

There's no time to waste!

Become a plastic pioneer this summer. Reduce the amount you use, reuse plastic products and recycle your waste.

Take the plastic challenge

REDUCE

ALL AT SEA
More than eight million tonnes of plastic waste are dumped into the oceans every year.

Could you live without plastic? Skipper and ocean activist Emily Penn has a cool way to keep an eye on the amount you use.

Plastic is everywhere. It has been a part of our lives for more than 100 years. The first fully synthetic plastic – containing no natural products – was invented in 1907 by Leo Baekeland. Now, many other types of plastic, which go into millions of products, including buildings, clothes and food and drink packaging, dominate our lives.

The main issue with plastic is that most of it isn't biodegradable. This means that it can't be broken down naturally by microorganisms. It takes around 450 years just for a single plastic bottle to degrade. At the moment, there are around 6.3 billion tonnes of plastic waste on Earth and a lot of this has found its way into the ocean.

"You may be surprised by how much plastic you use!"



Emily Penn analyses a plastic sample.



1 For one week, save all the single-use plastic you use and then photograph the collection. If you are not able to keep a load of plastic rubbish, keep a list instead. This challenge works even better if you can get your whole family or class to do it too.



2 The next week, refuse any single-use plastic items wherever possible. This might mean drinking milk from glass bottles rather than plastic cartons, or even making your own crisps and storing them in paper bags. If you do have to use single-use plastic, keep it all until the end of the week and then take another photo.



3 Compare your two weeks of plastic use. Work out how you could do even better. Is there anything in your second week's plastic waste that you could swap for a reusable product or a product made from natural materials?



4 Talk about it! Tell lots of people about your challenge. It might inspire them to start their own challenge. Share your #PlasticChallenge pics via scienceandnature@dennis.co.uk or tag @theweekjunior on your PopJam channel.

Water-bottle sprinkler

REUSE

There's nothing better on a warm summer's day than getting soaked by a sprinkler. Don't have one? Don't worry, we have a solution.



1 Place your water bottle on the table. Using a craft knife or scissors, make three vertical rows of three slits in the side of the bottle. Make sure you get an adult to help you with this part.

What you need

- Empty two-litre plastic bottle
- Garden hose
- Duct tape
- Scissors or craft knife

WARNING!
Always ask an adult to help when you are using a craft knife.



2 Insert the end of a garden hose into the bottle and wrap duct tape tightly around the top of the bottle to hold the hose in place. Make sure no water can escape.



3 Place the bottle in the middle of the garden then turn on the garden hose and watch as your water bottle sprinkler springs to life. You can run through it to cool down or use it to water plants.

TOO MANY BOTTLES
About 20,000 plastic bottles are sold worldwide every second.

Make a bag for life

RECYCLE

Turn a baggy old T-shirt into a bag for life.

What you need

- Old T-shirt
- Sharp scissors
- Bowl
- Pen
- Ruler



DID YOU KNOW?

Manufacturing a paper bag takes four times as much water as making a plastic bag.



1 Take an old T-shirt and cut off the sleeves. Use a bowl to trace around the neckline area and cut out an oval shape at the top.



2 Turn the T-shirt inside out and draw a line about 10 centimetres up from the bottom. Make tassels by cutting slits from the bottom of the shirt to the line.



3 Tie opposite pairs of tassels together. Then tie the neighbouring tassels to avoid gaps. Turn your T-shirt back the right way and you have your eco-bag.