

Plastic Waste

The amount of plastic waste is rising on a global level. This is a huge problem because plastic can take up to 1000 years to decompose. This sheet describes the reasons for plastic waste, the problems that it causes, and some ways to reduce it.

Waste

The amount of plastic waste we produce has increased.

Most items are sold in non-biodegradable plastic packaging.

The amount of household waste is growing.

Many people nowadays rely on fast food or pre-prepared meals.

People do not think about the consequences of dropping rubbish.

They assume that somebody is paid to clean the streets.

Effects

Plastic packaging does not break down easily.

Plastic waste makes our environment look dirty.

The waste ends up in landfill sites.

Waste is dumped into rivers and the ocean.

Sea life consume plastic and get ill.

The fish that we eat increasingly contain micro plastics.

Recycling and Other Solutions

We should recycle and reuse plastics.

There are collection banks for plastic.

Companies should be incentivised to use recycled plastic.

The government should ban some plastic items.

People should use metal or wooden straws instead of plastic ones.

Summary

The amount of plastic waste is rising on a global level. This is because most items are sold in non-biodegradable plastic packaging. For example, many people nowadays rely on pre-prepared foods which have plastic packaging. Furthermore, many people do not think about the consequences of dropping rubbish. They assume that somebody is paid to clean the streets, and therefore do not consider littering to be a problem.

Plastic waste damages the environment. Plastic does not break down easily and stays in the environment for hundreds of years. Litter ruins the way our towns and cities look and shows that people do not respect their communities. Furthermore, plastic is dumped into landfill sites which can poison the ground water, and into rivers and oceans. Sea life consume plastic and get ill. The fish that we eat increasingly contain micro plastics which are bad for our health.

There are several ways to reduce the amount of plastic waste. First, the government should require people to recycle their plastic waste. There are some collection banks for plastic already, but the number should be increased. Furthermore, companies should be incentivised to use recycled plastic in their products. Finally, the governments can ban some plastic items. A good example is plastic straws which are unnecessary and create a lot of waste. The government should mandate that cafes only provide reusable wooden or metal straws.

Practice Question

The amount of plastic waste is rising on a global level. What are the consequences of this trend? What can be done to reduce the global amount of plastic waste?