

Plastics in our Bays

TRUE OR FALSE Read the statement about plastic pollution in the boxes, decide if it is true or false, then write T or F in the bubbles.

Plastics are the most common form of marine debris.

T

Once in the water, plastic debris can fully biodegrade, it just takes a very long time.

F

Marine animals are smart enough not to mistake plastic for food, so they do not try to eat it.

F

Microplastics are small plastics less than 5mm and can be just as harmful as regular plastic to marine ecosystems.

T

All of the following kinds of plastics can be found in the bay: Mylar balloons, cigarette butts, wrappers, bottles, straws, cups, plates, bottle caps, single-use bags, and fishing line.

T

Proper disposal of our trash and recyclables does not help to reduce plastic pollution.

F



ANSWER KEY:

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1. Name 15-20 single-use plastics that you may find in the bay.

Examples: Wrappers, bottles, straws, cups, plates, bottle caps, single-use bags, utensils, cigarette butts, food containers, Mylar balloons, monofilament fishing line, 6 pack rings, packaging, single use coffee cups, stirrers, coffee cup lids, produce plastic bags, saran wrap, toothbrushes, floss picks etc...

2. How do these plastics get to the bay? Name ways the plastics can travel to the bay or be transported there. Think from miles away (inland), close up (shorelines), and on the water (boating).

Examples: Plastics can travel to the bay through wind, rain, stormwater runoff, dumping down drains, leaving behind items at the beach, littering, releasing balloons, animal transportation, and direct dumping.

3. When plastics get to the bay, what might happen to wildlife and to water quality?

Examples: Wildlife can ingest the plastic (an example is sea turtles mistaking a plastic bag as a jelly fish and eating it). Plastic, like 6 pack rings and fishing line, can choke animals or entangle them. Microplastics impact our water quality in our bays. Shellfish and fish consume microplastics which in turn can get ingested by humans and other animals up the food chain when eating seafood/prey. Plastics also leach toxins into the water, reducing water quality.

4. Name single-use plastics that you may use frequently.

Any listed from #1 and beyond.

5. Are there single-use plastics that you use that you could find a reusable and sustainable alternative to? If so, what are those alternatives? Would it be easy or difficult to make the switch?

Examples: **Reusable** bags, water bottles, straws, containers etc. Using materials like recycled paper, bamboo, stainless steel, glass, etc. Use materials that are biodegradable. Do not buy Mylar Balloons! And recycle things like fishing line.



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6. Name a few businesses that may use a lot of single-use plastics and why they might use them. Are there reusable and sustainable alternatives? If so, what are they?

Any business. See the examples of alternatives from number 5 above.

7. Write a strategy for how one of these businesses can become more environmentally friendly and reduce their single-use plastic.

Depending on the business of choice, examples and pointers include:

Take things step by step. Analyze budgets, compare costs of future changes/alternatives, and make a plan. Take action and change the options you choose; the materials you use and buy. Which items make the most impact to the environment? Perhaps those should be the first items changed out? Follow local and state regulations. Take surveys from your customers or clients and gain feedback that can lead you in the direction of what will be easy to change and what may not. Do your customers or clients feel certain use of plastic is unnecessary? Think about which items you dispose of the most and perhaps tackle that first. How do you dispose of it? Recycle, trash, drain, or dumping? Do you need to change how you dispose of your plastics? What can you easily change tomorrow? What will take longer? Are there items that there are no alternatives for? Maybe you can invent a new way!

8. Write a strategy for how YOU can become more environmentally friendly and reduce your single-use plastic. Put this into action and have your family and friends try too!

Follow the same approach as question 7 above.

