

LESSON: PLASTIC CYCLE

Instructors Guide



WHAT THIS LESSON COVERS

Understanding the plastic cycle (i.e., how plastic is made, how it is used, and where it goes when we throw it “away”) is important to better understand how we have reached unsustainable levels of plastic production and plastic pollution. This lesson will introduce students to what the true definition of “plastic” is, teach them about the plastic lifecycle, and introduce the concept of a circular economy.

Students will also be shown local tools available to help correctly identify how to dispose of common waste items and then taken through an activity to identify sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics.

ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THIS LESSON

Activity 1: [The Diversity of Plastic](#)

25 minutes

Activity 2: [A Closer Look at Plastic](#)

40 minutes

Activity 3: [Match the Sustainable Alternative](#)

15 minutes

ACTIVITY 1

Online resources:

- [Worksheet](#)
- [Sign Templates](#)
- [Bonus Experiment](#)

Materials from home:

- Scrap paper (if not printing online resources)
- Timer or stopwatch
- Assortment of at least 5 plastic products
- Single-use paper cup
- Large clear bowl filled with water

ACTIVITY 2

Online resources:

- [Worksheet](#)
- Supplementary Sheets
 - [Part 1](#)
 - [Part 2](#)
 - [Part 3](#)
- [City of Toronto waste poster](#)
- Waste Wizard ([app](#) or [website](#))
- AsapSCIENCE clip ([YouTube](#))

Materials from home:

- Assortment of at least 10 trash items
- 3 small bins or tubs

ACTIVITY 3

Online resources:

- [Worksheet](#)
- [Plastic Info Cards](#)

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- [Environment and Climate Change Canada Draft Science Assessment on Plastic Pollution](#)
- [City of Toronto Waste Reduction Tips](#)
- Book: [The Plastic Problem](#) by Rachel Salt