PLASTIC PLANET

AGES 5-7

Curriculum resource pack for plastic pollution

WWT is one of the UK's leading providers of outdoor learning. We welcome over 50,000 learners per year to our Wetland Centres where we provide unique opportunities for learners of all ages and abilities to interact with wetland wildlife from the UK and across the world.

We are open all year round with sessions for every season. Whether you're looking for curriculum-linked learning or simply a fun day out, there really is something for everyone. To find out more about our school visits programme please visit **learningzone.wwt.org.uk.**

Why wetlands?

WWT works across the UK to save, restore and build wetlands for wildlife and people. Wetlands are one of the most important habitats on earth – storing huge amounts of CO_2, providing a natural way of stopping flooding and serving as a home for huge numbers of different creatures. Spending time in wetlands is also proven to improve mental health and wellbeing!

Using this resource pack

This resource pack contains activities designed to cover key curriculum content as well as outdoor activities designed to promote nature connection and a love of the natural world. This is accompanied by supporting resources that can be printed or used on screen with your pupils. At the end of the pack you will find a short quiz that can be used to reinforce and assess pupils' learning.

CURRICULUM LINKS

England

KS1: Science

- Find out about and describe the basic needs of animals, including humans, for survival (water, food and air)

Northern Ireland

KS1: The world around us

- The effect of people on the natural environment over time
- Positive change and how we have a responsibility to make an active contribution

Scotland

First: Sciences

- I have contributed to discussions of current scientific news items to help develop my awareness of science

First: Social studies

- I can consider ways of looking after my school or community and can encourage others to care for their environment

Curriculum continued...

Wales

Foundation phase: Science and Technology

- I can recognise that what I do, and the things I use, can have an impact on my environment and on living things

Foundation phase: Humanities

- I can describe how people and the natural world may impact on each other
- I am beginning to appreciate and care for living things and my own environment
- I can take care of resources and not waste them, and I am conscious of the importance of creating a sustainable future
- I can recognise that my actions and those of others impact upon communities and the environment

INDOOR ACTIVITIES

YOU WILL NEED:

Plastic Pollution Visual (one set per group)

Plastic Audit Sheet (optional homework activity: one per pupil)

Timeline Cards (one set per group)

(For all accompanying resources see the end of this pack)

Other relevant resources

Activities:

- Make a t-shirt shopping bag
- Make a plastic bottle bird feeder

School visits:

- We have a range of sessions focusing on plastic pollution. Visit our Learning Zone to find out more **learningzone.wwt.org.uk.**

NOTE: **Where you see a Q this indicates a question to ask your pupils.**

Activity 1: The causes of plastic pollution

- Hand out a 'Plastic Pollution Visual' to each group or display on your board.
- Look at picture one on the Plastic Pollution Visual.

Q **What do you notice that is worrying or unusual about this swan's nest?**

- The nest contains lots of plastic. Plastic is increasingly making its way into our wetlands and oceans.

Q **How do you think it gets there?**

- People drop litter on the floor and it is then blown into our rivers and streams.

Q **Which plastic items do you have in your house?**

- Make a class list.

Q **Which might cause problems for the environment?**

- You could set the Plastic Audit Sheet as homework and get pupils to report back which plastic items they had in their homes.

Activity 2: The effects of plastic pollution

- Look together at pictures 2 - 5 on the Plastic Pollution Visual.

Q **What problems do you think all of this plastic might cause for wildlife?**

- Plastic pollution causes two main problems for wildlife:

1. Creatures getting tangled up and stuck in plastic items.
2. Animals eating the plastic. Larger pieces of plastic may get stuck in their throats. Smaller bits are swallowed.

- Objects break down (or degrade) over time. One of the main problems with plastic is that it takes a long time to break down, meaning that it stays in the environment for years to come.
- Give each group a set of Timeline Cards.
- Ask each group to match each object card with the length of time they think it takes for that object to break down.
- Go over the correct answer (see below) together as a class.

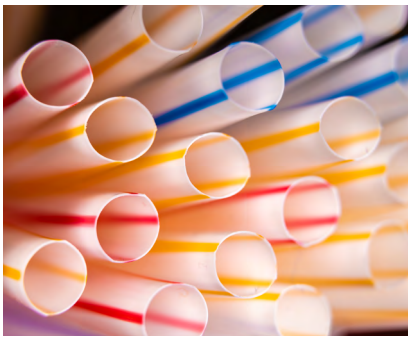
Activity 2: Answers

1 month

6 weeks

20 years

200 years



450 years

- This is why there is more and more plastic in the environment; we are adding it into the environment much more quickly than it can be broken down.

Activity 3: What we can do to help

- Look back at the list of plastic items you made earlier.
- Use these to get the class to start thinking about the following question:

Q **What could you and your family do to help?**

- Get each group to produce a list of things they could do to help.
- Get each group to report back and create a class list.
- This might include:
  - Using a refillable bottle instead of single use bottles
  - Using reusable bags in place of plastic bags
  - Using paper or metal straws in place of plastic ones
  - Using cotton buds with bamboo or cardboard stems
  - Using a re-usable coffee cup
  - Using plastic free wrapping paper
  - Using a bamboo toothbrush
  - Using reusable beeswax wraps in place of cling film
  - Use a bar of soap instead of liquid soap
  - Buying wooden toys instead of plastic ones
  - Buying loose fruit and veg and use a string bag
  - Buying milk in glass bottles
  - Buying bread in a paper bag
  - Buy toilet paper wrapped in paper
- You could set a homework task where pupils take home the class list and discuss with their families which they might realistically be able to do. They could then create a poster reminding them of the things they will do.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Activity 4: Litter pick

- Carry out a class litter pick. Use litter pickers if you have them. If not, make sure that you use gloves (preferably reusable) to avoid touching any potentially hazardous materials. Make sure children are supervised at all times.
- If your school is near a beach, you might want to carry out a nurdle hunt. Nurdles are small plastic pellets used to make nearly all plastic goods. They are often spilt into our rivers and oceans. See https://www.nurdlehunt.org.uk/ to find out how you can get involved. The same guidance as above applies to this activity.

Q **How did you feel doing your litter pick or nurdle hunt?**
Did it feel good knowing that you were helping nature? Imagine you're one of the animals that might have been harmed by some of the items you picked up. How would you feel knowing that people are doing something to help?

- Pupils could make sculptures for your outdoor areas from used plastic items.
- Why not put old plastic bottles to good use and make plastic bottle bird feeders. See our plastic bottle bird feeder 'make it' activity.

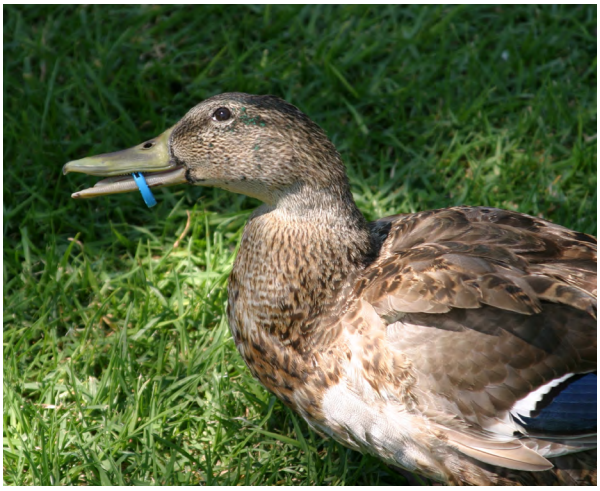
PLASTIC POLLUTION VISUAL

Picture 1

Picture 2

Picture 3

Picture 4



Picture 5

PLASTIC AUDIT

Q How many plastic items can you find in your house?

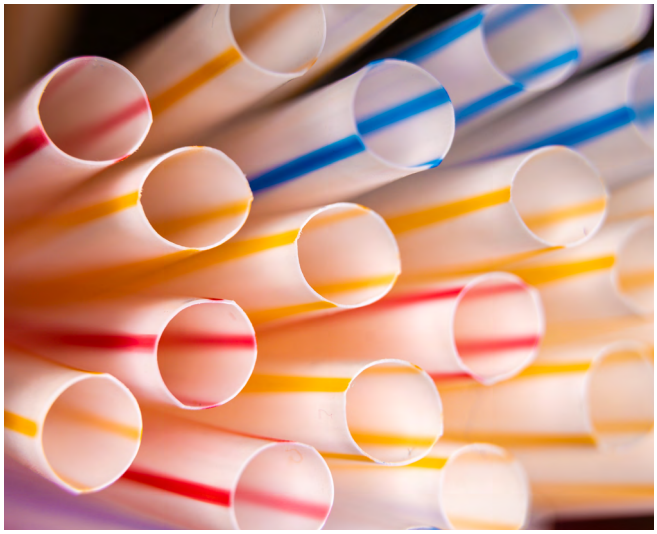
Plastic items in our house

TIMELINE CARDS

450 YEARS

200 YEARS

1 MONTH



20 YEARS

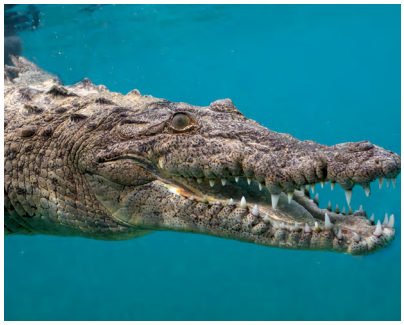
6 WEEKS

QUIZ: PLASTIC PLANET

Round 1: Picture round

Q These animals are all affected by plastic pollution. Can you name them?

1 .....



2 .....

3 .....

4 .....

5 .....

Round 2: The causes and effects of plastic pollution

Q Can you match each **Item** with **How long** it takes to break down or degrade?

Draw lines to match them up. (All timings are approximate).

6	**Plastic bag**	**1 month**
7	**Newspaper**	**200 years**
8	**Plastic bottle**	**20 years**
9	**Apple core**	**6 weeks**
10	**Plastic straw**	**450 years**

Round 3: Reducing plastic pollution

Q Five of the things below can help to reduce plastic pollution. Can you CIRCLE them?

Plant a tree	Use a refillable bottle instead of buying bottled drinks	Switch the lights off when you're not using them
Wrap your sandwiches in cling film	Buy wooden toys instead of plastic ones	Build a pond
Use reusable shopping bags	Buy lots of toys	Brush your teeth twice a day
Buy your milk in glass bottles	Look carefully before you cross the road	Watch the TV
Use paper straws	Walk to school	Turn the tap off whilst brushing your teeth

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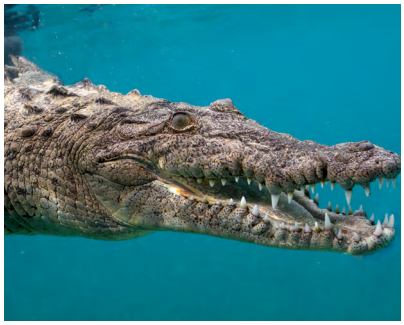
We'd love to find out how you got on!

ANSWERS: PLASTIC PLANET

Round 1: Picture round

Q These animals are all affected by plastic pollution. Can you name them?

1 Beaver



2 (Saltwater) Crocodile

3 (Great White) Shark

4 (Bottlenosed) Dolphin

5 (Smooth) Newt

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