

DROWNING IN PLASTIC



THE DEEP
For conservation, not profit



KS4+



• Geography
• Citizenship



40 mins

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS SDG
14&15

OVERVIEW

This workshop looks at why we use plastic and its structure. Then we move onto the effect plastic has on oceanic life.

Finally, we explore how we are now drinking plastic microbeads and the need to reduce, reuse and recycle.

OBJECTIVES

- Understand why plastic is such a widely used material.
- Understand why plastic builds up in certain places in the oceans.
- Understand how plastic enters the oceanic food web and how it is already being ingested by us.
- Investigate recycling plastics, those that can and those that can't.

LEARNING SESSION CONTENT

This workshop begins by discussing the structure of plastic, showing how tough and resilient everyday plastic items are. Then explaining how the long polymer chains do not break up but a piece of plastic just splits into smaller and smaller tough bits.

The currents in the oceans collect plastic waste in certain areas, gyres, in the form of plastic soup. With pictures to help, the effects of plastic on animals in the sea is discussed.

If time permits, an investigation into microplastics will take place.

Then the recycling of plastic is explored, using examples of everyday plastic that can be recycled, can't be recycled and is biodegradable. The recycling symbols and numbers are explained.

Finally, some current ideas about reducing our usage of plastic and cleaning up our oceans are given including different ways The Deep is trying to reduce plastic use.