

Geography Year 7 Tasks – Work Pack 4

The Effects of Plastic

Task 1: Read the below information and then answer the questions in full sentences.

- Single-use plastics are a human addiction that we must face head on. Plastic pollution is not only impacting our waters and marine life, but also the human food chain and our overall health.
- Plastic is accumulating in the world's oceans at a staggering rate. An estimated eight million tons of plastic – the equivalent of over 26,600 Boeing 747 planes – are swept into our seas and oceans every single year, mainly via rivers and coastal urban centres, through, for example, uncaptured waste, sewage systems, road run-off and littering.
- This pollution problem is so ubiquitous that plastic can be found throughout the marine environment – from coastlines and nearshore lagoons to remote ocean hotspots where plastics, caught up in ocean currents, are gathered up into huge 'garbage patches' that swirl on the ocean surface and many metres below. Plastics are even found in polar ice.
- Only twenty percent of the plastic pollution in our seas and oceans comes directly from illegal dumping at sea or commercial fishing activity. The majority enters the oceans from land-based sources of plastic debris and even from our very own homes.
- These plastics pose a huge danger to sea life, with over 500 marine species known to suffer from entanglement in and consumption of plastic debris, both of which often prove fatal.
- To make matters worse, the durable nature of plastic means that this material does not biodegrade in the ocean. It simply breaks up into smaller and smaller pieces, lingering in the marine environment for centuries.
- Plastic is of course, not the only pollutant of our oceans and seas; there are many others. And it's not only oceans and seas affected by plastic and other human detritus.
- Yes, multinationals and governments have to take action, but each individual must face up to their responsibility.
- This is our planet, it's beautiful, let us all, together and individually, protect it.

Questions

1. Name four things which plastic pollution is impacting.
2. Is plastic pollution diminishing?
3. Name three ways in which plastic enters the seas and oceans.
4. Name three places where plastic can be found.
5. What percentage of this plastic pollution comes from land-based sources and our own homes?
6. What do 500 marine species suffer from?
7. Is plastic biodegradable?
8. Is plastic the only pollutant of our seas and oceans?
9. Is it just governments and multinational companies that should address the issue of pollution?
10. What does the writer want people to do and why? To what extent do you agree?

Task 2: Complete a plastic diary for the week. Then write a report about how you, and others, can reduce their plastic intake.

MY PLASTIC DIARY

Your name

Over the next week, keep a 'plastic diary', recording how much single-use plastic you use.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Add up your totals here
Plastic bags								
Plastic bottles								
Plastic drinking straws								
Plastic food wrappers and packets								
Yoghurt pots and other food containers								

What other plastic items have you used this week?

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Task 3: Create a leaflet/poster about the effects of plastic pollution. An example poster is below. Make sure you include images and colours.

PLASTIC IS NOT FANTASTIC

WWF

It's long-lasting, cheap to produce and very useful, but plastic is causing huge damage to our incredible planet.

358 There are **358 items of litter** per square km on Britain's sea floor (on average).

99% Once it's in water, plastic breaks up into small particles called microplastics. By 2050 microplastics could be found in **99% of all seabird species**.

2050 By 2050, oceans could contain more plastic than fish.

TURTLE-LY EPIC! Rare Olive Ridley turtles hatched on a beach in Mumbai after volunteers spent **two years** clearing tonnes of plastic. Turtles hadn't been seen there for decades before people worked together to clean up the beach.

TUMMY ACHE Animals can mistake plastic rubbish for food, get tangled in packaging or old fishing lines, or choke on plastic-clogged water.

SAVE THE WHALES WWF is monitoring levels of pollutants, including plastics, in whales by taking skin and blubber samples from them.

400 It takes **400 years for a plastic water bottle to degrade**. That's why single-use plastic items (like plastic straws, bottles and bags) are particularly bad – sometimes they're only used for seconds, but they stick around for centuries.

A LOT OF BOTTLE Globally, **one million** plastic water bottles are used every minute and **91%** of them are not recycled.

MORE, MORE, MORE We are producing around **20 times more plastic** than we did 50 years ago and this could double again in the next 20 years.

REDUCE, REUSE Although many of us recycle single-use plastics, only 9% of the world's total is actually recycled. So it's better to use less in the first place, for example by using reusable water bottles. Around **33% of all plastics** find their way into fragile ecosystems, like rivers and oceans.

WE CAN FIGHT AGAINST PLASTIC!

Visit the WWF website for more engaging classroom resources and activities.
wwf.org.uk/schoolsandplastic

#FORYOURWORLD

Illustrations: Pujesh Joshi, Getty. Not to scale.