

Slide 1

St. Clare's Primary School
Global Citizenship Marine Environment Theme – Plastic Islands
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**Global Citizenship
Marine Environment**

Plastic Islands

Good morning everyone, my name is _____ and I'd like to introduce our presentation today. We are from St Clare's Primary school in Harold's Cross and we have been busy doing our project on marine litter and especially on Plastic Islands. We will be talking to you about our approach to the project. Luke and Dylan will be discussing what is meant by plastic islands. Cal and Aisling are going to tell you about some of the problems we looked at regarding plastic packaging. Finally, Tom will be talking to you about our new initiative: The Plastic Challenge. We hope you enjoy our presentation. I will now hand you over to Luke & Dylan who will talk to you about Plastic Islands.



Thank you Isabel. My name is _____ and I am here to tell you about plastic islands. Some of you might be wondering what is a plastic island? We first thought that a plastic island was something solid that you could walk on like a boat or a real island but in reality it is much different.

What is a plastic island?



- Plastic islands are like a soup or stew of plastic
- The litter is swept out to sea and is gathered together in currents called gyres.



A plastic island is actually like a soup or stew of plastic that is found in the sea. It is made up of all of the plastic waste that finds its way into the ocean. The ocean tides then sweep it out to sea where it becomes trapped in currents called gyres. A gyre is actually a circular current that is formed by the weather and tides and it traps the plastic in a particular area.

Here you can see some pictures of what the plastic in a gyre might look like. It is not solid like an island but it is spread out with a lot of the plastic floating below the water surface so it can't be seen from above.

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch



- Made up of millions of pieces of waste swirling around.
- Estimated to be over 18 times the size of Ireland
- Also known as the 7th Continent



The image shows a map of the Pacific Ocean with a large, irregularly shaped area in the center labeled 'GREAT PACIFIC GARBAGE PATCH'. Blue arrows indicate a clockwise circular flow of water around this area, representing the gyre that traps the waste. The background of the slide features green leaves on the left side.

The largest plastic island has been called the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. It is so big that some people have called it the 7th Continent as it is over 18 times the size of Ireland. Some people believe that it is even larger than the USA! You can see in this picture that the plastic island is huge and it is spread out over a massive area.

Litter and Marine Life



- 80% of marine litter comes from land based activities
- Microplastics leach out harmful pollutants and can be eaten by marine life
- 1 Million sea birds & 100,000 marine animals die each year because of marine litter.



You might be wondering how this plastic gets there? Well, did you know that 80% of marine litter comes from land based activities like: littering in towns and cities, overflowing litter bins, microbeads from cosmetics that are washed down the drain or toilet or from lost shipping containers.

The problem is that the plastic in the ocean never actually bio degrades. Over a long time it is worn down into smaller and smaller pieces called Microplastics. These tiny pieces can then be eaten by fish and other marine life and can be very harmful. Scientists believe that one million sea birds and a hundred thousand marine mammals die each year because of marine litter. This is something that we think is terrible and should be stopped.

Now I will hand you over to _____ and they will talk about some of the problems that we discovered in our investigation.

Packaging, packaging everywhere...



- 70% of Marine Litter is made of plastic
- Plastic production has increased worldwide from 1.5 metric tonnes in 1950 to 230 metric tonnes in 2009!
- Enough plastic is thrown away each year to wrap the earth four times!



Thank you _____. In our class we were shocked when we found out that 70% of marine litter is made of plastic so we tried to look at the different causes for this. We discussed where most of the plastic comes from and we thought that one of the biggest problems is the amount of plastic packaging on everything we buy.

The production of plastic world-wide has increased from 1.5 metric tons in 1950 to 230 metric tons in 2009 and the problem is getting worse every year.

In every supermarket and shop you go into, almost everything is covered in plastic. Fresh fruit and vegetables, drinks, yoghurts, milk, cheese. Many pieces of fruit and vegetables are in a plastic tray that is then covered by 1 or 2 pieces of plastic film that are often not recyclable. In the past it may have been possible to buy many more loose fruit and vegetables but now supermarkets are selling so many products that are covered in plastic because they think it is more convenient.

However, we think that if people knew what a problem this was for the environment, they would think twice about buying so much plastic. People need to be given more of a choice by supermarkets to shop more responsibly and buy less plastic.



So, to help raise awareness about this problem, we decided to investigate how much plastic waste our school community was creating. We asked all of the classes in the school to bring in their plastic waste each day for a week. Then, our class collected and bagged the rubbish each day and stored it so that we could show the school how much plastic we had used.

Here is a picture of our class hard at work and a photo of our plastic mountain!

The results were amazing! In just one week, our school community had created over 55kg of plastic waste alone – that is over 60 large bin bags of plastic waste.

The Truth about Plastic Waste



- In just one year, our school community could accumulate over 3000kg of plastic waste.
- Equivalent to the weight of an Asian Elephant!
- In Dublin, we calculated that nearly 4000 metric tonnes of waste could be created
- That is equivalent to 1,333 elephants!



We were totally shocked about the amount of plastic waste that our school community had created in a single week and we decided to see how much that would work out at over the course of a full year.

We calculated that in the course of one year, our school community alone would accumulate nearly 3000kg of plastic waste. That is the same weight as two and a half elephants!!

If we calculated this across the whole population of Dublin – that would be over 3,755,180kg of waste.

That is nearly the same weight as 150 elephants!

Now I will hand you over to _____ who is going to tell you about our plan to get people to change their ways – the plastic challenge!

The Plastic Challenge

- We brainstormed what you could buy in a supermarket without plastic packaging.. Very little!
- We started our own campaign and sent complaint emails to each of these supermarkets.

Logos: TESCO (Every little helps), DUNNES STORES, SPAR, SuperValu (Real Food, Real People), ALDI, LIDL, Green Schools (TT for Tides)

Thank you Aisling, we were really concerned about the results of our plastic collection and shocked at the effects of all of this plastic waste on the Marine Environment so we decided that something had to be done. We looked at what we could buy in a supermarket without single-use plastic well; very little.

The first thing we decided to do was write letters/emails to the main supermarket chains and shops (i.e Aldi, Lidl, Tesco, Supervalu, Dunnes Stores and Spar etc.) to complain about the amount of single use plastic packaging and to ask what plans they had to reduce it. We also wrote to the Food dudes, (the food dudes are a movement that bring in daily fruit and veg) about the same problem.

We discussed in class some different actions that we could take part in to encourage people to use less plastic and that is when we came up with the plastic challenge. We came up with the idea of the plastic challenge because we remembered the ALS ice bucket challenge in 2014 and decided that we should make a plastic challenge as a fun way of raising awareness about over packaged products and changing peoples behaviour!

To try to create publicity in school, we came up with our own poster campaign too based around the hashtag #plasticchallenge. Show some photos of posters.

So you're probably thinking what are the rules of the plastic challenge?

Not buying any single-use plastic for 1 week
or

Not buying anything containing any of the top 4 (Plastic Bottles, Sweet Wrappers, Lids, Bags). These were the top plastic items found in a 2014 big beach clean in Ireland.

We hope that people will tweet pictures of their plastic free shops using the hashtag #plasticchallenge as a way of raising awareness. People can compete with each other to see how much less plastic they are buying.

We know from our research that this is a difficult task but we think that by taking part in this challenge, people will start to realise just how dependent they are on plastic. We hope that this will help people to change their habits and put pressure on the supermarkets to give people more options when they go shopping.

The Future!

This is our vision of the future.

A packaging free supermarket: In Berlin there is a packaging free supermarket which we thought was awesome how you don't have to use any plastic and still have a normal shop! We also read an article about a family who bought no single-use plastic for a month. They found it very difficult and they had to completely change their shopping habits.



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Save Our Seas
#PlasticChallenge

So what is the #PlasticChallenge?

- No single use plastic purchased for one week
- No purchase of anything containing the Top 4: (Plastic bottles, bags, sweet wrappers or plastic lids)

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**The Future:
A plastic free shop!**



- This is our vision of the future for supermarket shopping in Ireland – a packaging-free supermarket.
- In Berlin, at Original Unverpackt, you can buy unpackaged, zero waste products
- Bulk bins are used for cereals and dry goods so you can buy as much or as little as you need
- We need to change our shopping habits to change the world!



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Thank you Tom.

To finish our presentation, I would like to remind you all of the importance of reducing the amount of plastic waste that we are creating.

Unless we all act now, our seas and marine animals will be destroyed.

It is up to all of us as consumers to demand that our shops give us more options when shopping so that we can reduce our waste. If we refuse to buy plastic products then the shops and suppliers will be forced to act.

Please join all of us at St. Clares in taking part in the plastic challenge and we can make a difference..

Thank you all for listening to our presentation. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we enjoyed learning about it!