workshop

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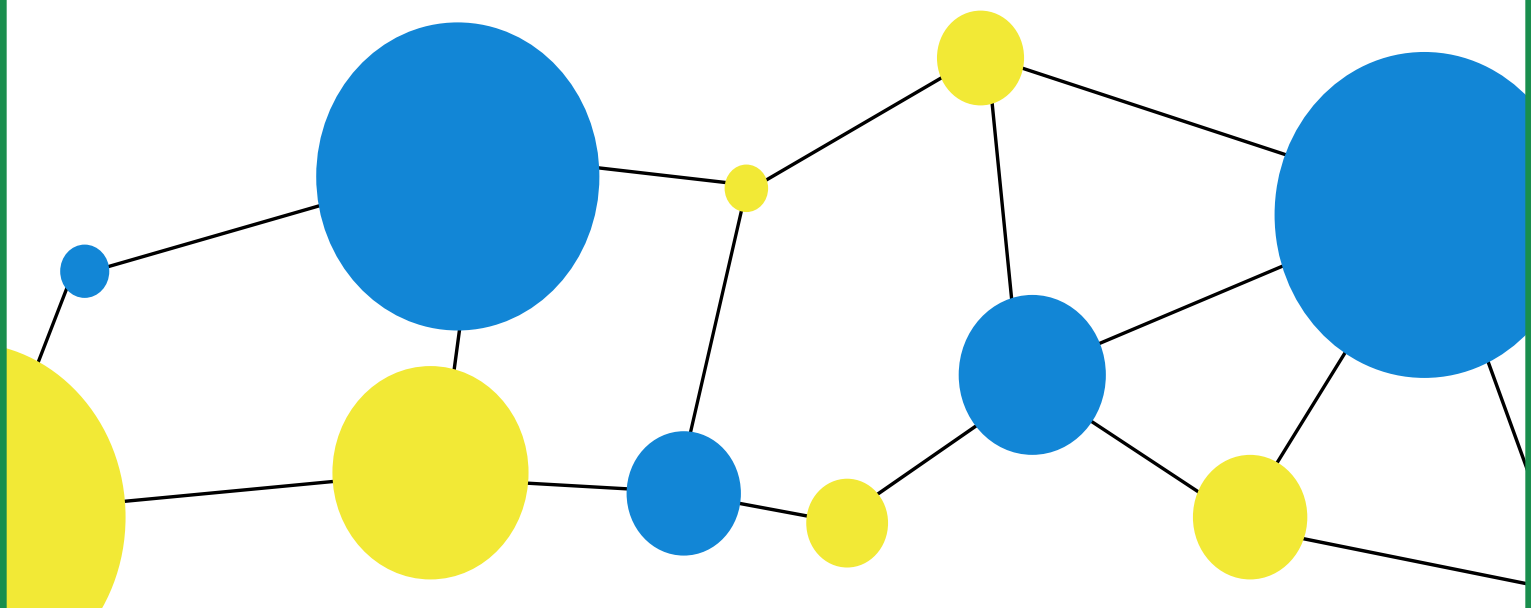
plastic and schools



1 what we want to achieve in this workshop?

In this workshop we would like to achieve a better understanding of the global plastic problem. We would like to encourage children, teachers and parents to reduce the amount of plastic we use at home or at school.
We would like to get active in sharing our knowledge and promoting action on plastic pollution in school.

2 goals: after completing this lesson, you will be able to:

1. Circular Economy

- To have a basic knowledge of what the circular economy is and how your actions affect this.
- To know what kind of everyday activities related to your own or your school's impact on the environment.

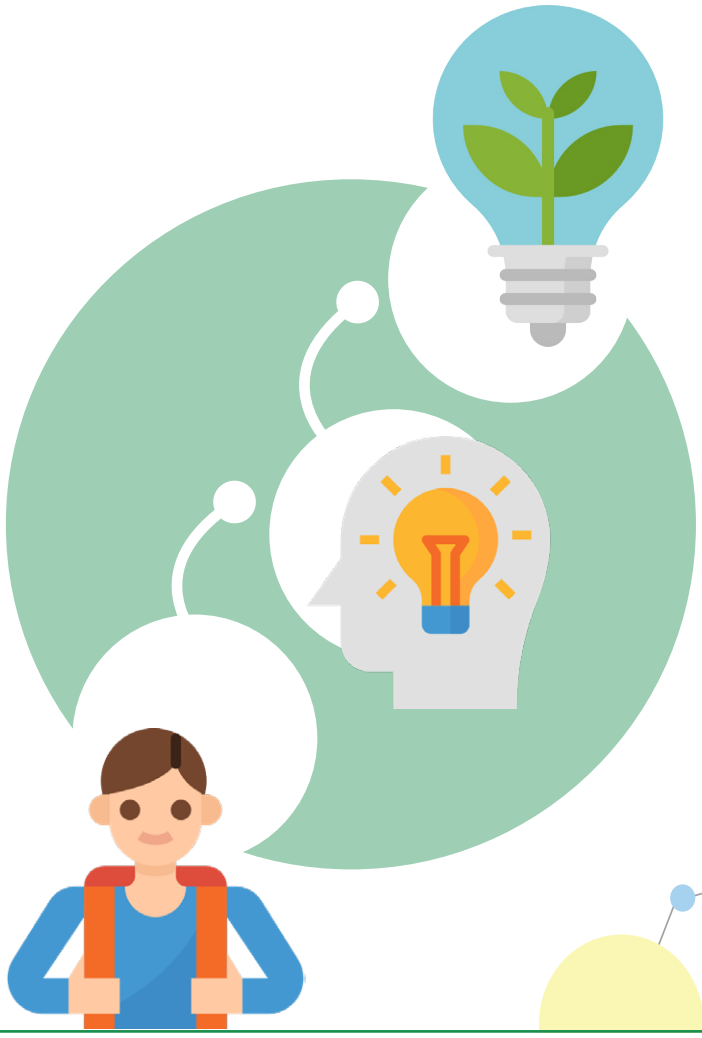
To recognise examples and situations where you or your school can avoid creating plastic waste and highlight positive alternatives and actions.

To learn and understand the terminologies concerning these issues and to be able to explain them (considering the learner's age).

To know how to find more information on the internet

To know how to explain why it is important to consider how much single-use plastic is thrown away and how it affects the environment.

To recognise examples of good practice.



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2. Negative scenario

- To get an idea of how much plastic we are using at the moment
- To analyse any unnecessary use of single-use plastic in the school
- To understand where our plastic waste goes when we throw it away
- To learn and understand the related terminologies to these issues, and be able to explain them (considering the learners' age)
- To know how to get more information using the Internet

3. Positive scenario

- To look at other solutions other than recycling (reduce, reuse, refill)
- How buying, using and throwing away less can help other areas in life
- To learn and understand the related terminologies to these issues, and be able to explain them (considering the learners' age)
- To know how to get more information using the Internet.

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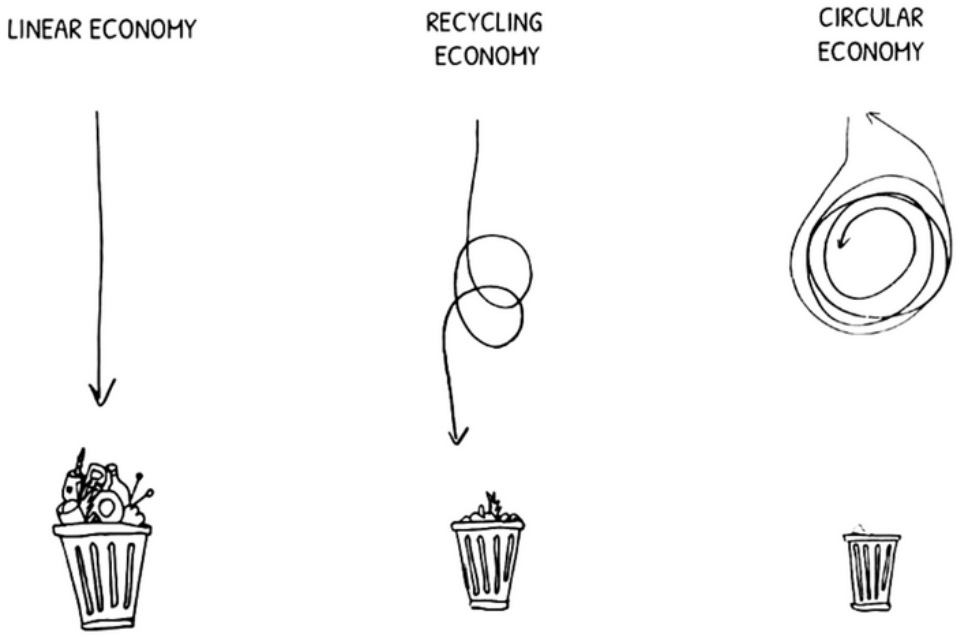
3 theoretical introduction: what is the circular economy? how can we make schools more sustainable?

More info links:

- Plastic Pollution
- Circular Economy
- Dirty Business: What really happens to our recycling



Plastic waste and pollution have captured the attention of the public, governments, and businesses around the world. Along with the search for solutions that can be scaled up, there is growing recognition that addressing the symptoms of this crisis through clean-ups is not enough. We need to move away from today's linear take-make-waste model and fundamentally rethink the way we design, use, and reuse plastics. A systemic shift tackling the root causes is required: a transition towards a circular economy for plastic, in which it never becomes waste or pollution. (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, New Plastic Economy).

It is important that governments and businesses move quickly towards a circular economy. In order to ensure that waste is kept within a looped system, it is necessary to work on:

- ♦ Raising awareness of the impact of plastic pollution amongst consumer goods companies, retailers, producers and manufacturers
- ♦ Communicating the benefits of a circular economy such as less environmental pollution and eliminating the need to throw products away
- ♦ Incentivising innovation and circular initiatives for businesses
- ♦ Innovation in product design to ensure that they can be either reused, refilled or easily recycled
- ♦ Collaboration between public, industry and government to promote more responsible practise and policy

New Plastics Economy

Font: Ellen Mc Arthur Foundation

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negative scenario

In 2017, Daniel Webb (Everyday Plastic) decided to conduct a little experiment… He saved every piece of plastic waste that he generated in a year. He wanted to understand exactly what he threw away and where it ended up.

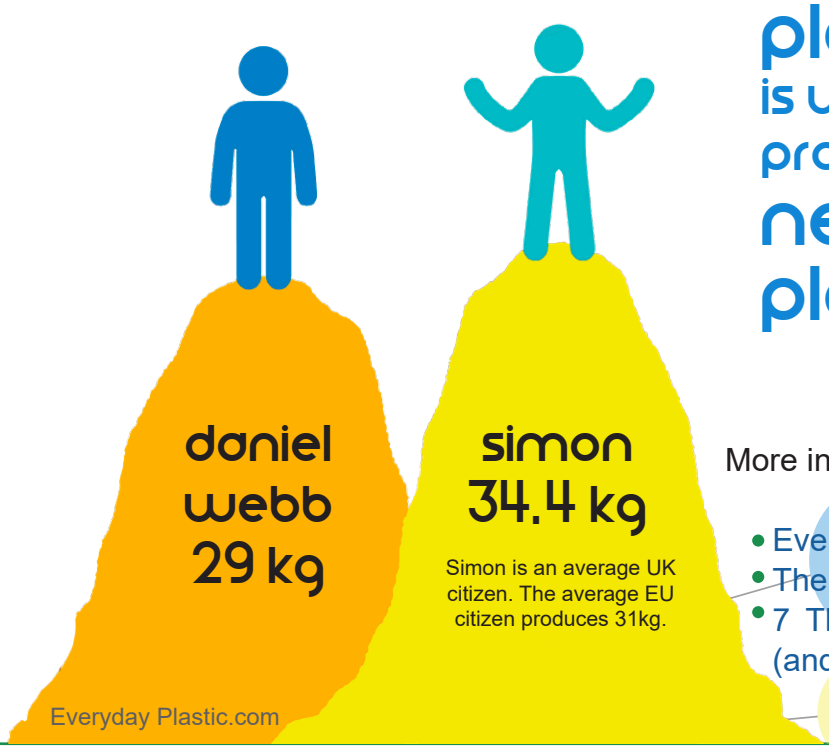
By the end of the year, he had 22 bin bags full of plastic that he would otherwise have thrown away. With the help of earth scientist Dr Julie Schneider, they analysed his whole collection of plastic waste. They counted, categorised, weighed and photographed every single piece.

Daniel had thrown away 4,490 pieces of plastic in a single year. He also found out that 93% of what he had thrown away was single-use packaging – material used to wrap or protect goods designed to be used once and then thrown away. 67% of what he threw away was food and drink packaging, most of which he bought in a supermarket.

Daniel and Dr Julie also realised that most of the packaging he had thrown away was the soft, thin, flimsy plastic used in carrier bags, cling film, crisp packets, sweet wrappers, bread bags and salad bags. Dr Julie found that hardly any soft plastic film is collected for recycling.

They were also able to determine exactly where Daniel's plastic waste would end up. Most of it (60%) would be sent to an energy from waste plant where it is incinerated which in turn creates electricity. Most shockingly, only 161 pieces out of the 4,490 (4%) would end up getting recycled in the UK. More of the plastic waste, in fact, would be exported – sent overseas for other countries to try and recycle themselves.

plastic packaging waste produced in one year



how much of recycled plastic is used to produce new plastic?

1,3% of the plastic Daniel Webb threw away is made of recycled materials (only 59 pieces!) The rest is made of newly-made plastic!

More info links:

- Everydayplastic report
- The Story of the Stuff
- 7 Things You Didn't Know About Plastic (and Recycling)

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positive scenario

Governments across the world are creating new laws to reduce the impact of plastic on the environment. The EU has pledged to ban single-use plastic items that would often be seen in schools such as plastic straws, cups and cutlery.

Businesses have also pledged to improve how their business operates and reduce the amount of plastic they use. Many supermarkets across Europe have introduced refill stations within the stores. These stations allow customers to bring their own reusable containers from home and refill on items such as pasta, rice, olive oil, oats and more.

Awareness of plastic pollution has increased significantly over the past two years. As a result, lots of people have changed their behaviour and habits to help reduce their own personal impact on plastic pollution.

Young people, in particular, have encouraged their family to use less and buy fewer things. Finding second-hand items for school such as sports equipment, uniforms and books not only reduces the amount of plastic waste but also motivates people to move away from throwaway society. Of course, buying fewer things not only prevents waste, but also saves money!

UK-based charity Surfers Against Sewage, runs Plastic Free Schools – a programme that is led by pupils to reduce plastic in schools. Each school that signs up is given 5 goals including an initial plastic audit of the school and removing at least 3 items of single-use plastic items throughout the school.

More info links:

- Carrefour Bio Opens First Store In Brussels
- The Guardian: European parliament votes to ban single-use plastics
- Plastic Free Schools

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tips to create less waste

- Buy school uniforms second hand or take ‘hand-me-downs’ from older family members
- Buy or borrow sports equipment
- Get your textbooks second hand
- Buy a reusable water bottle to take to school
- Walk to school where possible or take the bicycle
- Make lunches at home instead of buying ready-made meals
- Encourage the school to reduce the amount of waste it produces
- Pack your child’s lunch or snack with something reusable: tupperware, cloth napkin... Avoid using plastic wrap or aluminum foil.
- Show them that many school materials are made of plastic and can be recycled: markers, pens, broken rulers…

how to make your packed lunch plastic-free?

What are the top recommendations for packing healthy, low-waste lunches?

- Fresh, seasonal, locally grown fruits and veggies
- Dried fruits and nuts
- Whole foods in their own packaging (an apple or banana comes in its own wrapper!)
- Whole grains: brown rice, whole multi-grain breads, and pasta
- Filtered tap water or milk

More info links:

Plastic Pollution Coalition

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4 tip sheets

Age 6-10. Collect a bag containing Recycling: All of these things could be used to make your packed lunch. But what can be recycled?

	YES	NO		YES	NO
Bottle			Salad bag		
Clear tray			Crisp packet		
Margarine pot			Cling film		
Large yoghurt pot			Cereal bag		
Black tray			Carrier bag		
Small yoghurt pot			Bread bag		

Age 11-15. What could the school do to improve the amount of plastic in the canteen area? Discuss in groups.

Buy food in large catering size containers rather than selling individual packs, for example: ice cream, yoghurt, ketchup, mayonnaise.

Switch cling film in the canteen for foil or use reusable plastic containers with lids (tupperware)

Use stainless steel cutlery instead of throwaway plastic knives and forks

Put posters up around the school to create awareness.

Age16-20. How would you run a marketing campaign to increase awareness of the plastic problem in your school or college? Discuss in groups and take some notes.

Social media campaign

1. Schools and business workshops or talks
2. Celebrity ambassadors or endorsements
3. Create an eye-catching artwork or viral video
4. Posters and leaflets
5. Engage local businesses

notes

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4 tip sheets

Age 6-10. What alternatives could the school use instead of… Connect the correct options with lines. Discuss about it.

Water bottle
Milk bottles
Wet wipes to clean the kitchen
Liquid Handwash
Plastic cutlery

Reusable bottle
Stainless steel cutlery
Bars of soap
Old clothes
Glass bottle

Can you think of anything else?

Age10-15. What could you do to make sure that the school sources sustainable sports kits? Discuss in groups.

- Find producers of sustainable clothing
- Where is the clothing made? (As close to home as possible (not India, China etc.)
- What is made from? (organic cotton or re-cycled materials)
- Is it affordable?
- Does it look good?

Age16-20. In what ways could government and businesses help to improve the school's use of single-use plastic and its impact on the environment? Discuss in groups.

Prompts:

Subsidies or grants for schools who have refill initiatives
Make the producer or manufacturer of plastic pay for recycling
Ban hard to recycle single-use plastic
Ban single-use plastic where widely available alternatives already exists
Create a budget for reusable water bottles and water fountains

notes

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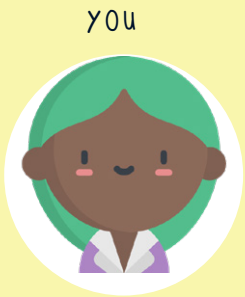
5 role–play

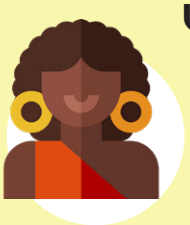
Role-playing game.

You're heading out for a weekend-long camping trip with the school. You need to take a lot of gear with you including a tent, camping equipment, clothes, food, drink and toiletries. Mum wants to buy everything new, while Dad wants to ask friends and family to borrow a lot of equipment. Your Grandma wants to buy all the ingredients so you can make your meals when you're on the trip, while your big sister thinks you should just buy all your food ready-made.

Choose one character each then discuss the best and most sustainable way to take as much equipment as you can without creating waste.



which is the best option to carry everything you need and generate less waste?



Icons source: "Flaticon", www.flaticon.com

6 more activities

If you want to continue learning about the circular economy, efficiency, sustainability and responsible consumption, here you have several links to have more information:

Age 6 -10: Digital Breakouts
Age 11-15: Escape-Rooms
Age 16-20: WebQuest

GOOD IDEAS!

Do a litter pick around the school
Pick a day to go plastic-free at school
Make a piece of art out of plastic waste
Get external speakers to come in and talk to the class about waste
Take The Everyday Plastic Survey

7 conclusion

To finish this workshop, we invite you to reflect and dialogue on all that we have learned.

What have you learned?

What solutions should we be focusing on?

How can you share all this new knowledge with your family and friends?

What things can you change to reduce your impact on the environment?

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