

Plastic-free party



Credit: Brian Yurasits

45 mins

Rainbows

About this activity

Plastic makes up most of the litter in the ocean. You can help by reducing the plastic you use. Plan a party that doesn't use any single-use plastic items and make cool plastic-free party decorations.

Outcomes:

- Spot hidden plastic in everyday items
- Learn about reusable, disposable and single-use plastic
- Find simple alternatives to common single-use plastic items
- Make a plastic-free party decoration

You will need:

- The following items (or images of them): paper, cardboard, cling film, image of a cigarette butt, plastic carrier bag, glitter, glossy wrapping paper, tin can, aluminium can, crisp packet, plastic drinks bottle, glass bottle, plastic milk carton, TetraPak carton, piece of food e.g. fruit, something wooden, something made of wool, single-use face mask
- [Plastic and Not plastic signs](#)
- [Litter Timeline cards](#)

For each person or group:

- [Our dirty ocean image](#)
- [Plastic party image](#)
- [Plastic-free Party Planner](#)
- Pens or pencils

To make party decorations:

- [Make your own party decoration instructions](#)
- Tissue paper in different colours
- Scissors
- String

Plastic-free party

Part 1

Plastic problems

1. As a group, look at the picture of [Our dirty ocean](#). Talk about what you can see.
2. Most of the litter in the ocean is plastic. What plastic items can you see in the picture? How do you feel when you look at this picture?

Part 2

Sort it out

We can help the plastic pollution problem by using less plastic. But can you spot plastic in everyday items?

1. Put all the items in a pile. Place the [Plastic sign](#) to one side of the pile, and the [Not plastic sign](#) to the other.
2. One at a time, ask each person to select an item and place it in the 'plastic' or 'not plastic' pile.
3. Once all the items have been sorted, reveal the answers. Were there any surprises? Look at the items in the 'plastic' pile. Which of the items can be reused? Which are single-use and designed to be only used once?

Part 3

Litter breakdown

How long does it take for litter to break down in the ocean?

1. Ask 6 people to make a timeline holding the [Litter Timeline cards](#).
2. Pick out the food, cardboard, crisp packet, plastic carrier bag, drinks can and plastic drinks bottle cards.
3. Give each item card to a different person and ask them to place it next to the time they think it will take for the item to break down.
4. Confirm the correct answers.
5. Ask the people with the plastic items to step forward. There's a twist – the time given is the time it takes for the item to break up. The plastic will never actually leave the planet as plastic lasts forever. It breaks up into smaller and smaller pieces but never goes away completely. Look at the plastic items. What does everyone think about this?

Part 4

Party planner

About 11 million tonnes of plastic ends up in the ocean each year. That's about a full rubbish truck every minute!

Parties and celebrations can be times when we use a lot of single-use plastic. Can you plan a plastic-free party?

1. Talk about all the plastic items you might see at a party. You could look at the [Plastic party image](#) for prompts.
2. Use the [Plastic-free party planner](#) to think about alternatives to single-use plastic.
3. How might making these choices for a party help the environment and the ocean?

Part 5

Make a decoration

Every party needs decorations. Follow the [instructions](#) to make cool plastic-free party decorations.

Plastic-free party answer sheet

Plastic or not

Not plastic:

- Paper
- Cardboard
- Glass bottle
- Tin can
- Aluminium can
- Piece of food e.g. fruit
- Item made of wood
- Item made of wool

Plastic:

- Cling film
- Cigarette butt
- Plastic carrier bag
- Glitter
- Glossy wrapping paper
- Crisp packet
- Plastic drink bottle
- Plastic milk carton
- TetraPak carton
- Single-use face mask
- Reusable plastic objects e.g. lunchbox, toy

Single-use plastic

- Cling film
- Cigarette butt
- Plastic carrier bag
- Glitter
- Glossy wrapping paper
- Crisp packet
- Plastic drink bottle
- Plastic milk carton
- Tetrapack carton
- Disposable face mask

Break down times of litter

- Food waste – a few months
- Cardboard – 2 to 5 years
- Crisp packet – 75 years
- Plastic carrier bag – 250 years
- Aluminium can – 450 years
- Plastic drinks bottle – 800 years

Times for plastic items are estimates, as plastic hasn't been around long enough to be certain.

What's the problem with plastic?

Plastic lasts forever. It does not biodegrade, but breaks up into smaller and smaller pieces.

Single-use plastic items, like carrier bags and bottles, are a particular problem as they're used once and thrown away, but last for hundreds of years in our environment.

11 million tonnes of plastic ends up in the ocean worldwide each year. That's about a full rubbish truck every minute.

Our dirty ocean

The ocean is full of rubbish and most of it is plastic. What can you see in this picture?



Litter left on the ground is washed down drains into rivers and eventually the sea. It can be blown into the sea by wind, or it escapes from factories using plastic to make products or packaging.

Plastic

Not Plastic

**A few
months**

**2 to 5
years**

75
years

250
years

450
years

800
years

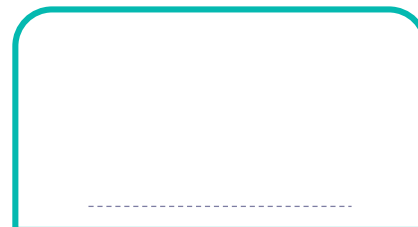
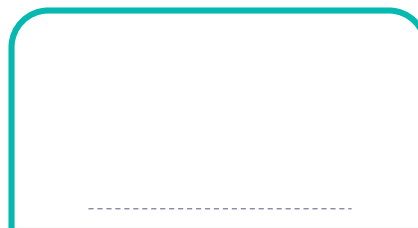
Plastic party



Image: Lidya Nada via Unsplash

Plastic-free party planner

Can you go plastic free?



Make your own party decoration

Use paper and string to make beautiful decorations for any party

You will need:

- Tissue paper
- String
- Scissors



Step 1

Take 20 sheets of tissue paper. Fold over 3cm of paper and press hard to make sharp creases.



Step 2

Turn the paper over. Make another fold of the same size. Keep doing this until all the paper is folded.



Step 3

Squeeze the paper together in the middle.



Step 4

Cut a piece of string about 15cm long and tie it around the middle of the paper.



Step 5

Round the ends of the paper with scissors.



Step 6

Gently pull each layer of tissue paper away.



Step 7

Continue to pull away the layers...



Step 8

Until you have a pom pom!