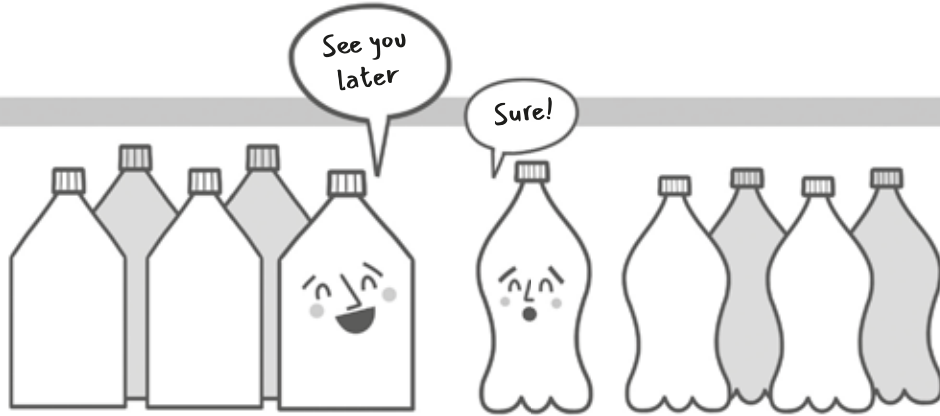




## Available

So now we've got the essentials covered, it's on to the avoidable plastics. These are the ones that we have problems with – **BECAUSE THEY ARE THE PROBLEM!** These types of plastic make up the single-use items we see so often, like plastic coffee cups and drinks bottles. And the reason that these items are BIG problems where plastic pollution is concerned is because we are pretty stupidly using a material that lasts almost forever, to make items that we use for just a few minutes before we throw them away.

**A PLASTIC BOTTLE LASTS FOR UP TO 450 YEARS** and even then, it only breaks down into tiny pieces called **microplastics**. These microplastics don't easily break down, which means that they stay around polluting the planet for thousands of years! That's a lot of problems that could be avoided pretty easily by just using reusable items instead.



## Hard-to-replace

Plastic is, in many ways, the perfect material, particularly when it comes to food packaging. We're not just talking about how lightweight and cheap it is, plastic also allows perishable foods – ones that go off, such as bread and vegetables – to be preserved for longer in airtight packaging.

This means that for supermarkets and companies that supply them with goods, plastic is by far the winner when deciding how to package their products. For example, cucumbers only last for a few days when sold loose, but when they're wrapped in plastic film, they can last for up to two weeks! It also means that most supermarkets see banning plastic altogether as a bad idea until a suitable alternative is found.

