

Family Plastic Challenge



Type of activity: Thinking about the way we live and changing it

Who is it for? All the family

Links to the Sustainable Development Goals: 6 - Clean water and sanitation, 11 - Sustainable cities and communities, 12 - Responsible consumption and production, 14 - Life below water (find out more here <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>)

What do I need?

- Curiosity
- Open mindedness
- Willingness to change old habits
- Understanding that the way we live has an impact on the wider world

Introduction

Plastic waste is a major and existing threat to life on Earth, but particularly to creatures that live in our oceans, seas and rivers. Tiny bits of plastic have been found in fish in distant oceans, showing how far plastic has travelled, and many marine creatures get caught up in large pieces, ultimately killing them.

Young Cumbrian leader and campaigner, Amy Bray, set up the organisation Another Way to help challenge and support us to reduce our impact on the environment, including our seas. You can find out more about Another Way and what you can do here <https://www.another-way.org.uk/learn-what-can-we-do/>

So, this World Oceans Day, we're thinking about how we can change our own habits to reduce the amount of plastic, particularly single-use plastic (plastic that is only used once for a short while - we normally find this in packaging), that finds its way into our oceans once we've finished using it.

Here's how to...

1. Decide with your family which room of your house you want to use for the plastic challenge. It could be your bathroom or your kitchen, or maybe your bedroom.
2. In the room you have chosen, gather together the items into four piles:
 - a. Those things that come in single-use plastic.
 - b. Items that are plastic themselves (think about how long you use them for before you throw them away).
 - c. Other objects that come in paper wrapping.
 - d. Things that are made of a material that is an alternative to plastic.

3. When you have your four piles, take a look at how you can reduce piles a. and b. by finding/buying alternatives next time you need to replace them and work out how you can recycle these plastics.

Some examples are:

- i. Instead of using clingfilm, get yourself some beeswax wraps. They are reusable and because they are made of beeswax and fabric, use sustainable materials that will easily breakdown when they have been well used.
- ii. When your family buys fruit and vegetables, buy loose oranges, lemons, apples or tomatoes and put them in a reusable bag you have taken to the shop yourself.
- iii. Take your own containers to the butcher or meat counter and ask them to put what you want to buy in your containers, not their single-use packaging.
- iv. Ask your parents to look for bamboo toothbrushes in local shops or online - they are a great alternative to plastic ones. While you are looking for these, you might also find toothpaste in non-plastic containers (but if not, many supermarkets have recycle bins for toothpaste tubes)
- v. Change your shampoo and conditioner from the liquid type to solid bar type. There are many different options now available, they last longer than the liquid form so will save your family a few pence too!
- vi. In your bedroom, think about how your toys were packaged when you received them. Can you write to the toy maker to ask them to use less packaging?
- vii. Many toys are plastic and will last a very long time, so when you have grown out of them, why not pass them on to family or friends, or a charity shop?

4. Once you've done one room, think about having a go at another room.

What now?

Talk to your friends and family about how you've looked at the plastic you and your family use and how you have tried to reduce it. Challenge them to reduce theirs too.