

SEA TURTLES VS PLASTICS

Your Mission: Play a game to learn about how plastic effects sea turtles, then educate others on actions that can be taken to help sea animals!

MATERIALS:

- Tokens or small squares of cardstock in 3 different colours (about 100 for a group of 20). One colour represents a plastic bag, one a plastic balloon and one a jellyfish.

- 1.** In a large playing area:
 - Mark off a space as home base.
 - Ask helpers to spread the tokens or cards widely spaced within the determined playing area.
- 2.** Explain the game:
 - Tell the students that they are going to be hungry sea turtles, and the tokens or cards represent items they can eat.
 - Demonstrate how to “swim” through the playing area (moving slowly and moving their arms as if swimming)
 - Explain that once they have 5 items, it is time to swim to home base. The game will end when everyone has 5 items.
- 3.** Play the game. When all have returned to home base, ask students to sort their tokens or cards by colour. Reveal what the different colours represent. Ask if there is anyone who didn't eat plastic.
- 4.** Explain that sea turtles typically eat jellyfish, and items like plastic bags and balloons can often look like jellyfish floating in the water. The turtles may ingest these items, and they take up space in their stomach, making them feel full without providing any actual nutrients. It can also block their digestive system, which can be fatal because the turtle can no longer feed properly.

Success Stories!

Continue talking about how plastics impact sea animals, using resources below. Share some success stories, such as **James Wilson**, 16, (CBC Kids) and **Kiera MacDonald**, 9, (CBC Kids) who both helped track leatherback turtles from Canada to the Caribbean to discuss how youth can get involved in conservation efforts near and far.



James Wilson & leatherback turtles

- 5.** Next, discuss ways we can keep plastic out of the ocean, such as shoreline clean ups, using less plastic, etc. Select a way to share your learning and allow students to educate those around them on how to take care of our natural environment.

Pick one or several messages such as:

- How plastics can hurt animals and what we can do about it
- How we can help leatherback turtles
- Why we should never release balloons into the sky

Pick an Audience

- Another class or classes
- School community
- Family
- Political leaders

Pick a Medium

- 1-minute video
- Infomercial
- Skit
- Picture book

RESOURCES

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OCEAN PLASTIC:

The Problem with Ocean Plastic (Canadian Geographic): This 2-minute animated video explains how plastics in the ocean harm animals.

Facts and Figures: Ocean Plastics 101 (Earth Rangers)

7 Facts About Ocean Plastic Pollution for Kids (kids.earth.org)

Plastic Pollution: What's the problem (Kids National Geographic)