

An illustration of a blue ocean filled with various pieces of plastic waste. A large white plastic bag is the central focus, with other smaller pieces of trash like a red fragment, a green piece, and a white cap scattered around. The water is depicted with wavy lines, and the foreground shows a sandy beach with green grass and rocks. The title 'Plastic Pollution' is written in a large, white, bold font with a blue outline across the middle of the scene.

# Plastic Pollution

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# Pollution

Pollution is when chemicals, gases, smoke or other harmful materials are introduced to, and damage, the environment.

Pollution can be caused by many different things such as the burning of **fossil fuels**.

In recent times, there has been growing concern about the damage that plastic is doing to the environment.



## Glossary

**fossil fuels:** Coal, oil and gas used to power factories, cars and homes.



# Where Is Plastic Found?

Plastic is **versatile** and cheap to make, so it is used to make lots of things. It is quite easy to tell when some items are plastic, such as drinks bottles and shopping bags.

However, plastic can be found in some surprising places:

- Some shampoos, face washes and toothpaste have plastic in them.
- Clothes made from material like nylon, polyester and lycra come from plastic.
- The outside of golf and tennis balls are made from plastic.



## Glossary

**versatile:** Can be used in lots of different ways.

# Why Does Plastic Damage the Environment?

The main problem with plastic is that it takes an extremely long time to **decompose**. A plastic bottle can last for up to 500 years. That means that a bottle dropped in the ocean or put in a **landfill site** today could still be there in the year 2518!

Plastic has **toxins** in it that are harmful to wildlife.

## Glossary

**decompose:** Rot, decay, break down.

**landfill site:** Rubbish sites where refuse is buried underground.

**toxins:** Poisonous substances.





# Why Does Plastic Damage Oceans?

Sea creatures can get stuck in plastic bags or the rings that hold drinks cans together. This can cause suffocation, starvation (because they can't get to food), or means that they cannot escape predators.

Sea turtles sometimes confuse plastic bags with jellyfish and eat them. This damages their insides and they can die. Around 70% of dead sea turtles are found to have eaten plastic.

## Did You Know...?

- It is thought that by the year 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the seas.
- 99% of seabirds have eaten plastic.



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# Plastic Pollution in Other Countries

In groups, use books, iPads, laptops and any other available resources to research how another country deals with plastic pollution.

In your research, try to find answers to the following questions.

What country are you researching?

What is the flag?

What is the population?

Which is the closest ocean or sea?

Which famous people come from there?

How does plastic pollution affect the country?

Does the country have any famous landmarks?

How does the country deal with plastic pollution?

What other things could they put in place to help solve the issue of plastic pollution?

Which continent is it in?

How much plastic waste does it produce each year?

What is the capital city?

# Useful Websites

[www.earthday.org/](http://www.earthday.org/)

[www.plastic-pollution.org/](http://www.plastic-pollution.org/)

[www.natgeokids.com/](http://www.natgeokids.com/)

<https://plasticoceans.org/>





# Countries to Research

United States of America



Thailand



Australia



India



China



Spain



Canada



Indonesia



Vietnam



Philippines



Brazil



Germany





# Your Task

Once you have completed your research, record your findings in the booklet provided.

You will then present your research findings to the rest of your class. Use your research to create a poster explaining more about what you have learnt.







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