

Lesson: Unfantastic plastic

Phase of learning

Years 3 - 4, Years 5 - 6, Years 7 - 8, Years 9 - 10

WA Curriculum

K-10 English, K-10 Mathematics, K-10 Science

Region

North Coast, Gascoyne Coast, West Coast, South Coast, Indian Ocean Territories

Summary

Students will investigate the use of plastics in society and the potential impact that this material has on the marine environment.

Outcomes

- Students will identify marine debris as a type of pollution.
- Students will identify possible sources of marine debris.
- Students will investigate the impacts of marine debris on marine wildlife.

Duration

1 hour

Preparation

Background information about marine debris and a vocabulary list can be found in the Fact Sheet: [Marine Debris](#).

Showing the effects of marine debris on animals may be distressing for some students. Familiarise yourself with the associated Presentation for this lesson and make a judgement as to whether you think it is appropriate for your students.

Steps

1. Brainstorm waste products, particularly plastic, created in everyday life. Use student's lunchbox items as an example.
2. Blackboard the responses and have students make notes or their own brainstorms.
3. Ask students to discuss the problems with waste and describe how they feel when they see

- rubbish or litter at school, in the community and in the natural environment.
4. Discuss the term biodegradable.
 5. Inform students that a report by Cleanup Australia in 2011 named Western Australia's beaches the most polluted in Australia – <http://www.news.com.au/travel/australia/western-australias-beaches-most-polluted-in-australia/story-e6frfq89-1226006342654>. Ask students how this makes them feel. Do they think the results are the same today?
 6. View the Presentation: [Harmful Marine Debris](#), observing sources of marine debris and its direct effects on marine life.
 7. Discuss the content of the pictures and direct impacts on marine life.

Related resources

[Presentation: Harmful Marine Debris](#)

[Lesson: Recycle challenge](#)

[Lesson: Bag it!](#)

[Lesson: Action plan](#)

[Fact Sheet: Marine Debris](#)

Keywords

biodegradable, flotsam, jetsam, litter, marine debris, plastic, pollution, polymer, recycle, reuse, rubbish, waste