



ALXDOGWALK  
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# ● *Be Loyal to the Planet*

● *"I can change the world  
with mosaic art!"*



**Warning:** Contents for kids of all ages!

## Dear Friends,

At the ALX Dog Walk, our tails are wagging that you're interested in teaching young people about plastic pollution and consumption through *Be Loyal to the Planet*, an upcycled mosaic art community awareness project! Upcycled art involves repurposing existing materials into something beautiful. This project asks students to collect plastic bits, buttons, and small toys to repurpose them into beautiful works of mosaic art. This project was inspired by artist, Jane Perkins, who creates incredible works of plastic upcycled art, and she welcomes this collaboration (more about Jane on page 15!).

**ALX Dog Walk.** ALX Dog Walk, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, aims to educate citizens in the District, Maryland, Virginia area about plastic-free and sustainable living while also raising funds to beautify and protect the City of Alexandria. Our furry friends help us to attract attention and deliver our messages in a lighthearted way.

**Project Goal.** We hope that through this fun art activity, your kids walk away, not only with a sense of artistic accomplishment and information about plastic pollution, but with the idea that we all are called to *Be Loyal to The Planet* by limiting and/or eliminating our plastic consumption. This kit contains:

- **Teaching Tools:** We've prepared valuable and easy lessons about plastic pollution and consumption with fun learning activities. Dig in!
- **Easy step-by-step instructions:** We've kept directions for this project short and simple, and we've even provided artwork templates for kids to recreate.
- **Certificate of Appreciation:** We believe it's important to recognize kids' efforts, and we've provided a *You Did Good Certificate* to award.

**Something for everyone.** This kit is designed for elementary school-aged kids at home, in school, or with clubs or faith groups. We also know that older kids love projects like this as well. Encourage teens to supervise younger kids' projects or even organize their own artwork project.

Thanks again for being part of ALX Dog Walk's awareness efforts!








Bark on!

Julie  
Founder  
www.alxdogwalk.com  
@alxdogwalk



## ***Be Loyal to the Planet*** **Community Awareness Project**

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# Be Loyal to the Planet

## Project Overview

### Did You Know?

In the U.S. alone, every 5 minutes, 2,000,000 plastic bottles are used and tossed in the trash? Did you also know that one garbage truck load of trash enters our oceans every minute of every day? We've become a throwaway culture, and it's estimated that by 2050, more plastic objects will exist in the ocean than fish! It's time to bark loudly about this issue!

Plastic is made of petroleum and oil – it never, ever biodegrades. Exposure to the climate eventually breaks plastic into tiny microplastics that leach into our streams, rivers, oceans, land, and, ultimately, our food chain. Research shows that these microplastics harm the health of animals, sea life, and humans. Let's work together to raise awareness - especially with our youngest stewards of the planet - to the need to reduce plastic consumption and increase recycling and upcycling. Working together, and by taking small steps like this one, we can do it!

### Instructions:

- We've provided artwork templates to use as a guide for mosaic creations, pages 7-12. Or, create mosaic designs from scratch! Kids can team up in pairs, groups, or go it alone.
- Reach out to parents and ask them to rummage through their homes for plastic buttons, small toys, and another other small plastic objects.
- For each mosaic, use a firm board made of sturdy cardboard, wood, or canvas. The size and type of board depends on the size of art and the potential weight of the piece – the larger the artwork, the stronger the board.
- Hot glue every piece and then apply Mod Podge between the pieces, wiping off the surface as you go.
- Allow ample time for the kids to create their mosaics. Maybe even a couple days or weeks depending on your teaching schedule.
- Recognize your kids' accomplishments with our *You Did Good* certificate on page 14.

### Supplies List:

- Firm board of canvas, wood, heavy cardboard, or recycled plastic (2-3 kids, approx 16"x20"; 8-10 kids, approx 24"x36")
- Collection of buttons, tiny toy pieces, and other small plastic pieces
- Containers to separate plastic pieces by color (cut a milk jug in half)!
- Hot glue (for every piece) and Mod Podge (for in between pieces)
- Drop cloth or old newspapers, and rags – glue can be messy
- Camera for documenting the event

### Raise Awareness:

Not only can you teach your young leaders about plastic pollution, but this activity offers an excellent opportunity to share the artwork with others at school and in the community. Raise additional awareness by hosting an exhibition of the artwork in school hallways/cafeteria, a local church or community center, etc. Name the exhibit "Be Loyal to the Planet," and display key facts about plastic pollution, consumption, and recycling/upcycling found in this kit.

Any time period makes sense for this lesson plan, but you could also tie-in with national/global environmental holidays.

Note: Another fun awareness project idea is to develop a contest to collect plastic used at home for one month. Classes can build sculptures and host an exhibit or compete with other classes/grades or even schools.

## LESSON PLAN

### Facts about Plastic Pollution



#### Why do we use plastic?

Plastic is made of gas and oil, it's really inexpensive and easy to make, allows the companies to get their products to the stores quickly, and consumers have become accustomed to the convenience of plastic packaging. Also, the stores that sell products packaged in plastic like the convenience too. Everyone is responsible, and, sadly, less than 6% of all plastic is recycled in the U.S. See page 16 for a backgrounder, *Why So Much Plastic?*

**Exercise:** Make a list of all the products that you use in your home that are packaged in plastic? Pick a room, ex: kitchen, bathroom, etc.

#### When did plastic pollution begin?

Plastic was accidentally discovered by a scientist in the 1930s and became mass produced around the 1950s. At the time, the scientific community didn't realize how harmful plastics were to the environment. Today, with our advanced science, we know the negative impact of plastic. Unfortunately, we've been producing tons of plastics each year ever since. Today, we crank out 300 million tons annually. Can you imagine that every piece of plastic ever made still exists on this planet!

**Exercise:** Color in the Earth Template picture on page 8.

#### How does plastic affect our environment?

Plastic sitting in landfills breaks down into micro-plastics that float into our streams, rivers, and oceans and, ultimately, end up in our tap water and food supply. For example, animals of all kinds mistake small plastic bottle caps and other shards of plastic as food which makes them sick.

**Exercise:** Discuss the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. See page 17 for a backgrounder, *The Great Pacific Garbage Patch*.

## LESSON PLAN, CON'T.



### How can we solve the plastic pollution problem?



#### 1) Think Big, Start Small

The plastic pollution problem can feel overwhelming. So, think big about the problem and raise awareness, but start your plastic free lifestyle with a small step. You'll feel good about your action, and this will lead you to the next action and the next.

To begin your plastic free lifestyle, select one or two products in your home that you can swap out for a plastic free product. For example, when it's time, replace your plastic toothbrush with a toothbrush made of bamboo. Most bamboo toothbrushes have soft nylon bristles that effectively remove bacteria and whiten teeth. Bamboo, a fast-growing plant, requires no pesticides, fertilizers, and little water. BTW, we toss one billion plastic toothbrushes every year in the U.S., and every toothbrush ever used since 1930s still exists today!

**Exercise:** Challenge kids to choose one plastic-free step to work on in their home such as using plant-based trash bags, a bamboo toothbrush, bamboo toilet paper made without plastic packaging, etc. See page 20 for ideas.

#### 2) Recycle

There are over 9,000 different recycling programs in our country and keeping up with the rules can be confusing. Unfortunately, less than 6% of all plastic is recycled. We recommend visiting your city's website each year for updates. See page 19 for the backgrounder, *Recycling*.

**Exercise:** Complete the "Word Finder" on page 13.

#### 3) Upcycle

Upcycling is the process of turning waste, often of the sort that is usually considered "unrecyclable", into something that is useful or of value. A popular form of upcycling involves creating art with items of waste. As artist Jane Perkins has demonstrated (page 15), the results can be spectacular.

**Exercise:** Discussion: Think about ways to upcycle a milk jug? For example, cut it in half and plant something, etc.



# Earth Template



*Earth, mosaic by Jane Perkins*



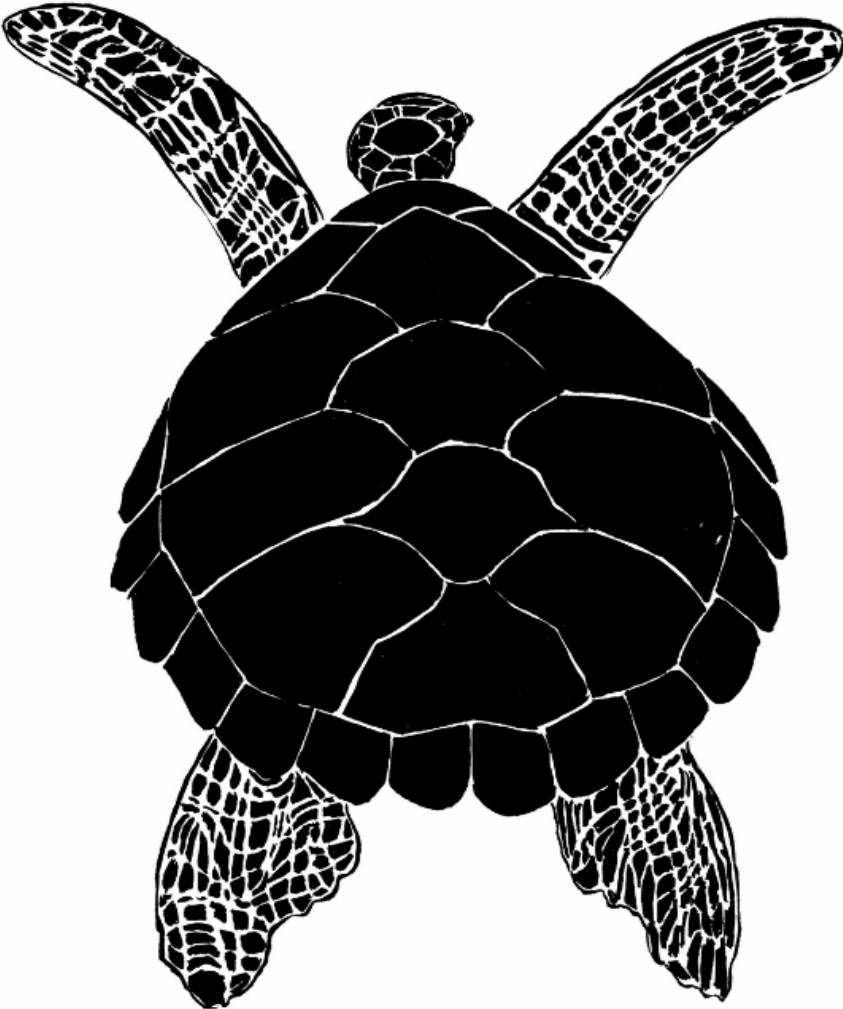
# Earth Template



## Sea Turtle Template



# Turtle Template

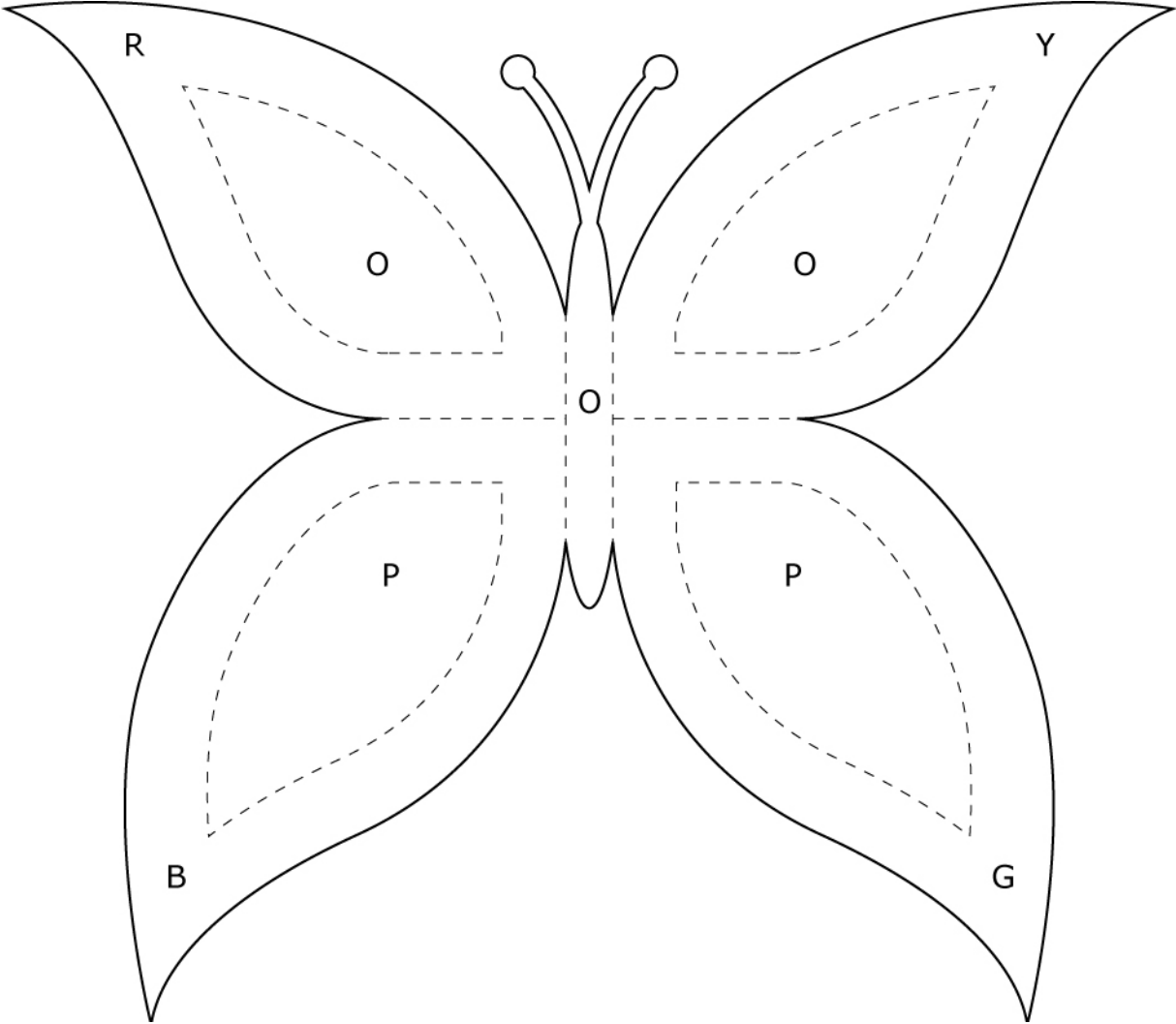


# Butterfly Template





# Butterfly Template



**R** = Red      **O** = Orange      **Y** = Yellow      **P** = Purple  
**G** = Green      **B** = Blue



## Things That Cannot Be Recycled!

W O V B F A B X M B Y X T N F F C F K E  
D C T Q G M L F F E L H P A G H K D A Z  
K F B P O T A T O C H I P B A G A N H B  
B Q W P X G C W N K B X C P D P T U C O  
O U X N Y N S E F Y C U Q X X C C C O T  
K J U U Z I N K R G B Y B E T E A J E T  
X H Y K U E R E X E D D G B Q A N X O L  
B S D R C T V A M H A J O I L F D P K E  
P L A S T I C W R A P L E A B E Y Z Z C  
D V J U P M I E X U P N B T H F W I W A  
K X Z I P L O C K B A G Q A A D R R G P  
G E N K Q X D I N T X H V W G S A X A K  
D U Z M A O H D T R H V V U H S P Q S P  
W B M C L H L T I A Q E X H B S P N W K  
B C E B O U B R T S D B U T U I E N R U  
S Z H I H L D N N H S H U G U R R I I L  
D U K S E G D B B B L I W R Q L K H H S  
F C E O V W O I Z A X Y F X Y Z W Q F P  
C L A U Q N E D Z G R A C L A U M O Q Q  
N N M F X O G U E U B H O L B Y X X L X

potato chip bag

candy wrapper

plastic wrap

bubble wrap

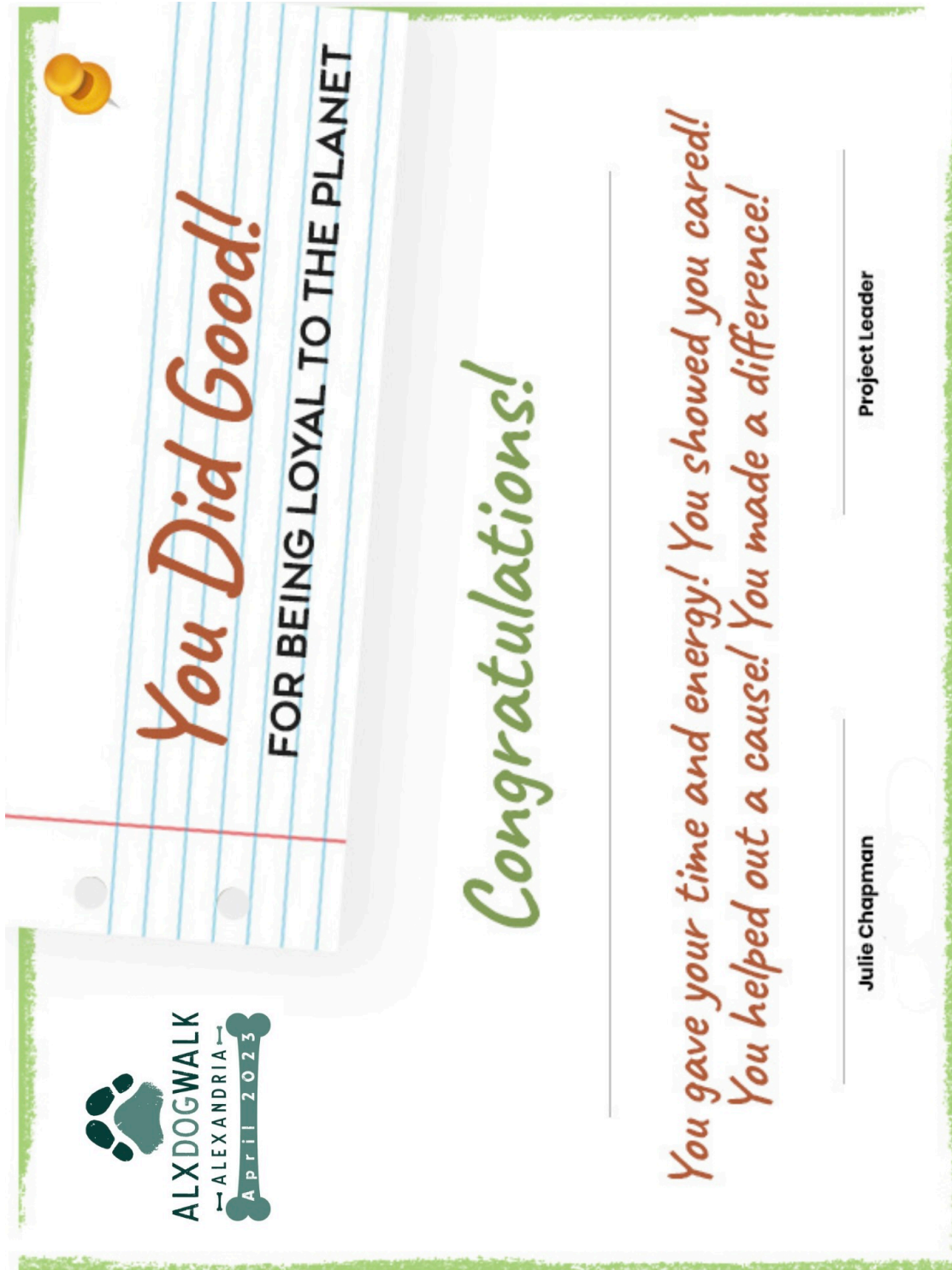
ziplock bag

cereal bag

bottle cap

trash bag

# You Did Good! Certificate



## LESSON PLAN BACKGROUNDEERS

### Backgrounder: Jane Perkins, An Artist to Know!

There are so many things that make us smile at ALX Dog Walk. A tasty snack, a nice snooze in the sun and most of all... belly scratches!

In her own words, Jane Perkins "loves art with an element of fun" and hopes her work using upcycled materials makes people smile!

When she was in her forties, Jane left her nursing role to go to art school. While she was there, she was fascinated with creating brooches out of old toys and mementos that friends gave her or that she bought from garage sales.

Jane found that a lot of the materials she collected were too big to be made into jewelry. She then had the idea of creating portraits with the leftover materials... which is what she is known for today!

She has made numerous portraits of familiar faces including Nelson Mandela, Albert Einstein, Queen Elizabeth, and many others.

Jane creates her works of art at her studio in Devon, in South West England. No color is added to the materials she uses; it's all used 'as found'.

Jane recommends viewing her portraits in two different ways. From a distance, so you can see the whole image, and then up close so you can see the toys, buttons and beads that make up the final portrait.

You learn more about Jane and see some of her portraits on her website:

<https://janeperkins.co.uk/>



*Sunflowers, 2014,  
after Van Gogh*



*Pride*



*The Great Wave, after  
Hokusai, 2015*



*Diva*

## Backgrounder: Why So Much Plastic?

Before answering this question, we want to say for the record that we're just a bunch of do-good dogs looking to address plastic pollution. No politics in our dog house! We want to point this out because when bringing up the issue of who's responsible for plastic production, the topic can begin to feel political.

Let's start with the basics: plastic consists of oil, gas, and other chemicals. Since its usage began in the 1930's, we've been told it was safe to use and safe to trash. Today, we realize the inaccuracies of both. So, why do we continue to have so much plastic in the world? It's really a multi-part answer, and we're all involved.

First, oil and gas companies. Plastic is cheap, easy to make, and demand steadily continues to grow. They're doing what they know best – extracting resources to make and sell a product. The industry earns \$400 billion annually.

Second, manufacturers and retailers have and continue to embrace the opportunity to use plastic. To switch to sustainable packaging would require a huge investment of time and resources.

Third, governments around the world provide insufficient consumer support in the areas of research, education, and regulations. Most people still don't understand how to recycle!

Finally, consumers. Until recent years, we've been told that plastic was A-OK for our health, the landfills, and the environment in general. However, armed with different information today, we still choose to buy products packaged in plastic, throw them away, and buy again and again.

***Plastic production is expected to triple in the next thirty years.*** Let's work like dogs to spread the word and use our plastic consumer power to break this chain of plastic consumption.

Take small steps in your home and watch the ripple effect occur!

Bark on!

## **Backgrounder: The Great Pacific Garbage Patch**

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is one of several big patches of garbage and debris floating in the ocean. This particular patch, most of which is plastic, floats in the middle of the northern Pacific Ocean between Hawaii and California. The plastic garbage patch formed because currents near the center of the Northern Pacific Ocean move around in a circle, which catches and traps floating pieces of plastic.

Currently, there is 80,000 tons of plastic in this floating garbage patch 1.6 million square kilometers in size (twice the size of Texas!). In addition, the seafloor beneath the Great Pacific Garbage Patch may also be an underwater trash heap. Oceanographers and ecologists recently discovered that about 70% of marine debris actually sinks to the bottom of the ocean.

It's estimated that 1-3 trillion pieces of plastic exist in this garbage patch, and the impact on sea life is enormous. For example, plastic will account for approximately 74% of the diet of sea turtles that enter the area!

For more educational information, check out OceanCleanUp.com and these videos:

**Great Pacific Garbage Patch, :02 minutes**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EyaTqezSzs>

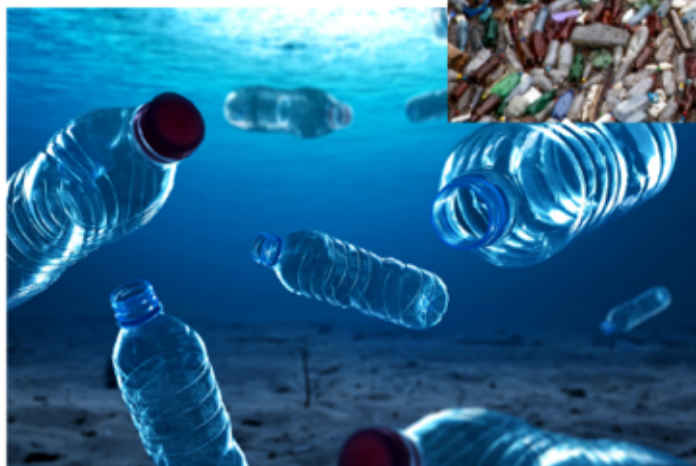
**Documentary film, A Plastic Wave, :24 minutes**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-dpv2xbFyk>

**A PBS NewsHour Documentary, The Plastic Problem, :54 minutes**

<https://www.pbs.org/video/the-plastic-problem-7kdvzo/>





## Backgrounder: Recycling

Did you know that the average American goes through more than 250 pounds of plastic waste a year?

That's nearly four fully-grown golden retrievers!

It might be tempting to throw all your plastic straight in the recycling bin but stop and pause before you do this. Not everything can be recycled.

Some plastic can be recycled, but other plastics cannot, for example:

- 1) Thin plastic film that covers vegetables, meat, and cheese. This can quickly wrap around recycling equipment, bringing the whole plant to a standstill!
- 2) Small pieces like bread bag clips, bottle caps, and pill packaging can cause issues too. They fall between the belts and gears and ultimately end up in the trash.
- 3) Contaminated plastic can't be recycled as it may pollute the rest of the plastic at the recycling plant.
- 4) Flexible packaging is any non-rigid plastic used to protect things – like candy wrappers, potato chip bags, and detergent packets.

The great news is that bottles can be recycled. Your humble plastic bottle may end up as carpet, cozy fleece clothing, or even... more plastic bottles! To be on the safe side, give the bottle a rinse out under the tap beforehand and remove the label and cap.

If in doubt, check your local city recycling requirements!

## Backgrounder: Plastic-free Alternatives

<u>Plastic Item</u>	<u>Plastic-Free Alternative</u>
Candy (wrappers are plastic)	Buy Bulk Candy; Foil is OK Too
Clothes (spandex, nylon, etc.)	Cotton, Silk, Linen, Bamboo, etc.
Dish Brushes	Wood Brushes
Storage Food Bags	Silicon Bags/Stainless Steel Containers
Grocery Shopping Bag	Paper or Cloth Bag
Toothbrush	Bamboo Toothbrush
Plastic Wrap	Bees Wax Wrap
Soap Dispenser	Glass Dispenser
Plastic Products in Stores	Shop in Bulk with Paper/Cloth Bags
Soda Bottles	Glass Bottles/Aluminum
Sponges	Sponge
Straws	No Straws!
Toilet Paper w/Plastic Packaging	Bamboo Paper w/out Plastic Packaging



## FINAL TO-DO'S!

- ❑ Email us your feedback!  
[bestfriends@alxdogwalk.com](mailto:bestfriends@alxdogwalk.com) ... thank you!
- ❑ "Follow-us" @alxdogwalk on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter and receive great information on the topic. Serve as a catalyst, and share the info with your network!
- ❑ Tell us about your project and send us your photo/videos.

# Bark on!