

THE STORY OF MICROPLASTIC

For more plastic related chatter:

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WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Plastic is a man-made material, usually made from **fossil fuels**. Most ocean plastic pollution comes from sources on land including **rubbish dumps**, **industry** and **sewage water**.

HOW DOES IT BREAK UP?

As plastic spends more time in the water it gets weakened by the waves and **UV light** from the sun. Eventually it breaks up into tiny pieces of plastic known as **microplastic**.

Microplastics are tiny pieces of plastic less than 5 mm in length, coming in all different shapes and types of plastic.

Primary microplastics are those which enter the environment already as microplastic.

Secondary microplastics are larger pieces of plastic which break up into smaller pieces within the environment itself, like in this infographic.

WHERE DOES IT GO?

Once in our ocean, plastic pollution is transported around the globe by **ocean currents** that are like huge conveyorbelts.

ACTIVITY

Now you know more about the story of microplastic, how about being a real life microplastic researcher and looking up online how the words **highlighted in blue** contribute to our plastic pollution problem?

Think about the following questions:

1. What can you do personally in your home/school/community to reduce plastic pollution?
2. How are scientists, engineers and inventors working to help the problem?

HOW IS IT DANGEROUS?

Plastic is an absorbant material, allowing it to carry harmful toxins on its surface which can be fatal for marine animals ranging from the smallest baby turtle to the biggest whale in the ocean through a process called **bioaccumulation**!