

An illustration of ocean pollution. The background is a blue ocean with various pieces of plastic waste floating on the surface, including a large white plastic bag, a red plastic fragment, and several smaller white and blue pieces. In the center, a map of the African continent is shown in a light blue color, with a large white plastic bag draped over it. The water is depicted with wavy lines, and there are green, rocky islands or reefs on the left and right sides. The overall scene conveys the impact of plastic pollution on the world's oceans.

Plastic Pollution

Plastic in the World's Oceans
Set to Triple over Next Decade

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Plastic in the World's Oceans Set to Triple over Next Decade



Photo: Plastic litter in the ocean

- [How does plastic pollution enter our oceans?](#)
- [What effect does plastic debris have on marine animals?](#)
- [What can we do to help reduce plastic pollution?](#)

The impact of plastic litter on our oceans is one of the biggest environmental issues facing the world today. Plastic is not [biodegradable](#), which means it can stay in the environment for up to 1000 years.

12 million tonnes of plastic enters our oceans each year, washing up on beaches all around our planet. Plastic [debris](#) kills many marine animals who choke on large pieces or swallow smaller pieces, which they mistake for food.

Organisations, such as Greenpeace and WWF, are working hard to stop plastic pollution. They are asking big [corporations](#) to reduce plastic packaging and governments to help by introducing [microbead](#) bans and charges for plastic carrier bags. Many nurseries and schools now no longer use glitter and some cafes and restaurants have stopped providing drinking straws.

By taking action now, we can help stop further damage to our planet's oceans and protect our precious marine environment.

Read the full article online [here](#).

Watch the devastating effects of plastic pollution.





How Does Plastic Pollution Enter Our Oceans?

ordinary
straight
various



Through the Drain

- Tiny pieces of plastic called microbeads, which are found in personal care products, are often washed down drains and end up in the world's oceans.
- Sanitary products, such as face wipes and cotton buds, are flushed **straight** down the toilet.



Ordinary Rubbish

- Litter dropped in the street is washed into rivers and then flows to the ocean.
- Trucks transporting rubbish to landfill often leak waste products.
- Holidaymakers often leave plastic debris on the beach.
- **Various** products are thrown from ships at sea.



Write a dictionary definition for the words: *debris*, *landfill*, *holidaymakers*.



Take it in turns with a partner to summarise the different ways in which plastic enters the ocean.





What Effect Does Plastic Debris Have on Marine Animals?

Plastic kills over 100,000 marine mammals each year **through** ingestion, suffocation, infection and starvation.



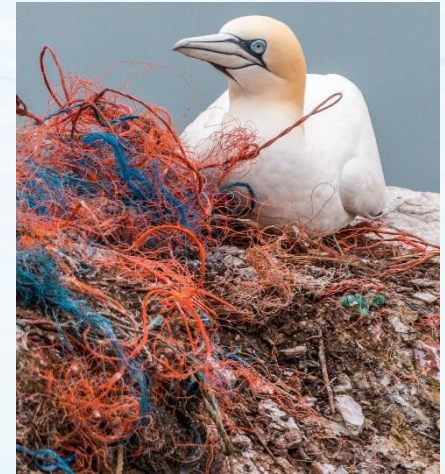
Plastic consumed by **different** species of fish spreads pollution across the food chain to larger fish and marine mammals. **Therefore**, it will eventually reach humans.

Animals who travel on the ocean surface, such as seabirds and turtles, **often** swallow floating plastic, which they mistake for food.

Tiny particles of plastic, called microbeads, are causing a devastating effect because they are too small to be caught by sewerage systems.



therefore through different often



Click here to explore the facts and figures of plastic pollution.



Take it in turns with a partner to summarise the key effects of plastic pollution on marine life.





What Can I Do to Reduce Plastic Pollution in the World's Oceans?

consider
question
position



There are many ways we can all make a difference in reducing plastic pollution in our oceans.

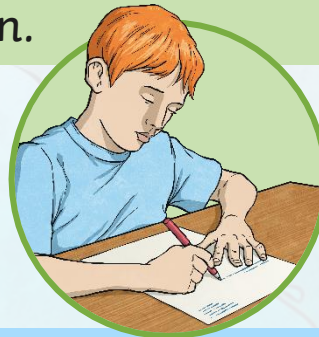
Carry a reusable bottle of water.

Do not buy plastic carrier bags – take a reusable bag instead.



Understand what the recycling symbols mean on packages and recycle where possible.

Consider writing to your local MP to question their current position on plastic pollution.



Persuade your friends and family to do the same.

Get involved in beach clean-ups.



Create a recycling questionnaire for each member of the class to complete at home.



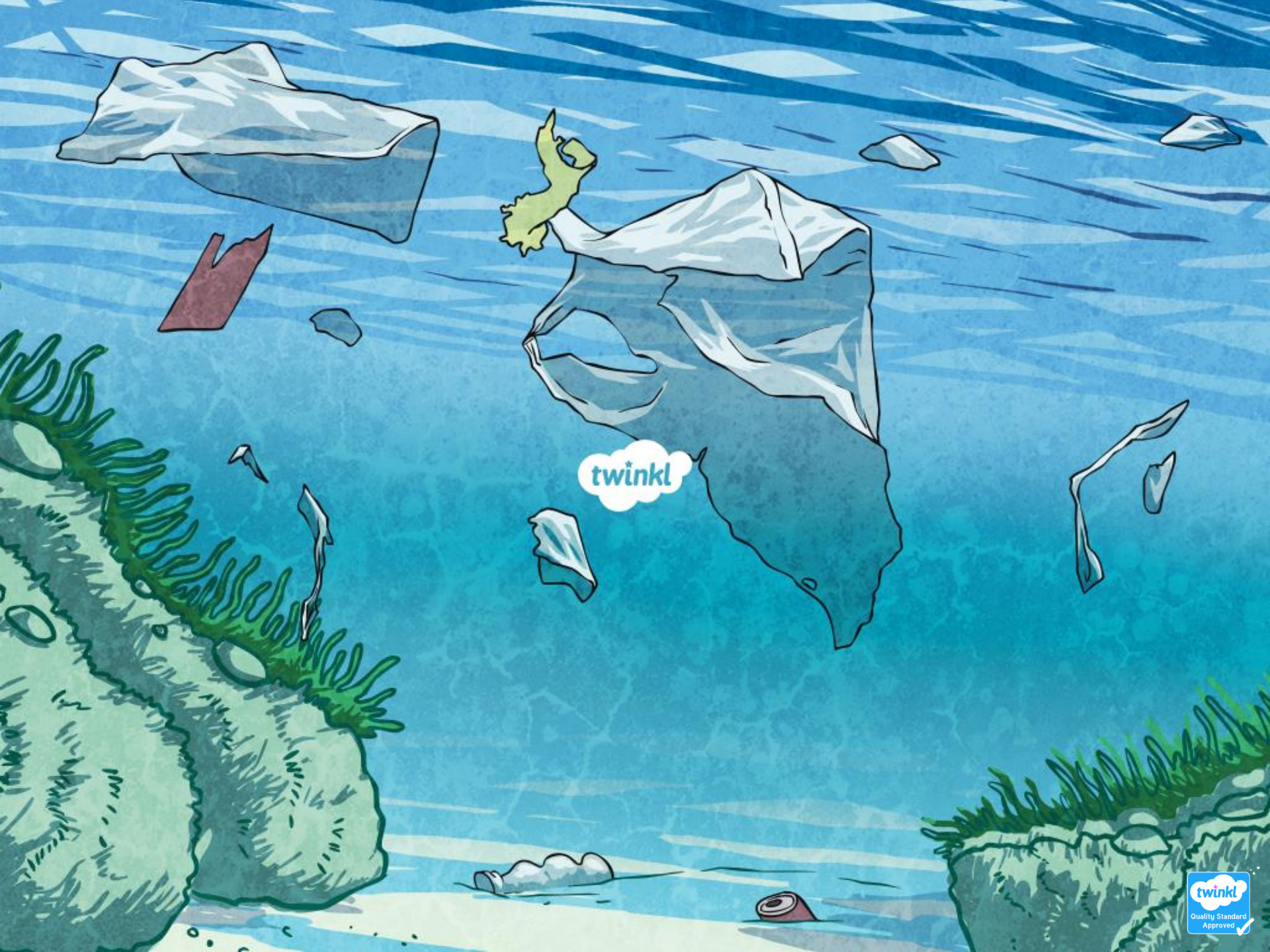
What if everyone in the world used reusable water bottles? Discuss.





Glossary

Word	Definition
biodegradable	a material which can be easily broken down and decomposed by bacteria
debris	scattered pieces of rubbish
microbeads	tiny pieces of plastic found in products such as face scrubs and toothpaste
corporations	a large company in business



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