

Unit 11: Our Plastic World

Narrator: Plastic is everywhere. Almost everything we use today is made of plastic. But how is plastic made? Most of the plastics we use today are synthetic. Synthetic plastics are made from fossil fuels like oil. Every year, world production of plastic increases.

Since 1950, mankind has made about 9.2 billion tons of plastics. That's nearly the same weight as 1,600 great pyramids of Giza! The problem is, much of this plastic ends up as trash—especially single-use plastics like straws, grocery bags, and packaging products.

Single-use plastics make up about 40 percent of all plastic waste. They end up ruining our oceans, hurting wildlife, and polluting communities around the world.

But we can take action to help stop this. For example, we can use fewer single-use plastic items in our day-to-day lives. By simply choosing to use reusable alternatives, each person can make a huge impact in decreasing plastic waste.

Another way to reduce plastic pollution is by developing bioplastics—plastics made from plants. These forks are made from a type of plant. Bioplastics can break down much faster than synthetic plastics—in weeks instead of hundreds of years.

Scientists are also using materials like rubber to make bioplastics. The sap from this rubber tree can be used to make all kinds of things such as gloves, tyres, and mattresses.

Plastic is present in almost every aspect of modern life. But by reducing the amount of plastic we use and throw away, and by producing more bioplastics, we can help save the planet.