



## Plastic: past, present, and future

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### PLOT

**Title:** Plastic: past, present, and future

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The world consumes over 300 million tonnes of plastic each year.

But when did we start using plastic? And why?

Where does all the plastic waste go?

Journey through the life cycle of plastic – how plastics are produced, the many uses of plastics throughout the last century, how our plastic use has spiralled out of control, and what we can do about it.

### \*THEMES

\* Environment

\* Plastic

\* Climate change

\* Sustainability

Technology

### DISCUSSION TOPICS

Just looking at the front cover, what do you think this book will be about?

Read the book together and discuss how it makes you feel.

It's a bit confusing that plastic can be good and bad. Can you make a list of some of the ways plastic has helped us? Then have a discussion about way that plastic use has spiralled out of control.

Can you identify five things made of plastic in your classroom?

Can you think of some alternatives for common plastic products?

Talk about the world's plastic problems with your friends and family — knowledge is power!

# Teaching Notes

**Sustainability** is a cross-curriculum priority in the Victorian F-12 guidelines, so you can use this book across all learning areas.

## ENGLISH

Reading  
Textual analysis

## MATHEMATICS

Geometry: recognise & name common 2-D & 3-D shapes

Graphs that document plastic usage over time

## SCIENCE

How is oil turned into plastic  
Microplastics and their effect on the planet  
Living things and their habitats

## ARTS

Posters about recycling  
Short film about the plastic toys travelling via ocean currents  
Collage or sculpture using recycled materials

## TECHNOLOGY

Research alternatives to plastic:  
Bioplastics  
Liquid wood  
Discuss Boyan Slat's ocean clean up inventions

## LANGUAGES

Introduction to books in translation  
Research the word for plastic in ten different languages

## ACTIVITIES

### *The Wayfaring Toys*

Tell the story of one of the plastic toys that spilled into the ocean that night in 1992. Chart its journey from the western Pacific Ocean to one of the many arrival points of the toys –Alaska, South America, Hawaii, Scotland, and even stuck in Arctic ice.

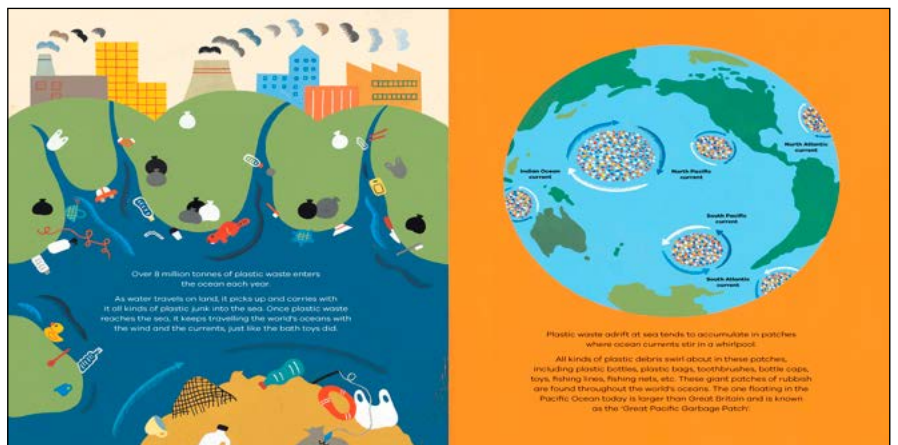
You could write it as a play or short story, or even make a video.



### *Where in the World?*

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is the largest accumulation of ocean plastic in the world. It is located between Hawaii and California.

Can you name the world's seven continents and five oceans? Locate them all using a globe, an atlas or Google Maps.



# Teaching Notes

## HEALTH AND PE

Ways plastic has improved healthcare through history

Relay race using a glass bottle versus plastic

## GEOGRAPHY

Map the route of the capsized bath toys, labelling continents and oceans

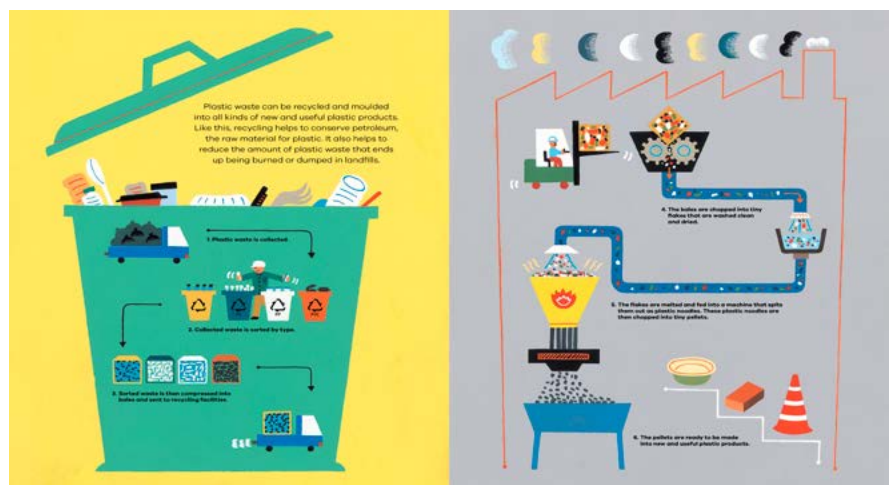
Research the top oil-producing countries

## Recycling Practice

Collect lots of different kinds household waste and mix it all together in a tub or laid out on the floor. Instead of using real food waste, use toy fruit and vegetables or cut out illustrations of food that the class has made.

Have the class sort the rubbish into separate tubs or bins that represent compost, recycling, and landfill.

*Extra activity:* you could even use this activity to spark a class discussion about ways to reuse waste instead of throwing it out or recycling it.



Visit our website for additional resources and ideas about what we can do to reduce global plastic waste:

[scribblekidsbooks.com/books/plastic/](https://scribblekidsbooks.com/books/plastic/)



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