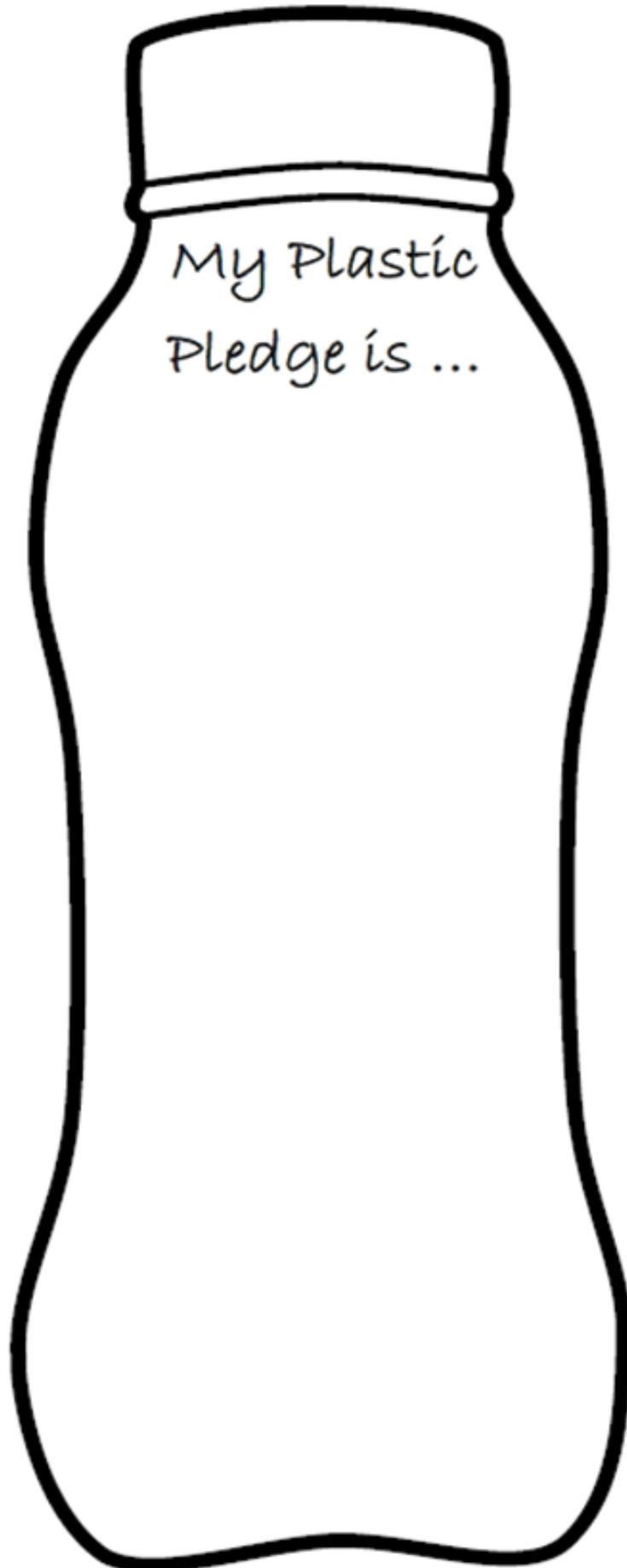
- What could you reuse at school?
- Is there anything you could swap such as using paper straws rather than plastic?
- How could you make sure the right things went into the right bins in your classroom?
- How could you get people to litter less?
- How could you share what you know about recycling with other people?
- What rules/laws should we put in place to help protect the planet?

Have a think and put down any fun ideas you can come up with!

Here are some examples from a Year 6 class we visited recently



Reduce, reuse, recycle



Reduce, reuse, recycle

Quiz answers

D) 1,000,000

Banana peel

2 months



Cardboard box

6 months



Plastic bag

50 - 100 years



Coffee cup

200 years+



Plastic straw

250 years+



Plastic bottle and lid

450 - 1000 years



Iceland changed their packaging after customers campaigned to reduce plastic waste.

Iceland stopped packing bananas individually, reduced the amount packaging and changed from plastic to cardboard so it could be recycled.





Reduce, reuse, recycle

If your pupils have any photos of their work, feel free to share them with us on Twitter at @WRWArecycling

We love seeing what schools have come up with!

Links to further reading to learn more

BBC 'Plastic Watch'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/11CnCQR0GJfkDgJs57sR5Ps/war-on-plastic>

'WRAP' Plastic Pact

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/the-uk-plastics-pact>

'Recycle now' Plastic Recycling

<https://www.recyclenow.com/>

<https://www.recyclenow.com/recycling-knowledge/how-is-it-recycled/plastics>