Practical activity ideas

Note to the teacher – If your children need to review their learning, you can use these activities to support them.

Discussion activities

Debate – We should stop using plastic by 2050 Use opinions and facts to argue for or against banning plastic.

The resources needed for this activity are: paper and pens

Activity: Children decide whether they will argue for stopping the use of plastic by 2050 or argue against it. They will take time to prepare the arguments, with a focus on backing up their opinions with facts. Each side will take turns to present their points and respond to the opposing side. At the end of the debate, hold a class vote to discuss and reflect on the strongest arguments and what has been learnt.

Role-play activities

Plastic then and now Understand how the role of plastic has changed over time and how lifestyles have changed.

The resources needed for this activity are: pen and paper

Activity: Children are to interview someone in role as a person from 1950 and someone as a person from 2020. They will develop a range of questions to ask during the interview such as:

What would your life be like without plastic?
What kind of packaging does your food come in?
Do you consider plastic waste to be a problem?

Afterwards, reflect together on how lifestyles have changed and how our relationship with plastic has too.

Interactive activities

Plastic free day Consider which parts of our lives are more challenging without plastic.

The resources needed for this activity are: pen and paper/diary

Activity: Challenge children to go an entire day without using any plastic. Throughout the day, they should write in their diary whenever they notice a challenge, such as avoiding plastic packaging or finding alternatives to plastic items. Encourage them to describe how they overcame each challenge, what surprised them and if it made them think differently about plastic and plastic waste.

School grounds litter survey Conduct a guided fieldwork activity to learn about plastic litter on the school grounds.

The resources needed for this activity are: gloves, litter pickers or tongs, plastic bags or buckets, large plastic sheet or flattened cardboard box

Practical activity ideas

Activity: Challenge children to explore the school grounds and collect litter in a safe, supervised area. Once collected, tip the contents onto a plastic sheet or cardboard surface and sort them into categories by material (e.g. plastic, paper, cardboard). Encourage discussion about where the most litter was found, how much of it was plastic, where it may have come from and what can be done to reduce it.

Optional: Children could create a sketch map of the school grounds and highlight the litter hotspots.

The 'Plastic Monster' build

The resources needed for this activity are: gloves, large sheets of cardboard or a frame, duct tape/strong glue, scissors

Activity: Task the children to collect and use a week's worth of cleaned school plastic waste to construct a physical, life-sized 'Plastic Monster' or sculpture. This provides a dramatic, memorable and tangible visual representation of the school's plastic output.

Plastic 'Life Clock' activity

The resources needed for this activity are: very long string or measuring tape, cards or sticky notes (to label the items and years)

Activity: Children are to use the decomposition times (provided in the Lesson 1 presentation) for common items (e.g. plastic bottle: 450 years; straw: 200 years). They can create a timeline (string or tape) to physically map out and compare how long each item lasts. This makes the abstract concept of decomposition time concrete and shocking.