

 theday.co.uk/the-slow-poison-that-we-are-all-addicted-to-4



Deadly diet: Chris Jordan's shocking photo of an albatross killed by eating plastic.

Could we live without plastic? This year's Earth Day theme is Planet vs Plastics. Scientists around the world are looking for alternatives.

What's happening?

People are very worried about the amount of plastic waste that we are creating. It is killing a lot of seabirds and other creatures who eat it thinking that it is proper food. The challenge is how to use less of it.

Find out more

Over eight million tonnes of plastic are dumped in the ocean every year. It is creating a hazardous environment for sea wildlife, particularly sea birds like [albatrosses](#).

But trying to get rid of plastic altogether is unrealistic. It is vital for hospital equipment and for keeping food fresh, as well as other things like growing crops. And we do not yet have a material to replace it with which would be as effective.

Banning single-use plastic would be a good start. And we should replace everything that we can — for example, a lot of people are choosing to use bamboo toothbrushes instead of plastic ones.

But some people say it will never be possible for us to phase out plastic altogether.

Could we live without plastic?

Some say

Yes! There are lots of other materials we can use, like bamboo for toothbrushes.

No! There are some things we will always need it for, like phones and TVs.

Others think

Some people say

"There's no more delicious irony on the face of the Earth than environmental protesters being led away in plastic handcuffs."

Dennis Miller (1953 –), American comedian

What do you think?

Six steps to discovery

1. **Connect**

How do you feel about this story? - Do you worry about plastic pollution? Do you have plastic toys you treasure?

2. **Wonder**

What questions do you have? - For example: How is plastic made? How many different kinds are there?

3. **Investigate**

What are the facts? - Make a list of the disadvantages and advantages of using plastic. Then choose which one you find more convincing.

4. **Construct**

What is your point of view? - Someone challenges you to give up plastic for a year. Think about what you would say.

5. **Express**

What do others believe? - Which everyday things could be replaced with non-plastic ones? Take it in turns to say.

6. **Reflect**

What might happen next? - Imagine you are asked to make a poster telling people to use less plastic. Draw or paint one.

Glossary

Albatrosses - A type of very large seabird.