

Plastics and the Environment



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Plastic Here

Have a look around.

What can you see that is made of plastic?

Jot down or draw as many things as you can.



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Click to show some examples

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Plastic There

Now think about the things you use at home.

How many of them are made of plastic?



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Click to show some examples

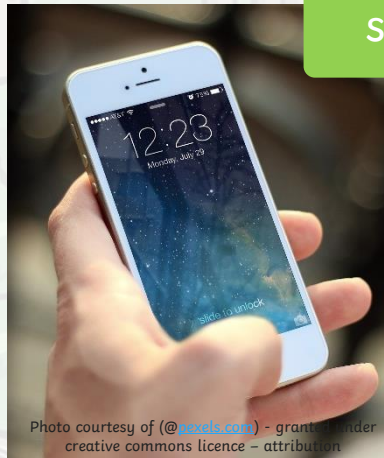


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Plastic Everywhere



Think about it

What do you think when you see these pictures?

How It All Began

Plastic was first created by a British inventor called Alexander Parkes, in 1855.

He used some natural materials in his plastic.

In 1907, a Belgian man named Leo Baekeland invented Bakelite. This plastic was completely man-made and was used to make televisions, trays, jewellery, furniture and even toys.

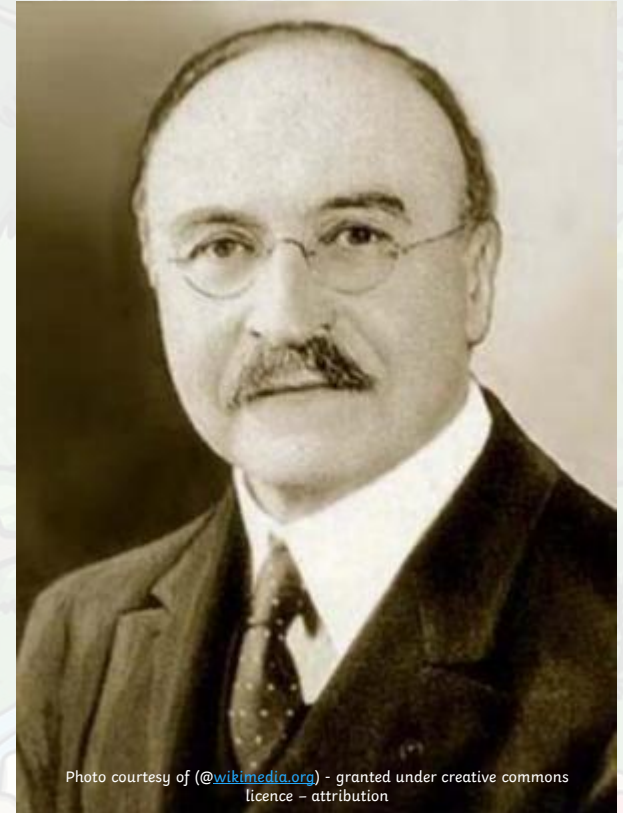


Photo courtesy of [@wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leo_Baekeland.jpg) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

Leo Baekeland

What Is Good about Plastic?

Plastic is so useful!



It keeps things airtight, which is great for keeping food fresh.



It keeps things watertight, so nothing leaks out.



It can be shaped and moulded into lots of different things from chairs to cars and pens to carpet tiles.



It can even look pretty!

Discuss it

Can you think of any other good things about plastic?

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Problems with Plastic

Plastic is harmful to all living things.

The way plastic is made releases harmful gases into the air.

Plastic lasts for a very long time. It can not [decompose](#) like vegetables, fruit or meat.

If it is burnt, it releases harmful gases into the air and causes air [pollution](#).

It is usually buried in huge [landfill sites](#). This means we don't see it, but it is still there and can last for many hundreds of years.



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The Biggest Problem with Plastic

The biggest problem with unwanted plastic is the [pollution](#) and damage it does to the environment.

Plastic breaks into tiny pieces which then get blown around by the wind and the rain.

They end up in our streams, rivers and the seas.

Plastic is [toxic](#) for the world's water and land, causing harm to the fish, animals and birds. Even glitter is toxic for living things.



Photo courtesy of (@[liskovam](#)) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

These [microbeads](#) are easily eaten by fish and other sea animals. It can make them very ill or even kill them.

They can make us ill if we eat the fish.

Discuss it!

Talk to the person beside you about your thoughts.

All Living Things



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Think about it

What do you think about these pictures?

All living things should be able to live free from pollution and harm from plastics. So, what can we do?

Make Your Choice

Look at these two pictures. Which do you think is the right thing to use, to help the environment?



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Instead of using lots of water bottles and throwing them away, buy a reusable water bottle. It is cheaper too!

Make Your Choice

Look at these two pictures. Which do you think is the right bag to use, to help the environment?



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Instead of using thin plastic carrier bags and throwing them away, buy a bag for life and keep using it. It's cheaper too!

Make Your Choice

Look at these two pictures. Which do you think is the right to do, to help the environment?



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Instead of throwing plastic away, recycle it in the proper places.

Make Your Choice

Look at these two pictures. Which do you think is the right to do, to help the environment?



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Instead of using glitter, which harms living creatures in land and sea, use colouring pencils.

You Can Make a Difference

We can all help to clean up the planet, by making small changes.

You can make a difference just by making different choices.



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Let's all work together to make the earth a healthier and cleaner place for everything.

Glossary

[air pollution](#)

chemicals or rubbish that have a poisonous or harmful effect to the air

[decompose](#)

to break down

[landfill sites](#)

a place for burying waste

[microbeads](#)

tiny pieces of plastic

[pollution](#)

chemicals or rubbish that have a poisonous or harmful effect

[toxic](#)

poisonous and harmful



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