

Plastic Pollution

Plastic Is Everywhere

We use plastic every day. We drink water from plastic bottles. We buy food in plastic bags. And many of our toys and class supplies are made out of plastic. We use way too much plastic! Look around you. Count all of the things you see that are made out of plastic.

What happens to all of the plastic we throw away? Fortunately, some plastic is recycled. That means that it is reused to make other products. Unfortunately, a lot of plastic ends up in landfills. The plastic may be buried under soil, but it is not gone!

Research shows that it takes about 1,000 years for the average plastic bottle to break down. That means that plastic bottles buried in a landfill today will still be there around the year 3000! If we do not change the way we use and throw away plastic, our planet will be ruined by plastic pollution.



Ocean Garbage Patch

The world's biggest landfill is not on land at all. It is out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. It is called The Great Pacific Garbage Patch. A lot of our trash winds up there. It is about twice the size of the state of Texas. And it is full of plastic. Most of the plastic in the garbage patch sinks to the ocean floor. The rest of the plastic floats on the surface of the ocean. Sometimes it ends up washing up on shore. If this continues, our beaches will be unsightly garbage pits.

In addition, the plastic harms the animals and plants that live in the ocean. How does that happen? Jellyfish and some small fish eat the plastic. Then, larger fish eat the smaller fish. Many of these larger fish are caught and eaten by people. As you can see, the plastic in the ocean affects life everywhere. This is sad and wrong!



Plastic garbage underwater

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

This information might make you feel dejected. But it doesn't have to. You possess the power to save our waters. What can you do? You can reduce, reuse, and recycle the plastic you use every day. The less plastic you use and throw away, the cleaner our water will be. Make it your goal to reduce the amount of plastic waste that goes in the garbage. Try to reuse containers when you can. Support recycling programs in your community. You will be glad you did!



Here are some simple tips to help keep plastic out of our landfills and oceans.

Reduce	Reuse	Recycle
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• use paper bags instead of plastic bags• use glass containers instead of plastic containers• drink filtered tap water instead of bottled water• use metal straws instead of plastic straws	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• use reusable shopping bags• use stainless steel bottles instead of plastic water bottles• donate old appliances, computers, and toys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• plastic bottles• plastic containers• plastic cups• plastic plates• plastic toys (some toy companies have recycling programs)