

## Recycling plastics — KS1

### Where on earth does plastic come from?

Plastics are made from oil. Oil comes from drilling deep into earth to get fossil fuels. **Fossil fuels** are formed from the remains of ancient marine organisms, such as plants, algae, bacteria and even dinosaurs!

### How does oil get turned into plastic?



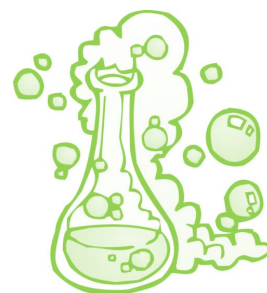
Step 1: Drill down deep into Earth to get oil.

Step 2: Transport it by truck or boat to an oil refinery.



Step 3: A process separates out the oil into liquids and gases (distillation).

Step 4: Use a chemical reaction to change the liquid oil into plastic and other things, such as petrol for cars.



# Reduce, reuse, recycle

## What are the problems with plastic production?

1. When you buy something plastic, remember it has taken millions of years to get to that point of being plastic. To use it for a very short time and throw it away is a waste of the earth's oil.
2. If we use the oil up it's not easy to get more.
3. Drilling and transporting oil creates a lot of pollution. Distilling and processing oil in the refineries also creates pollution.
4. Plastic litter and waste is also causing a lot of pollution, it is harmful to the environment and to animals and it is not nice to see.
5. All this is contributing to climate change by creating pollution.

## Are these a good use of earth's resources?

A lot of plastic stuff that we buy daily is single-use plastic.

This means we use it once and throw it away.

Remember, it also has to be collected by the bin men and sent to be recycled.

All this leads to a lot of waste and pollution to make it, transport it, and turn it into something else.

Which do you think is the better solution to this problem?

1. Reduce your plastic use
2. Reuse your plastics
3. Recycle plastics



# Reduce, reuse, recycle

**Reduce** is the best way.

If you have to buy something, think, do I really need this?

Think of ways you can reuse it, rather than throw it away.

When you have finished with it put it in the recycling bin.

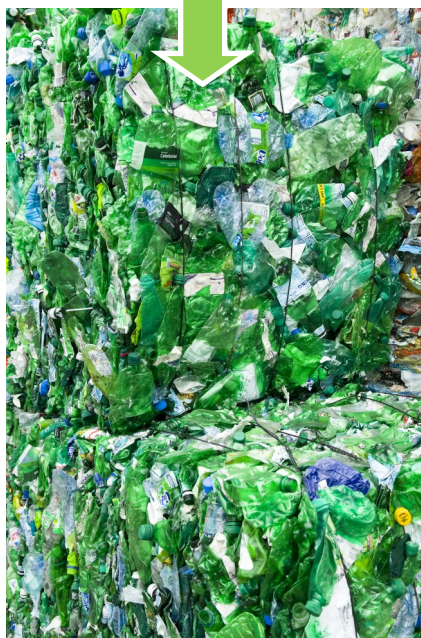
## Once I have put my correct plastics in the recycling bin where does it go?

It gets taken by the bin men to the Recycling Centre in Smugglers Way, Wandsworth.

Here the recycling bounces along a conveyor belt and gets separated, even into different types/colours!

At the end of the belt is a big crusher which crushes the sorted plastics into a big cube called a 'bale'.

Which of the plastics on this conveyor belt matches the plastics below?

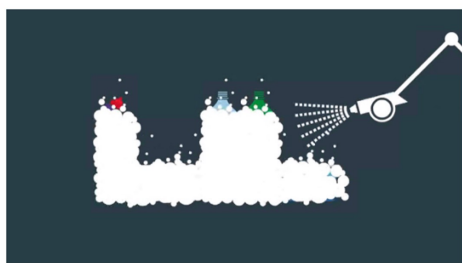


# Reduce, reuse, recycle

The bales of plastic are put onto a big transport truck and taken to a recycling factory somewhere in the UK.



The bales are unloaded and split onto a conveyor belt.



The plastics are washed and cleaned.



The plastics are then shredded into little pieces or flakes. And then converted into pellets.



The recycled plastic pellets are then melted down and turned into other things. If it is made into clothes it is turned into 'yarn' and woven into fabric.



Did you know that plastic can only really be recycled 2-3 times? After that the quality of it is not good enough to be used again. It is much better to **reduce** your use of plastic.

# Reduce, reuse, recycle

Here are some of the plastics we DO want:



Here are some of the plastics we DON'T want:



We call these 'scrunchy' plastic. It's softer and can scrunch into a ball in your hand.

## More Reading:

- Video and info about how old plastics are turned into new plastics.  
<https://www.plasticmakeitpossible.com/plastics-recycling/what-happens-to-recycled-plastics/the-recycling-journey-of-a-plastic-beverage-bottle/>
- <https://www.recyclenow.com/recycling-knowledge/how-is-it-recycled/plastics>
- Find how to Reuse plastics or the problem with plastics in our [WRWA schools home learning sheets](#).

# Reduce, reuse, recycle

Print out or draw your own, and colour in this poster:



Why not stick it next to your recycling bin to remind you of the good work you and your family are doing