

An illustration of a blue ocean with various pieces of plastic waste floating on the surface. A large, crumpled white plastic bag is the central focus. Other items include a brown plastic bottle cap, a small white plastic cup, a piece of clear plastic, and a small white plastic bag. The ocean is bordered by green grassy banks on the left and right. The text 'Twinkl Green Week' is written in white with a black outline, and 'Plastic Pollution' is written in pink with a white outline, both centered over the ocean.

# Twinkl Green Week

## Plastic Pollution

twinkl



# 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.

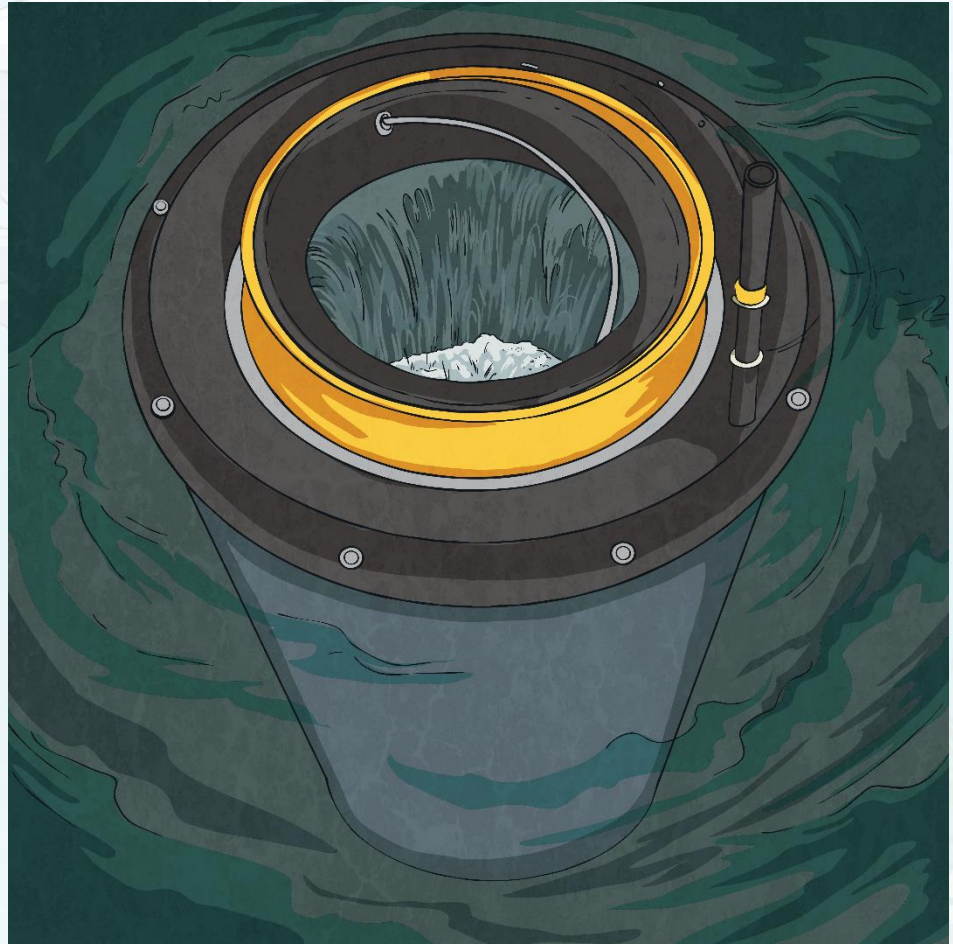


Photo courtesy of Stefan Leijon (@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence – attribution



# Sea Bin

A sea bin is a floating bin. It sucks water and rubbish from the surface of the water. The rubbish enters a catch bag and is trapped. The bin has a pump which puts the water back into the sea. At regular intervals, the bin is emptied and the rubbish can then be recycled.

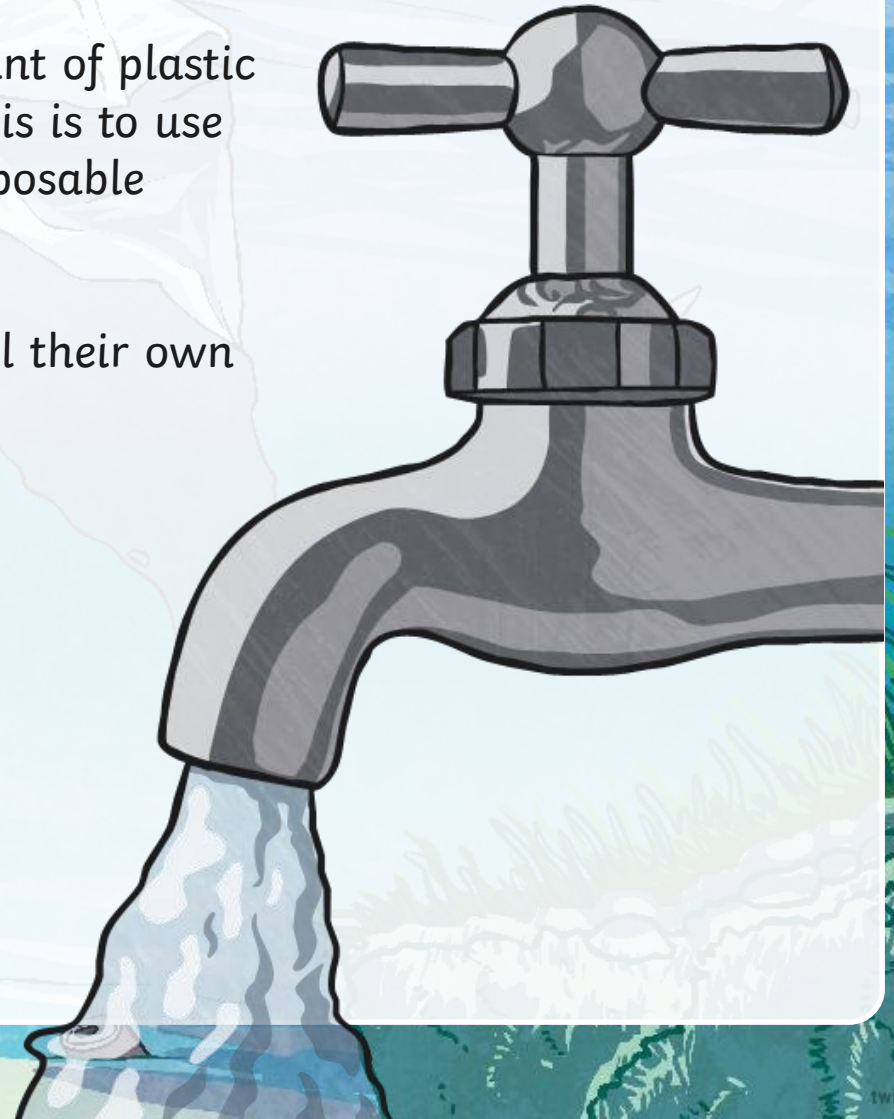




# Refillable Water Bottles

People are trying to reduce the amount of plastic that they use. One easy way to do this is to use refillable water bottles instead of disposable ones.

Some shops now allow people to refill their own water bottles for free.





# Reusable Mugs



Nowadays, it is very popular to buy hot drinks at coffee shops. At first sight, the cardboard cups might seem environmentally friendly. However, the lids are plastic and the inner layer of these cups is a type of plastic that is difficult to recycle. In the UK, 2.5 billion disposable coffee cups are thrown away each year. They end up in landfills or littering areas.



To help this problem, people are being encouraged to take their own reusable cups to coffee shops when they are going to be ordering a takeaway hot drink. Some coffee shops give customers a discount for using their own cup.



# Plastic Straw Ban



500 million plastic straws are used every single day. That is enough to fill a sports stadium nine times every year! As they are so small, they are difficult to recycle, so most straws end up as rubbish.



There is now a campaign to ban the use of plastic straws. Shops are being encouraged to provide recyclable, cardboard straws. Customers can also refuse a straw in their drink, or even bring their own reusable straws.



# Microbeads

Many toiletries such as toothpaste, shampoos and face scrubs once contained **microbeads**.

Microbeads are tiny pieces of plastic, almost too small to see. The microbeads were washed down drains and would end up in lakes, rivers and seas. These tiny pieces of plastic are toxic to creatures.

In January 2018, a ban on microbeads in these toiletries came into place in the UK. Some environmental campaigners claim that the ban doesn't go far enough, as microbeads are still allowed in other products.





# Plastic Bag Charge

Plastic bags damage the environment in many ways. Wildlife both in sea and on land can eat these bags, which damages them **internally**. Bags can clog drains and cause flooding. They also cause **visual pollution**.

Since October 2015, all large shops in England have to charge 5p for shopping bags. This is to encourage shoppers to reuse these bags, or use a 'bag for life', or bags made of jute or string. Shops in Wales and Scotland already charged for these bags.

## Glossary

**internally:** On the inside.

**visual pollution:** When an area doesn't look nice.





# You Investigate

In groups, you are going to choose one of these ideas and research it. Use your research to create a poster explaining more about what you have learnt. You will need to explain your research to the rest of the class.





# You Decide

Listen to people's presentations.

Which method of removing plastic from our oceans do you think is best?



Sea bin



Reusable mugs



Refillable water bottles



Straws ban



Plastic bag charge



Ban on microbeads



