

# Introducing the PLASTICS

To get started, let's clarify some of the types of plastic. Simply speaking, there are many types of plastic with a variety of different properties and uses, and to try to cover them all in a short book would be **practically impossible** – and make for a pretty boring read!

So, throughout this book, we'll mainly be concentrating on single-use plastics – plastic items that are used once and thrown away soon after.

They are sometimes called **convenience plastics**. You've probably heard of them – they are getting a lot of attention these days due to their negative impact on the environment.



In an ideal world, or even just a world free of plastic pollution, it would be tempting to say, "Ban all single-use plastic!"

But, unfortunately, it's not that simple. There are lots of complications that make it hard to get rid of plastic. How annoying!

To help you get your head around this, we're going to take you through **THREE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC**.

## Essential

Can you imagine walking into a hospital and seeing no plastic at all? No plastic-wrapped medical equipment, no plastic drip bags hooked up to patients, no single-use scrubs for surgery? Let's face it, you wouldn't want to go into hospital for an operation and see the doctors unwrapping paper bags of medical instruments.

**IN PLACES LIKE HOSPITALS, PLASTIC IS THE PERFECT MATERIAL TO USE!** It's necessary for sealing items that need to be completely clean for long periods of time, like hospital equipment. This is something that paper could never do. And this means that sometimes, plastic is a necessity – that is, until we find a suitable alternative (fingers crossed). Even plastic straws can fall into this category, as people with medical conditions sometimes need plastic straws to be able to eat. These are what we class as **essential plastics** – they're needed for their purpose and it's hard to use alternatives.

