

Pollution Briefing:

1. Good day children and teachers, today I am going to be talking to you about pollution, some of the problems it causes and its effect on the environment. But I am also going to tell you how we can fix these problems so we can live in a beautiful healthy environment/ community.
2. Did you know that every 5 seconds, 60,000 plastic bags are thrown away in the USA alone
3. That's 1, 2,3,4,5.... 60 thousand 1, 2,3,4,5... 120 thousand! So in the time it has taken me to count out those 10 seconds 120 000 plastic bags have been thrown away. Now can you imagine how many that is in a day, a week, a year...?
4. This is what 60, 000 plastic bags looks like and this is what gets used every 5 seconds in one country!
5. They also use 2 million plastic bottles every 2 minutes
6. They buy them to drink coke, fanta, water and then simply throw them away.
7. This is what 2 million plastic bottles looks like; it's literally an ocean of plastic!
8. You may be asking so what? How does this affect me? How does this affect the environment?
9. Well firstly where does all this rubbish go? For people who live in towns and cities their rubbish is taken away to a landfill site, where it is treated and stored in a controlled environment. This is because dumping rubbish in the environment or near our homes can cause serious health issues. It brings pests like rats and cockroaches which carry disease and make people sick.
10. Landfills are areas of land specifically set aside for the control disposal of rubbish so that we can keep the areas we live in clean. Rubbish that doesn't go to a landfill ends up as litter, which gets blown by the wind or rain into streams, rivers and eventually the ocean.
11. Rubbish made of natural products such as food, vegetables, rice, phutu, even newspaper doesn't last forever in the ground. It decomposes. Decomposing or rotting is a natural process which breaks down things into their simpler forms and returns it to the earth.
The process is very important for new growth and development if living organism because it recycles nutrients back into the soils.
So instead of throwing away old food or the parts of plants we don't eat, like vegetable peels we can keep them to make compost which can be mixed with the soil to help our crops grow better
12. But different things decompose at different rates, depending on what they are made of. Decomposition is caused by fungi, bacteria, insects and other scavengers. These pictures show some of these decomposers. You have fungi, which is your mushrooms and moulds, earthworms which live in the soil, bacteria which you cannot see but they are there helping to decompose and insects which often lay their eggs on the decomposing things, when the eggs hatch they eat whatever they have been laid on and decompose it. So when we see

mushrooms growing on a fallen down tree, we know they are breaking down the dead wood and the goodness is returned to the soil so new plants and trees can grow.

13. This list shows the time it takes for some of our daily household items to decompose.

- Banana peel: 3-4 weeks
- Newspaper: 6 weeks
- Paper towel: 1 month
- Apple Core: 2 months
- Cigarette butt: 1 year
- Plastic bag: 10-20 years
- Leather: 50 years
- Disposable nappy: 500 years
- Aluminum Can: 80-200 years
- Glass bottle: 1 million+
- **Plastic Bottle: Never**

PLASTIC NEVER DECOMPOSES! It sits in the ground forever and poisons it.

14. Not all things decompose!

Some things are made of unnatural substances, like plastic and cannot be decomposed by nature. These things need to be RECYCLED, this means using the material over and over again to make new things. Plastic packets, bottles, toys etc. can all be recycled to make new plastic bottles this means we don't have to keep making new plastic & we don't have old plastic littering our environment. Plastic is very harmful to the environment and because it never decomposes, it builds up in the environment, so eventually everywhere will be filled with plastic if we don't stop making new plastic.

15. Unfortunately this doesn't always happen, only 32% of rubbish is recycled, the rest sits in landfills for 1000's of years or litters our streets and environment. And people keep making new things, which are eventually thrown away into landfills.

16. So what about the rubbish that doesn't go into a landfill, but ends up as litter in the environment? Litter pollutes our environment and water. If animals eat litter it makes them sick, some even die

17. Litter also dirties our water. We need water to drink, cook, and wash our clothes and bodies. When we throw plastic and rubbish into the water it can poison it, and that makes us sick, and kills all the fish and plants living in the water. Rubbish can also block the water from flowing which makes puddles and small dams of water. This is where disease can be spread and even if you just play in the water you can get sick from the parasites in it.

18. Water gives us life, that is why we need to protect it and keep it clean

19. So if we want to change things and look after the environment, what can we do? What must we do?

20. These photos were taken of some very badly polluted areas, you can see a lot of litter, rubbish and the water is green and dirty

21. But these photos were taken of the SAME areas after people had been to clean up all the litter and kept it clean. These areas are now clean, beautiful and healthy.

22. So we can do some simple things to help the environment.

First: **Reduce**, this means using less.

- Buy in bulk, so there is less packaging to throw away, if you buy 1 big tin of jam you only have 1 tin to recycle instead of 3 small tins.
- Don't waste water and electricity. Fix a leaking tap and DON'T leave taps running, this wastes lots of water which is very precious and not endless.
- Don't throw away things that aren't broken
- Use material bags instead of buying plastic bags every time you shop. This will save you money and stop new plastic being made. Remember plastic never breaks down so it just piles up in the environment.

23. Second **Reuse**: this means using something more than once, before throwing it away.

- Keep items for later use, reuse plastic bottles rather than buying new ones
- Donations – maybe someone else can use what you throw away
- Use items to make crafts

24. Third **Recycle**:

- Separate real rubbish from things that can be recycled.
- Take recyclable items to a recycling Drop off zone
- Think about how long it takes something to decompose before just throwing it away.
- Maybe you can even get your school involved and they can have a recycling drop off zone at the school, you could even have a competition to see which class can collect the most recycling.

25. These are all things which can be recycled.

- Glass
- Cans
- Metal
- Plastic
- Paper, including newspaper

26. We also need to remember: Do Not litter! Throw your rubbish in a bin, or find out if you can recycle it. We all share the earth and would not want to live in someone else's mess, and they do not want to live in your mess.

27. We can make a change and start TODAY cleaning our community and environment.

It will mean:

- Less litter, so our bodies will be healthier and our animals won't get sick from eating litter.
- Clean water for us to use and play in
- Clean environment for other animals to live in and beautiful bush and nature which is very important for the Earth