

## PLASTICS DEBATE -

EDUCATORS GUIDE

## Who is more responsible for all of this plastic packaging?

Perfect for older KS2 pupils and KS3. Why not get your pupils discussing plastics and different viewpoints?

### Curriculum links

**Literacy KS 3** - explain and discuss their understanding of what they have read, including through formal presentations and debates

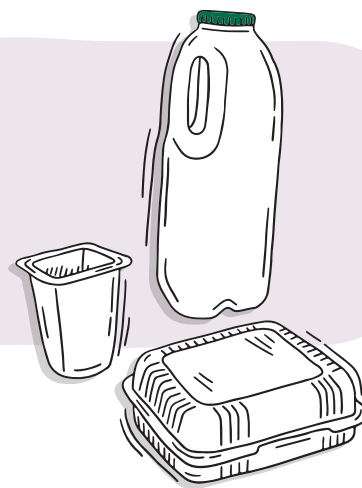
- provide reasoned justifications for their views giving short speeches and presentations,
- participating in formal debates and structured discussions

**Citizenship KS 2** - participate in democratic structures and processes and take responsibility (for example, for planning and looking after the school environment).

### Resources

Prompt Cards    Page 3 of this resource

Examples of plastic packaging displayed on a table



### Round one - Information is essential! Build a background of knowledge.

Start off by examining and discussing some examples of the packaging your pupils can see on the table. Discuss what the pupils already know about plastic and where they could find out more. Suggestions could include websites from companies such as supermarkets, organisations such as Keep Britain Tidy or Surfers against Sewage and of course Chester Zoo! They will need to take notes at this point to support their arguments later on.

### Round Two - How does it relate to us?

In small groups ask pupils to make a list of when they have last used plastic in the last 48 hours, e.g. food packaging, drinks bottles, hair care and cosmetics packaging. Next, decide if these plastics were single use or reusable. Which do the pupils think is better for the environment?

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## Round Three - Pose a question

Tell the pupils we are going to discuss the following question... "Who is more **responsible** for all of this plastic packaging?"

To help them you will hand out prompt cards, one each, so there is a complete mix of cards. Each card has a different perspective and they will be asked to take on that role for this exercise.

- Consumer
- Supermarket manager
- CEO of a leading cosmetics company
- Manager of a waste collection firm
- Drinks bottle manufacturer
- Animal rescue centre staff

Divide the class into groups according to the roles they are playing.

Ask them to read the cards and their perspective on the plastic issues. Allow time for the groups to discuss and prepare their arguments ready for the next step.

Bring all pupils back as a class.

## Round Four - Speed Debate!

Ask the children to form two parallel lines facing each other. They should be standing opposite another pupil for this exercise. Their first task is to identify their role to the person opposite, e.g. consumer or animal rescue centre staff. They are then given approximately 3 mins to express their viewpoint to each other (feel free to adapt the timings to suit).

The next step - One line of pupils moves along one position so they are now opposite a different person (the pupil at the top of the line "rejoins" at the other end so they have a partner). If two pupils opposite each other have the same role they can compare ideas and add to their arguments. Alternatively, both pupils could take on their role but adopting different viewpoints, one supporting plastic the other wanting it banned.

After each 3 minute, "Speed debate" the pupils on one line move along so they are opposite a different partner. This allows different viewpoints to be shared.

## Round Five - Changing Views

As a class, spend a few minutes of sharing views. Has anyone changed their views during this exercise? Can pupils suggest any changes they can make to avoid plastic waste? For example, can they write a letter to their local stores asking them what they are doing to reduce plastic pollution? Can they perform a plastic audit in the school? Following their audit, can the pupils find ways for their school to reduce plastic?

**Suggested texts for further reading...**

**"Say no to plastics, 101 easy ways to use less plastic" by Harriet Dryer**

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## PLASTICS DEBATE

### PROMPT CARDS

#### CEO of a Cosmetics Company

I've been spending years developing expensive creams and make up. Our consumers demand good quality products. If the packaging looks expensive and well made, people will buy the product so it's got to look appealing to the customer. Our packaging needs to be strong to keep the products safe. Some people pay a lot of money for our products so we need to keep it in the best condition.



#### Supermarket Manager

We try to avoid plastic waste but the producers keep everything wrapped up to prevent damage in transportation. Our shoppers want their food neatly wrapped up and protected. We are trying to stop food waste so packaging foods well is so important. Good packaging has been designed to make the product last longer. How can we make a profit if we have to throw food away? When they buy clothes they want them wrapped up to keep them clean or hanging up so they can find what they want easily.

#### Consumer

I don't like to buy plastic but what choice do I have? Everything is wrapped up in plastic in the shops so I think it is their responsibility. I need to get my food home without it getting damaged or dirty so decent packaging is important to me. I have a busy life so I need to grab things and go! We are told to avoid food waste and the plastic does keep food fresh for longer.

#### Waste Collection Firm

I think we all use far too much plastic. It's not that difficult to reduce the amount we use if we are careful. We have so many different types of plastic which is hard to sort. People don't separate other rubbish from their plastics which makes our job harder and stops us from recycling as much as we want. Recycling could be easier if the manufacturers made their packaging simpler to recycle.

#### Bottle Manufacturer

We make bottles for all sorts of drinks. The bottles have to be light for easy transportation but strong enough to keep the product safe. Plastic is just perfect because it is light and strong. If we used heavier packaging that is more carbon released into the atmosphere and that makes climate change worse! We are only producing what people demand.

#### Animal Rescue Centre

I wish people could see the damage their plastic litter does. The other day I had a sparrow which was tangled in an old plastic bag. Plastic lasts years because it is needs to be tough to keep food and other products safe for a long time but this means animals are at risk. I think that we all should avoid using plastic in the first place. There are lots of alternatives available such as cloth bags and beeswax wraps which are reused.