

Workshop 3 - Plastic waste

Activity title or topic	How to deal with plastic waste in coastal environments	Duration	1 hour
Age	7 - 12 years old	Number of participants	Up to 25 students
Location	Part 1-2-3 in the class Part 4 in the class, gym or outdoors	Corresponding pages from the comic book	9 and 10
Presentation content	Theory on the origin and impact of microplastics, followed by inspiring initiatives in the field. The event concludes with a waste sorting game.	Materials required	Visual support available in the practical guide Print pdf of objects to make game cards Waste sorting answer sheet

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Part 1 : The causes and impacts of waste and microplastics

Duration ≈ 10 min

Sources : How does trash end up in the environment? E.g.: poor sorting, travel by wind and runoff. This part will be important later on, so that students understand how they can influence the situation.

Consequences : What do certain animals eat? e.g.: mackerel eat zooplankton, but zooplankton look a lot like microplastics. It can sometimes make a mistake and eat microplastics (refer to page 6 of the comic book). Explain what microplastics do, referring to page 6 of the comic book. Be careful to keep the facts simple (not too many details) so not to alarm students too much. Explain that it's with this information that we can better target our efforts to solve the problem.

Part 2 : Inspiring initiatives

Duration ≈ 5 min

Show videos or images of a few projects to help clean up oceans and coastal environments. E.g.: Défi 1000 tonnes, Organisation bleue, The Ocean Cleanup, Projet HoulaOne (Université de Sherbrooke).

These projects are very important and impressive, but students need to be reminded that prevention is better than cure. By introducing Part 3 of the workshop with this element, students will understand that they too have an important role to play in protecting coastal environments (you don't have to be an engineer to help reduce waste in the water).

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Part 3 : Solutions for individuals

Duration ≈ 5 min

What can you do at home to reduce waste in the environment?

Explain that by reducing our waste, less of it will end up in the sea. You can even introduce the 3Rs concept by quickly explaining that it's better to reuse than to recycle or throw away.

Talk about good behavior at the beach: Challenge us to bring a bag to put our trash in during a day at the beach, or even to pick up a few pieces of trash, organize a trash-picking activity with family or friends.

Part 4 : Clean-up activity

Duration ≈ 40 min

Outdoor version: the class will be divided into 3 or 4 teams. Each team will have a set of trash and four bins to separate them. Teams must take the trash to the right bins. There's a chance to make them run by scattering the bins around the schoolyard, for example.

Indoor version : Another option would be to stick the 4 bin pictures on the board and divide the group in two. Each group can come up with a team name. You can show a trash/team in turn, giving them time to discuss, and then a volunteer stands up to stick the image in the right place. This way, the whole group can make corrections as they go along.

The team that sorts their waste best wins, and extra points may be awarded for proposing a way to reuse the object instead of throwing it away.

An answer sheet is also available. Please note that the data is based on the municipality of Carleton-sur-Mer. Some waste may end up in other destinations, depending on the municipality. Consult Recyc-Québec's Ça va où? application ([Ça va où ce truc? - RECYC-QUÉBEC \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)) to find the data for your municipality.

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The aim of the activity is to explore the lifespan of waste and think about how to dispose of it correctly so that it doesn't end up in the environment. Ask for zero-waste options to replace the items in the garbage cans and avoid consuming more plastic.

Conclusion

Duration \approx 5 min

You are now experts in coastal waste management! You have a mission to help reduce its impact. Ask them what they liked best, what they'll remember, what information surprised them, and so on. Invite students to share their new knowledge with family and friends. You can also point out that the best way to make others aware of environmental issues is often to "lead by example" by adopting the right behaviours ourselves. In this way, we encourage others around us to do the same.