



Plastic and The Environment

Study*ladder*

Plastic products are everywhere!

Plastic is very strong and durable. Hard plastic containers can be used to store things like engine oil and cleaning chemicals. This is because the molecules in the plastic do not easily react to other chemicals.

However, this also means that plastic doesn't easily break down once it is thrown away. Plastic can still be present in landfill for hundreds of years and some plastics may not ever decompose.



When plastic production increased during the latter half of the 1900s, people soon realised that its disposal was becoming a problem.

Something needed to be done to reduce the amount of plastic going to landfill.



Problems With Plastic Disposal

Manufacturers began adding special chemicals to encourage the natural decomposition process.

The plastic gradually breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces, taking up less space in landfill.

But the tiny pieces of plastic are still there! They leach harmful toxins into the water in the soil.

Tiny pieces of plastic end up in our oceans and rivers. They create a hazard for sea creatures who think that they are food. The toxins then pass through the food chain.



Managing Waste by Recycling

The best solution to the plastic disposal problem has been the development of new types of plastic that can be melted and reformed into new plastic products.

Products are collected and taken to recycling plants where they are sorted, ready to be melted down and made into new plastic products.

