

Microplastics

🔦 B2 Level

🔦 Duration: 1 h

🔦 Group lesson

🔦 Age: teenagers or adults

🔦 Lesson goals

Students can understand documentaries in the standard form of the language.

Students can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including listening for main points; checking comprehension by using contextual clues.

Students have a sufficient range of language to be able to express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words.

1

Warm-up

Exercise 1: Brainstorm a list of everyday items that are made of plastic.

For a small group (up to 5 students):

Think of at least 10 items. Write them on the board.

Play the game “I have never...”. The aim of the game is to think of plastic items that you haven’t used.

How to play: The first student says: “I have never used a plastic bottle.” If the students have used a plastic bottle - they put down one of their fingers. If the students haven't used a plastic bottle - they don't. The next student names another plastic item. The student who has more fingers left is the winner.

For a bigger group (6 students and more):

Split into teams. Each team should write down a list of items made of plastic. You have two minutes to create your lists. After that, each team names one plastic item from their list, the same item can't be named twice. The team with more remaining items on their list wins.

2

Pre-listening

Exercise 2: Match the words with their definitions.

- a. a machine or device used for household tasks such as cooking, cleaning, or laundry
- b. cut or torn into small pieces
- c. gradually become weaker or damaged through use or friction
- d. having a consistency like that of water or oil, flowing freely but maintaining a constant volume
- e. pressed or squeezed with force so as to break or damage something
- f. a network of pipes and treatment plants that carry away wastewater from homes and businesses
- g. containing high levels of harmful substances that can cause environmental damage or health problems
- h. the result or effect of an action or decision, often negative
- i. a localized physical condition in which part of the body becomes reddened, swollen, hot, and often painful, especially as a reaction to injury or infection
- j. the act of getting rid of something, usually by throwing it away or destroying it

consequence

sewage system

home appliance

inflammation

pollutant-rich

wear down

shredded

disposal

crushed

liquid

Listening

Exercise 3: Watch this video about microplastics and select the correct title for it.



Are Nanoplastics a Myth or Reality?

How Can We Use More Microplastics to Save the Environment?

The Beauty of Microplastics in Industry

The Threat of Microplastics

What is Synthetic Compound

Exercise 4: Watch the video again and choose the correct option. In each question only one option is correct.

1. What are microplastics?

- a) Small plastic pellets used in industry
- b) Shredded plastic waste particles
- c) Plastic bottles and shopping bags
- d) Synthetic clothing and car parts

2. What is plastic made of?

- a) Compost
- b) Natural gas, crude oil, or coal
- c) Biodegradable materials
- d) Metal and glass

3. What is the size range of microplastics?

- a) Between 5 mm and 1 micrometer
- b) Between 1 mm and 5 micrometers
- c) Between 1 mm and 5 mm
- d) Between 5 millimeters and 1 centimeter

4. What are primary microplastics?

- a) Small plastic pellets used in industry
- b) Shredded plastic waste particles
- c) Plastic bottles and shopping bags
- d) Synthetic clothing and car parts

5. What is one of the biggest causes of microplastics?

- a) Synthetic clothing
- b) Plastic bottles
- c) Car tires
- d) Electrical appliances

6. How do microplastics get into our water bodies?

- a) Through rain transferring plastic into the sewage system
- b) Through animals consuming them as food
- c) Through cleaning processes in factories
- d) Through recycling processes

7. Why are microplastics harmful to animals?

- a) They cause hormonal imbalances
- b) They can lead to internal injuries and inflammations
- c) They can cause illnesses and death
- d) All of the above

8. Where can microplastics be found in our foods?

- a) Salt, honey, and milk
- b) Meat, vegetables, and fruits
- c) Cereals, bread, and pasta
- d) Beverages, such as soda and juice

9. What is the main message of the text?

- a) To promote the use of plastic
- b) To raise awareness about the harmful effects of microplastics
- c) To encourage people to use more plastic bags
- d) To suggest ways to increase the amount of plastic waste in nature

10. What can individuals do to reduce the amount of microplastics in nature?

- a) Stop using plastic altogether
- b) Properly dispose of plastic waste
- c) Find alternatives to plastic
- d) All of the above

Speaking

Exercise 5: Read the opinions on microplastics. Which one can you relate to? Explain why, provide examples from your personal experience.

Jennifer: "I strongly support the ban on single-use plastics because of the devastating impact it has on marine life. I personally witnessed a sea turtle that was found dead, with its stomach filled with plastic bags and other debris."

Mike: "I am still undecided because while I understand the environmental concerns with microplastics, there are practical uses for them, such as in the medical industry for surgical instruments."

Sarah: "I am against banning all forms of plastics because it will negatively impact the economy and cause job losses. We should focus on recycling and reducing waste instead."

David: "It breaks my heart to see how pollution and careless behavior have led to the contamination of our oceans and harm to wildlife. We need to take responsibility and make changes to protect our planet for future generations."

Exercise 6: Connect the words into logical statements.

E.g. The sewage system in our city needs improvement for better disposal of waste.

1. sewage system / disposal
2. plastic bottles / consequences
3. to-go cups / biodegradable
4. artificially made material / wearing down
5. electric appliances / particles
6. home appliances / pollutant-rich

Exercise 7: Discuss the questions with your partner.

1. How has the production and use of plastic impacted the environment?
2. Can you name any alternatives to using plastic products?
3. Do you use any alternatives to plastic products? If yes, what do you use?
4. Are there any laws or regulations in your country regarding the use of plastic?
5. What are some innovative ways that people are repurposing or upcycling plastic materials?



Correct answers and teaching tips

Exercise 2: Match the words with their definitions.

- a. home appliance
- b. shredded
- c. wear down
- d. liquid
- e. crushed
- f. sewage system
- g. pollutant-rich
- h. consequence
- i. inflammation
- j. disposal

Exercise 3: Watch this [video](#) about microplastics and select the correct title for it.

*We copy-pasted the video transcript into the “Create three titles for a text” tool and generated several titles.

Correct title: The Threat of Microplastics

Exercise 4: Watch the [video](#) again and choose the correct option. In each question only one option is correct.

- 1. b
- 2. b
- 3. a
- 4. a
- 5. c
- 6. a
- 7. d
- 8. a
- 9. b
- 10. d

Exercise 6: Connect the words into logical statements.

*We used the “Create a list of sentences with your vocabulary” tool. Here is an example of our input: sewage system + disposal; plastic bottles + consequences.

Possible answers:

*these are only possible answers. Let your students be creative and use their imagination.

- 1. The sewage system in our city needs improvement for better disposal of waste.
- 2. The consequences of not recycling plastic bottles will be severe.
- 3. I always ask for to-go cups that are biodegradable when I visit coffee shops.
- 4. The artificially made material used in shoes is slowly wearing down over time.
- 5. The exhaust from electric appliances contains harmful particles that can impact air quality.
- 6. Many home appliances, like air purifiers and vacuum cleaners, can be pollutant-rich.