**Plastic Facts**

**Key Stage Two**

**NC references**

**English: Spoken Language**

* listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
* ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
* use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
* articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
* give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings

**Learning objectives**

Use facts and figures to discuss and debate plastic pollution

Use facts as a basis for writing, discussion and as the starting point for projects or activities related to reducing plastic pollution

**Teaching ideas**

**Plastic facts (taken from** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-42264788>)

* 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic has been produced to date
* 6.3 billion tonnes of plastic waste has been generated (79% of total plastic produced)
* This amount of plastic waste could almost double to 12 billion tonnes by 2050
* Drinks bottles are one the most common types of plastic waste. Some 480 billion plastic bottles were sold globally in 2016 (1 million bottles per minute)
* Less than 50% of plastic bottles sold are collected for recycling
* Only 7% of bottles are recycled into new bottles
* Schemes to reduce plastic waste are planned, including deposit-return schemes and improvement of free drinking water supplies.
* Research suggests that about 10m tonnes of plastic currently ends up in the oceans each year.
* Plastic waste accumulates in areas of the ocean where winds create swirling circular currents, known as gyres, which suck in any floating debris. The best known of these gyres is in the North Pacific Ocean.
* This ocean pollution is mostly made up of plastic fishing netting and tiny fragments of plastic- known as microplastics- which become suspended in the water and are described as ‘plastic soup’.
* An operation to clean up the North Pacific gyre, known as ‘Ocean Cleanup’ is due to commence in 2018.
* Plastic is durable and hard-wearing but, as a result, takes many years to biodegrade.
* Wind, water and sunlight break plastics down into tiny fragments that pollute beaches, waterways, ocean and the food chain.

**Resources**

<http://clearplasticuk.net>

<http://beplasticclever.co.uk>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-42264788>

**Next steps**

* Create written or video presentations using the facts and figures about plastic pollution.
* Investigate and/or research how long different materials take to biodegrade.
* Write instructions for how to reduce plastic waste.
* Start by encouraging the whole school to collect 100 pieces of single-use plastic and then see how many you can collect by the end of the school year.
* Discuss with the School Council and School Leaders how the school could become more ‘Plastic Clever’. Extend this by speaking or writing to the local community such as cafes and shops.
* Link to *Kids Against Plastic* Quiz resources, writing ideas and compare how long different materials take to biodegrade.