

# Earth Day 2024: Planet vs. Plastics



## What Is Earth Day?

Earth Day is held every year on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. It is a day when people take part in activities to help the planet. The theme for Earth Day 2024 is 'Planet vs. Plastics'. It asks everyone to work together to limit our use of plastics to help look after the Earth. On Earth Day, people take action to make our world a better place. This includes litter picking, planting trees and raising money for environmental charities.

## Plastic Pollution

Plastic is a hard-wearing material and some plastics can take hundreds of years to break down. Many items end up in oceans and this is very harmful to animals. **Microplastics** have been found in lots of different places!



## Plastic in the Environment

Plastic can break down into tiny particles that enter the Earth's soil and water.

There are many ways that plastic can enter the environment, such as:

- litter
- washed-down drains
- spilled by ships
- blown out of bins
- abandoned by humans

So much plastic enters the environment each year that it can be found in fresh water, soil, air and oceans around the world.



## How Can We Reduce Our Use of Plastic?

There are many steps that you can take to reduce your use of plastics and help save our planet.

### Reusable Items

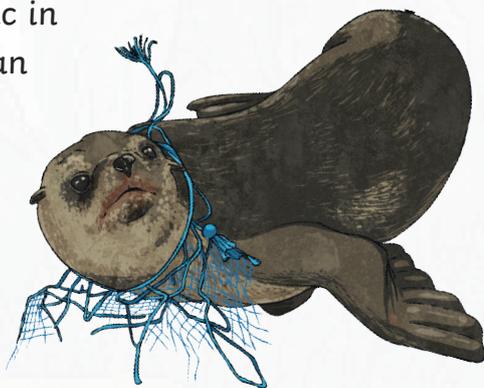
Many people have been working hard to use less plastic. Instead of using single-use plastic items, such as straws and plastic bags, they buy reusable items, such as reusable flasks and canvas bags. You could save 156 plastic bottles every year by choosing a reusable bottle!

Some coffee shops even charge people less if they buy their hot drinks with a reusable cup.



### Did You Know...?

By 2050, there will be more plastic in the oceans than there are fish!



### Did You Know...?

160,000 plastic bags are used around the world every second!



### Recycle Your Plastic

If you use single-use plastics, make sure you recycle them so that they can be turned into new things instead of being thrown away.

### Plan Your Parties

Plastic party plates, glitter and balloons can be extremely dangerous to wildlife and the environment.



## Glossary

**microplastics:** Small pieces of plastic less than 5mm in length.

# Questions

1. Which month does Earth Day take place in? Tick one.

- February
- April
- June
- August

2. Draw **four** lines to complete the sentences.

Plastic can be found...

to use less plastic.

The theme for Earth Day 2024 is...

in fresh water, soil, air and oceans.

Many people have been working hard...

'Planet vs. Plastics'.

Plastic is a...

hard-wearing material.

3. Number the sentences from 1-4 to show the order in which they appear in the text.

- Some coffee shops charge people less if they buy their hot drinks with a reusable cup.
- Balloons can be extremely dangerous to wildlife and the environment.
- Microplastics have been found in lots of different places!
- On Earth Day, people take action to make our world a better place.

4. Why is it bad for plastic to end up in the oceans? Tick one.

- It's colourful.
- It's noisy.
- It's harmful to animals.
- It's smelly.

5. Name one way that plastic can enter the environment.

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6. Fill in the missing word.

Plastic party plates, glitter and \_\_\_\_\_ can be extremely dangerous to wildlife and the environment.

7. Why do you think the author has written this text?

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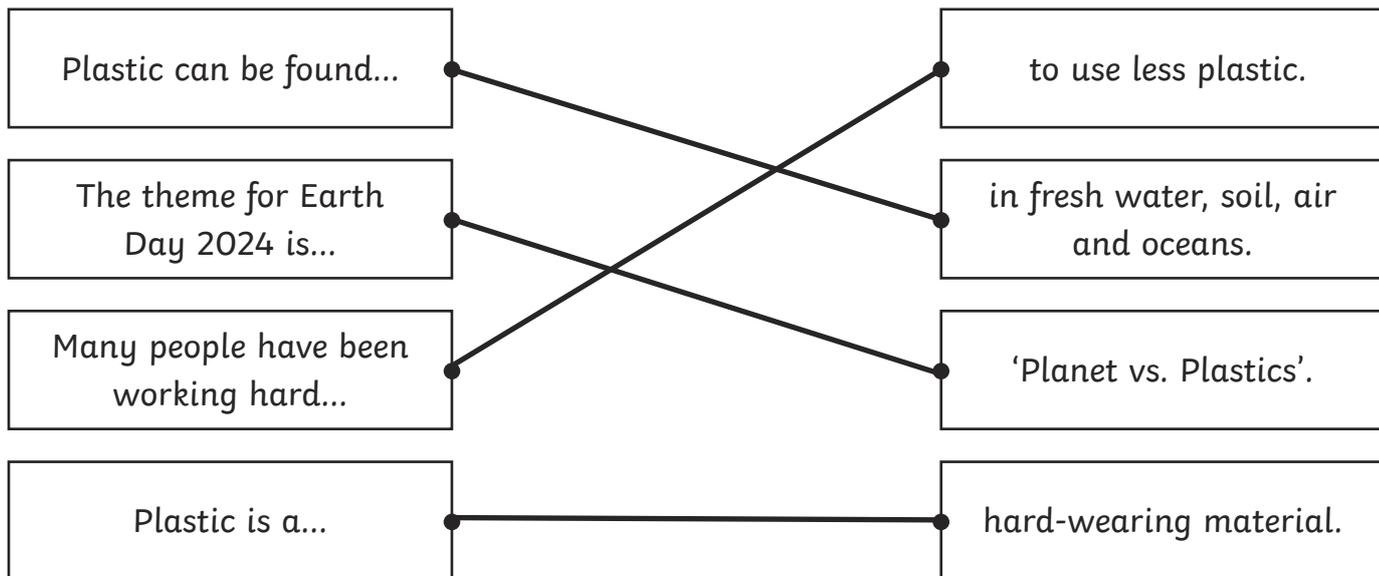
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# Answers

1. Which month does Earth Day take place in? Tick one.

- February
- April**
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3. Number the sentences from 1-4 to show the order in which they appear in the text.

- 3** Some coffee shops charge people less if they buy their hot drinks with a reusable cup.
- 4** Balloons can be extremely dangerous to wildlife and the environment.
- 2** Microplastics have been found in lots of different places!
- 1** On Earth Day, people take action to make our world a better place.

4. Why is it bad for plastic to end up in the oceans? Tick one.

- It's colourful.
- It's noisy.
- It's harmful to animals.**
- It's smelly.

5. Name one way that plastic can enter the environment.

**Accept any of the following: littering; washed down drain; spilled by ships; blown out of bins; abandoned by humans.**

6. Fill in the missing word.

Plastic party plates, glitter and **balloons** can be extremely dangerous to wildlife and the environment.

7. Why do you think the author has written this text?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think the author has written this text to raise awareness for Earth Day and help people understand how plastic is affecting the planet and how we can help.**

# Earth Day 2024: Planet vs. Plastics



## What Is Earth Day?

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## Plastic Pollution

Plastic is a hard-wearing material, and some items can take hundreds of years to break down. In fact, it can take around 1000 years for some plastics to begin to **decompose**! **Microplastics** have been found in lots of different places! Sadly, these toxic particles enter the food chain when animals ingest them.



## Plastic in the Environment

Plastic can break down into tiny **toxic** particles that rapidly enter our Earth's soil and water.

There are many different ways that plastic can enter the environment, such as:

- litter;
- washed down drains;
- spilled by ships;
- blown out of bins;
- abandoned by humans.

So much plastic enters the environment each year that it can be found in fresh water, soil, air and oceans around the world. Worryingly, this could **endanger** some of our much-loved creatures.



## How Can We Reduce Our Use of Plastic?

There are many steps that you can take to reduce your use of plastics and help save our planet.

### Reusable Items

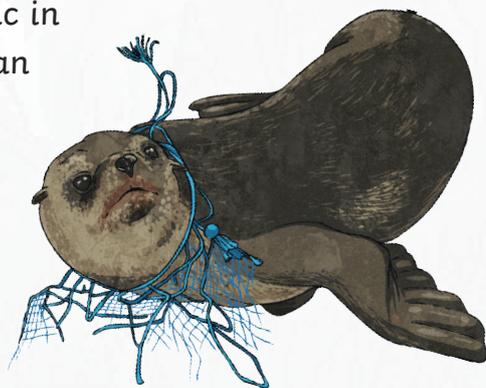
Instead of using single-use plastic items, such as straws and plastic bags, buy reusable items, such as reusable flasks and canvas bags. You could save 156 plastic bottles every year by choosing a reusable bottle!

Many people have been working hard to use less plastic. Some coffee shops charge people less if they buy their hot drinks with a reusable cup.



### Did You Know...?

By 2050, there will be more plastic in the oceans than there are fish!



### Did You Know...?

160,000 plastic bags are used around the world every second!



### Recycle Your Plastic

If you use single-use plastics, make sure you recycle them so that they can be turned into new items instead of being thrown away.

### Plan Your Parties

Plastic party plates, glitter and balloons can be extremely dangerous to wildlife and the environment. Unfortunately, animals may mistake balloons for food, which may make them very sick.



### Glossary

**microplastics:** Small pieces of plastic less than 5mm in length.

**endanger:** Putting something or someone at risk or in danger.

**toxic:** Something poisonous or harmful.

**decompose:** To break down something into smaller parts.

# Questions

1. What are examples of reusable items? Tick **two**.

- canvas bag
- plastic straw
- flasks
- plastic bag

2. Draw **four** lines to complete the sentences.

Plastic can break down...

people take action  
to make our world a  
better place.

On Earth Day,...

in lots of different  
places!

Microplastics have  
been found...

there will be more plastic in  
the oceans than there are fish!

By 2050,...

into tiny toxic particles.

3. **Plastic can break down into tiny toxic particles that rapidly enter our Earth's soil and water.**

What does the word 'rapidly' mean? Tick one.

- quietly
- slowly
- carefully
- quickly

4. Number the facts from 1-4 to show the order in which they appear in the text.

- Animals may mistake balloons for food.
- Many people have been working hard to use less plastic.
- Microplastics have also been found in lots of different places!
- Earth Day is held every year on 22<sup>nd</sup> April.

5. Look at the sub-heading called **Plastic Pollution**.

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'to eat or drink'.

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6. Fill in the missing word.

Plastic is a hard-wearing \_\_\_\_\_ but some items can take hundreds of years to break down.

7. How is plastic affecting wildlife?

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8. Why is using a reusable bag better for the environment than using a plastic bag? Explain your answer.

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# Answers

1. What are examples of reusable items? Tick **two**.

- canvas bag**
- plastic straw
- flasks**
- plastic bag

2. Draw **four** lines to complete the sentences.

Plastic can break down...	people take action to make our world a better place.
On Earth Day,...	in lots of different places!
Microplastics have been found...	there will be more plastic in the oceans than there are fish!
By 2050,...	into tiny toxic particles.

3. **Plastic can break down into tiny toxic particles that rapidly enter our Earth's soil and water.**

What does the word 'rapidly' mean? Tick one.

- quietly
- slowly
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4. Number the facts from 1-4 to show the order in which they appear in the text.

- 4** Animals may mistake balloons for food.
- 3** Many people have been working hard to use less plastic.
- 2** Microplastics have also been found in lots of different places!
- 1** Earth Day is held every year on 22<sup>nd</sup> April.

5. Look at the sub-heading called **Plastic Pollution**.

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'to eat or drink'.

**ingest**

6. Fill in the missing word.

Plastic is a hard-wearing **material** but some items can take hundreds of years to break down.

7. How is plastic affecting wildlife?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Plastic is affecting wildlife as some animals mistake plastics for food and eat it, making them sick. In some cases, it can even be fatal.**

8. Why is using a reusable bag better for the environment than a plastic bag? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that using a reusable bag is much better for the environment than using using a plastic bag because most plastic bags can only be used once and take a long time to break down whereas a reusable bag can be kept to use over and over again.**

# Earth Day 2024: Planet vs. Plastics



## What Is Earth Day?

Earth Day is held every year on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. It is a day when people take part in activities to help the planet. The theme for Earth Day 2024 is 'Planet vs. Plastics'. It asks everyone to work together to limit our use of plastics to help look after the Earth. On Earth Day, people take action to make our world a better place through activities such as litter picking, planting trees and raising money for environmental charities.



## Plastic Pollution

Plastic is a hard-wearing material and some items can take hundreds of years to break down. In fact, it can take around 1000 years for a plastic bag to **decompose** in a landfill! **Microplastics** have been found in lots of different places! Sadly, these toxic particles enter the food chain when animals mistake the plastics for food and ingest them. Sometimes, animals can become trapped in plastic too, causing serious injuries and even death.



## Plastic in the Environment

Countless amounts of plastics enter the environment each year. Plastic can break down into tiny **toxic** particles that rapidly enter our Earth's soil and water.

There are many different ways that plastic can enter the environment, such as:

- litter being carelessly thrown or not disposed of correctly;
- washed down drains;
- spilled overboard by ships;
- blown out of bins by poor weather conditions;
- abandoned by humans e.g., fishing nets.

Plastics can be found in freshwater, soil, air and oceans around the world. Worryingly, this could **endanger** some of our much-loved creatures. It is estimated that by 2050, there will be more plastic in the oceans than there are fish!

## How Can We Reduce Our Use of Plastic?

In 2015, it became compulsory for shops to charge for single-use carrier bags. The government is beginning to tackle the plastic problem by introducing restrictions or bans on buying and selling single-use plastics, such as cotton buds, straws and polystyrene cups. There are many other productive steps that you can take to reduce your use of plastics and help save our planet.

### Reusable Items

Instead of using single-use plastic items, such as straws and plastic bags, buy reusable items, such as reusable flasks and canvas bags. You could save 156 plastic bottles every year by choosing a reusable bottle.

Many people have been working hard to use less plastic. For example, some coffee shops charge people less if they buy their hot drinks with a reusable cup.



### Recycle Your Plastic

If you use single-use plastics, make sure you recycle them in the correct bins so that they can be turned into new items instead of just simply being thrown away. A wide variety of products can be made from recycled plastic, such as drink bottles, polyester fabrics and carrier bags.



### Plan Your Parties

Plastic party utensils, glitter and balloons can be extremely dangerous to wildlife and the environment. Unfortunately, animals may mistake balloons for food and ingest them, which may make them very sick.



### Glossary

**microplastics:** Small pieces of plastic less than 5mm in length.

**endanger:** Putting something or someone at risk or in danger.

**toxic:** Something poisonous or harmful.

**decompose:** To break down something into smaller parts.

# Questions

1. How long can it take for a plastic bag to degrade in landfill? Tick one.

- 2050 years
- 22 years
- 6 months
- 1000 years

2. Draw **four** lines and match each sub-heading to the corresponding sentence from that section.

**Plastic Pollution**

Microplastics have been found in lots of different places!

**Earth Day 2024**

Plastics can be found in freshwater, soil, air and oceans around the world.

**How Can We Reduce Our Use of Plastic?**

In 2015, it became essential for shops to charge for single-use carrier bags.

**Plastic in the Environment**

The theme for Earth Day 2024 is 'Planet vs. Plastics'.

3. List **two** reasons why plastic is bad for the environment.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

4. Fill in the missing word.

You could save 156 plastic bottles every year by choosing a \_\_\_\_\_ bottle!

5. Look at the section with the sub-heading **How Can We Reduce Our Use of Plastic?**

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'put a limit on'.

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6. Why do you think that so many people celebrate Earth Day?

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7. **The government is beginning to tackle the plastic problem...**

Why do you think the author chose to use the word 'tackle'?

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8. Predict the impact on the planet if plastic bags were banned.

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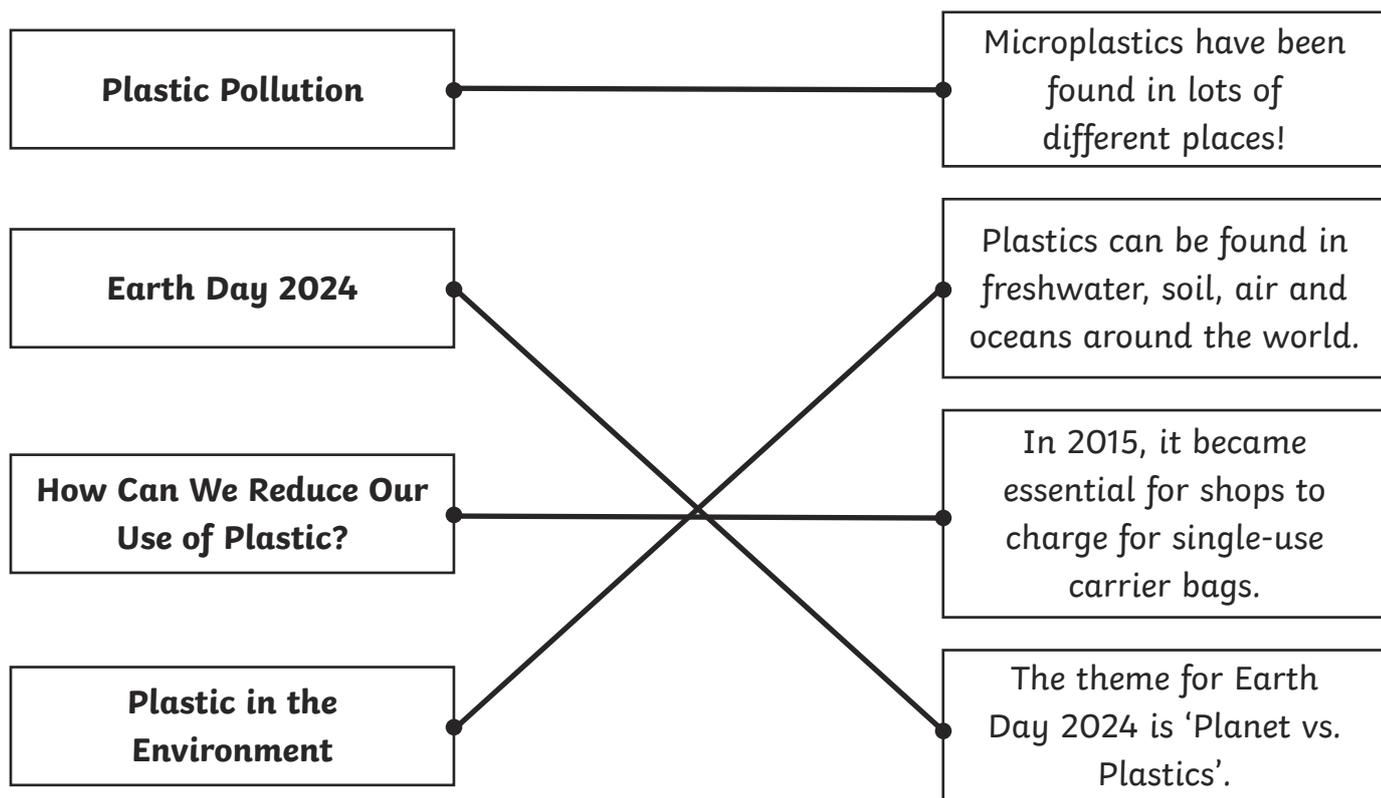
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# Answers

1. How long can it take for a plastic bag to degrade in landfill? Tick one.

- 2050 years
- 22 years
- 6 months
- 1000 years**

2. Draw **four** lines and match each sub-heading to the corresponding sentence from that section.



3. List **two** reasons why plastic is bad for the environment.

**Accept any two of the following:**

- **endangering wildlife;**
- **microplastics been found in lots of different places;**
- **animals ingesting plastics;**
- **entering oceans;**
- **not being easily degraded and taking up space.**

4. Fill in the missing word.

You could save 156 plastic bottles every year by choosing a **reusable** bottle!

5. Look at the section with the sub-heading **How Can We Reduce Our Use of Plastic?**

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'putting limits on'.

**restrictions**

6. Why do you think that so many people celebrate Earth Day?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that so many people celebrate Earth Day because people want to help look after the planet and make it a better place for everyone in the future.**

7. **The government is beginning to tackle the plastic problem...**

Why do you think the author chose to use the word 'tackle'?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the author chose to use the word 'tackle' because it suggests fighting against plastic pollution to make a difference.**

8. Predict the impact on the planet if plastic bags were banned.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that if plastic bags were banned there would be a lot less pollution in the oceans and it would be better for all wildlife as many animals are being harmed by plastic.**