

SINGLE-USE PLASTICS: TAKE ACTION

Your Mission: Investigate plastic use through an audit to identify areas where avoidable waste can be reduced

MATERIALS: Gloves and hand sanitizer and tarps

To help students understand the impact of single-use plastics, take the [How Long 'Til it's "Gone" Quiz](#) and discuss the results or watch the video [Single-use plastic](#), microplastics are an environmental disaster (CBC Kids News, 2022, 5 mins).

1. Invite students to share what they know about single-use plastics and how they can impact the environment (pollution, animals might mistake them for food, they can hurt habitats). Ask them which types of single-use plastics they think are the most common at their school.
2. Explain that you are going to do an audit to see how much single use plastic is being used around you. Students will be separated into smaller groups and each group will receive a recycling bin to go through. They will look through the recycling bin and separate the single-use plastics by type.
3. Review proper handling of litter, and then get started.
4. Once finished, have each group share their results and discuss. The following questions can be used as a guide.
 - *Why do you think we found so many plastic straws/plastic forks/etc.? What is one way we could encourage people to use less of them?*
 - *Why do we use single-use plastics? How could we change this?*
 - *How can we get others to stop using single-use plastics?*
5. As a class, find a way to share information about the audit and ways to cut back on single-use plastics, for example:
 - *Create a report about the audit for the school newsletter/website*
 - *Share the results with the school through announcements or visiting classes*

Tips for handling litter

- Wear gloves at all times
- Do not touch any sharp items (adults can dispose of them)
- Do not eat or drink while handling litter
- Do not eat or drink anything found
- Wash hands carefully after handling litter

Single-use plastics explained to kids:

Single-use plastics are made to be used once and thrown away, like soft drink and coffee lids. Some can be replaced with reusable options, while others are needed to keep things safe and clean, like plastic gloves for food handling in the cafeteria. We can make a difference by using less of the ones we don't really need.