

Surf Soup® PLASTIC SOUP
Trash Out, Surf On!
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READER ACTIVITY & DISCUSSION GUIDE

A Note for Teachers, Parents, and Librarians

Thank you for sharing Surf Soup® Plastic Soup: Trash Out, Surf On! with your readers.

This story is designed to introduce children to the idea of plastic pollution and environmental responsibility through curiosity, observation, and storytelling—rather than fear or blame. In the world of Surf Soup®, children are encouraged to notice patterns, ask questions, and think about how everyday choices ripple outward into the larger world.

Plastic Soup builds on themes introduced in Surf Soup® Pickle Soup, connecting kitchen traditions, creativity, and community with ocean awareness. The story uses gentle mystery and character-driven moments to help children understand where plastic comes from, how it travels, and why responsibility is shared by all of us.

The accompanying reader guide is intentionally flexible.

Activities and discussion questions can be used:

in classrooms or libraries

at home with families

in environmental or ocean-themed units

as part of social-emotional learning discussions

No prior knowledge of Surf Soup stories is required, but returning readers will enjoy familiar characters and continuity.

Most importantly, this guide invites children to feel empowered. Even small actions—like asking questions, reusing materials, or caring for shared spaces—can help change the recipe for our future.

We hope this story sparks meaningful conversations, creative thinking, and a deeper connection to the ocean we all share.

With gratitude,
Surf Soup®



Let's Talk About Plastic Soup

Discussion Questions

Why did Koa call the jars “plastic soup”?

What clues helped Koa figure out where the jars came from?

Did Plastic Man mean to pollute the ocean? Why or why not?

What does it mean to take responsibility instead of blaming?

What are some ways we can change the “recipe” in our own lives?



Activities

1. Spot the P

Have kids look around their home or classroom.

How many plastic items have logos or symbols?

Where do you think those items go after they're thrown away?

2. Ocean Recipe Remix

Draw a bowl of good ocean soup.

What ingredients belong in it? (Fish, waves, coral, friends!)

3. Reuse Challenge

Pick one plastic item and think of three new ways it could be reused.



Take Action

Bring a reusable bottle or bag

Help clean up a beach or park

Talk about where trash goes after the trash can



BACK MATTER from Surf Soup Book (Exclusive)

What Is Plastic Soup?

Plastic soup is what we call it when plastic ends up in the ocean and floats together like ingredients in a big, messy soup.

Plastic doesn't mean to get there—but once it does, it can travel far and stay for a very long time.

Where Does Plastic Come From?

Most plastic starts on land.

It comes from things we use every day—bottles, bags, jars, and wrappers.

When plastic is dropped, blown away, or washed down drains, it can end up in rivers and oceans.

Why Plastic Doesn't Belong in the Ocean

Plastic can:

Hurt sea animals

Get tangled in plants and coral

Break into tiny pieces that are hard to clean up

The ocean is home to many living things—and they don't need plastic in their soup.

What Can Kids Do?

Even small actions matter!

You can:

Use a reusable bottle or bag

Pick up trash when you see it

Ask where things go after you throw them away

Help grown-ups think of better ideas

Changing the recipe starts with noticing.

A Surf Soup Promise

In Surf Soup®, we believe:

Curiosity leads to caring

Caring leads to action

And together, we can help the ocean breathe easier
One Last Thought
Next time you're at the beach, take a look around.
What belongs in the ocean—and what doesn't?
The ocean is always listening.

WHAT IS PLASTIC SOUP?

Plastic soup is what happens when plastic ends up in the ocean
and floats together—
like ingredients in a soup that doesn't belong there.

 Bottles

 Bags


 Jars


 Lids

WHERE DOES PLASTIC COME FROM?

Most plastic starts on land.

 dropped

 blown by wind

 washed into drains

 carried by rivers

All roads can lead to the ocean.

WHY PLASTIC DOESN'T BELONG IN THE OCEAN

Plastic can:

 hurt sea animals


 damage coral and plants


 break into tiny pieces that are hard to clean

The ocean is a home—not a trash can.

 PLASTIC DOESN'T DISAPPEAR

Plastic can last a very long time.


 longer than a wave

 longer than a tide

 longer than we think

That's why what we use matters.

 HOW KIDS CAN CHANGE THE RECIPE

Small actions = BIG ripples 

- ✓ use reusable bottles & bags
- ✓ pick up trash when you see it
- ✓ ask “Where does this go next?”
- ✓ help adults think of better ideas

Every helper counts.

 THE SURF SOUP WAY

In Surf Soup[®], we believe:

 Notice

 Care

 Change

That's how we keep the ocean happy.

ONE LAST QUESTION

Next time you're at the beach...

What belongs in the ocean?

What doesn't?

The ocean is always listening.