



Classroom Activities: Bringing The “Journey of a Plastic Bag” to Life

After delving deeper into the environmental impact of single-use plastic bags, students use storyboards to prepare a creative way to share this information and encourage others to change their habits.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Recognize the impact of plastics on climate change and the environment
- Plan and create a means of sharing information about this impact with others

DURING THIS ACTIVITY, STUDENTS WILL:

- Explore the impact of single-use plastic bags on the environment, from the manufacturing process to disposal
- Use the Journey of a Plastic Bag Storyboard to creatively express the environmental impact of plastic
- Share this message with others and reflect on how it was received

MATERIALS:

- [The Journey of a Plastic Bag](#)
- [The Journey of a Plastic Bag Storyboard](#) (1 per individual or group); N.B.: This requires 11” X 17” (28 cm x 43 cm) paper
- Access to technology for online searches



GRADE LEVEL: 4-6

**JOURNEY OF A
PLASTIC BAG**

**JOURNEY
STORYBOARD**

Before Beginning

- Prepare copies of the Journey of a Plastic Bag and the Journey of a Plastic Bag Storyboard for the class
- Decide the creative way in which the students will share their messages or if they will choose

Instructions PART 1

1. Ask students to scan [The Journey of a Plastic Bag](#) for unfamiliar vocabulary. They can discuss and research to clarify potentially problematic terms, e.g.:

- greenhouse gases (GHGs)
- [greenhouse effect/climate change/global warming](#)
- oil extraction
- oil refinery
- recycling

Earth Rangers' [P2050 Climate Change Word Glossary](#) gives a brief description of these terms

2. Have the students read the Journey of a Plastic bag individually.

3. After reading, check for understanding by asking students to identify:

- the natural resource that plastic bags are made from
- events during the bag's journey that emit heat trapping GHGs into the atmosphere
- events during the bag's journey that could cause other types of damage to animals and their habitats
- how long most plastic bags are used before they are thrown away
- the percentage of plastic that actually gets recycled

Instructions PART 2

As a class, list Feelings, Thoughts and Questions provoked by The Journey of a Plastic Bag.

Continue the discussion. The following questions can be used as a guide:

- How can we find answers to these questions?
- What effects can other single-use plastics have an effect on the environment?
- How can we prevent plastics from entering the environment?
- How can we share our learning with others? (some ideas below)

Instructions PART 3

1. Have the students pick a medium to express their message about the effect of plastics on the environment and how we can change our habits to improve the situation, or select one for them, for example:

- Persuasive letter
- Persuasive essay
- Slideshow
- Video
- Song lyrics
- A drawing

2. Working individually or in a group, students use [The Journey of the Plastic Bag Storyboard](#) to map out their letter, essay, song lyrics, slideshow, video, or drawing.

3. Once students have finished their outline, give them time to work on their project (the amount of time depends on the project).

4. Offer a way for the students to share their creations with others – i.e. with classmates, electronically with the school and families, communities. Take time afterwards to reflect on how their audience reacted to their message.

Resources

[P2050 Climate Change Word Glossary](#)

[P2050 The Greenhouse Effect and Climate Change](#)

[How Long 'Til it's "gone" Quiz](#)

This interactive Earth Rangers quiz gives students the chance to think about how long it takes for plastics to breakdown into microplastics.

[Plastic-free for a week challenge](#)

Changing our relationship with single-use plastic starts by changing our habits. In this challenge, students try to adopt as many plastic-free habits as possible.