

What happens to the plastic we throw away?



Let's investigate our everyday plastic waste and find out!

THE BIG

PLASTIC

COUNT

GREENPEACE x **EVERYDAY
PLASTIC**

Why do we need to investigate this?

The plastic crisis is getting worse. We need the government to fix it. But how big is the problem? That's what we need you to investigate.

So count your plastic waste for a week and show the government why they need action now.



What do you think of when you hear the word plastic?



Recycle, hard, useful, rubbish, everywhere, dangerous, packaging, single-use, pollution, bottles, bags, toys, waste, ocean, oil, pointless, crisp packet, animals, beaches, scrunch, ugly, colourful, recycle, bin, litter

Plastic: a material that has transformed our lives!



Plastic was invented in 1869. It's cheap, long-lasting and can be made into all sorts of sizes, shapes and colours. That's why it's used to make lots of everyday items like clothes, food packaging, medical equipment, toys and technology.

However, its usefulness has made it a big problem for our planet.

Why is plastic a problem?

Let's find out more about why plastic is a problem.

Stand up if you think a fact is **true** or **remain seated** if you think it is **false**.



True or **False**?

The UK produces an estimated 3 million tonnes of plastic waste every year.

False



In 2018, the UK generated an estimated **5.2 million tonnes of plastic** packaging. 3.5 million tonnes of that was waste – enough to fill Wembley football stadium six times over!

True or False?



40% of all plastic produced each year is single-use (used once then thrown away).

False



It's actually 50%. Single-use items include crisp packets, drinks bottles and food trays. This plastic is often called 'pointless plastic' because it packages products that don't need it, like fruit and vegetables.

True or False?



It takes more than 400 years for a plastic bottle to decompose.

True



Over time, plastic breaks down into **tiny pieces called microplastics**. Almost all of the plastic ever created still exists somewhere on Earth.

True or False?



Plastic is made from oil and gas.

True



Almost all plastic starts as a fossil fuel like oil and gas. When burned, these fuels release greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide, which contribute to climate change.

What do the facts tell us?



Huge amounts of plastic is made every year. Half of this is used once and thrown away.

All this plastic doesn't disappear. It breaks down into tiny pieces of plastic that find their way into every corner of our planet. Into soil, water and even the air we breathe.

Despite this, the volume of plastic is predicted to DOUBLE by 2040!

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What are the impacts of plastic?



Burnt plastic can release gases which cause health problems.



Animals can become tangled in plastic waste or accidentally eat it. This can injure or kill them.



When burned, plastic creates greenhouse gases. These contribute to climate change.

Recycling is the solution to the plastic problem.



Agree



Disagree

Is recycling the answer?

Stand up if you think a fact is **true** or **remain seated** if you think it is **false**.

All plastic can be recycled.

False. Soft plastic, like crisp packets, cling film, flimsy lids and bread wrappers, can't be recycled.

There is more plastic being produced than can ever be recycled.

True. Unlike glass or metal, most plastic can only be recycled once or twice. After this, the quality isn't good enough so it becomes plastic waste.

Plastic can be recycled only once or twice before it becomes unusable.

True. The UK produces more plastic waste per person than almost any other country! There is simply too much plastic being made and thrown away for recycling to work.

Only 9% of plastic worldwide is recycled.
So where does the rest end up?



Plastic waste is burnt, creating toxic gases and ash. This causes health problems and contributes to climate change.



Plastic waste and ash from incineration is buried underground at landfill sites. Toxins then seep from the plastic and end up in soil and waterways.



Plastic waste is shipped abroad to countries that can't deal with it. It then gets dumped or burned, damaging the local environment and communities.

Recycling in the UK



The government says 46% of the UK's plastic waste is recycled.

Investigators at Greenpeace and Everyday Plastic think it is less.

That's why we need you to investigate by joining The Big Plastic Count!

How to take part

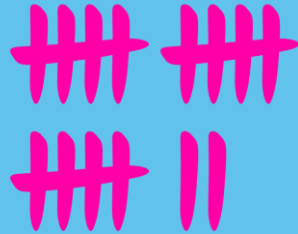
1.

Tell everyone at home



2.

Get counting



3.

Upload your findings



4.

Receive your plastic footprint



We'll show your findings to the government



Thousands of people all over the UK are taking part in The Big Plastic Count. Together, we can show the government what's really happening to household plastic waste. It's perfect timing too because the government is about to decide what to do about plastic.

Let's convince them to act.

How can the government help?



The government can make laws for companies to use less plastic and make packaging reusable.

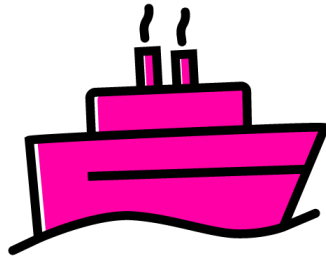
Soon, the government is meeting to discuss laws on plastic. We can convince them to halve single-use plastic by 2025 and ban plastic waste being sent to other countries by showing them the true scale of the problem.

This will make the planet a greener and healthier place for everyone!

What can we do to reduce our class plastic footprint further?



?%
RECYCLED



?%
EXPORTED



?%
LANDFILLED



?%
BURNT

The class plastic footprint shows how much plastic the class uses altogether and where it goes.

Plastic Footprint Action Toolkit

Let's take more action.

1

**PERSUADE
YOUR MP**

2

**BECOME A
PLASTIC
CLEVER
SCHOOL**

3

**TAKE
PERSONAL
ACTION**