



Plastic In Our Oceans

Key words:

Microplastics, food chain, drains

School Plastics Challenge
Week Three

Plastic in our Oceans

Plastic is **cheap** and **long-lasting**.

The qualities that make it useful are also the qualities that make it a **huge problem**.

People throw it away without much thought.

Then it hangs around in the environment for a **LONG time**.



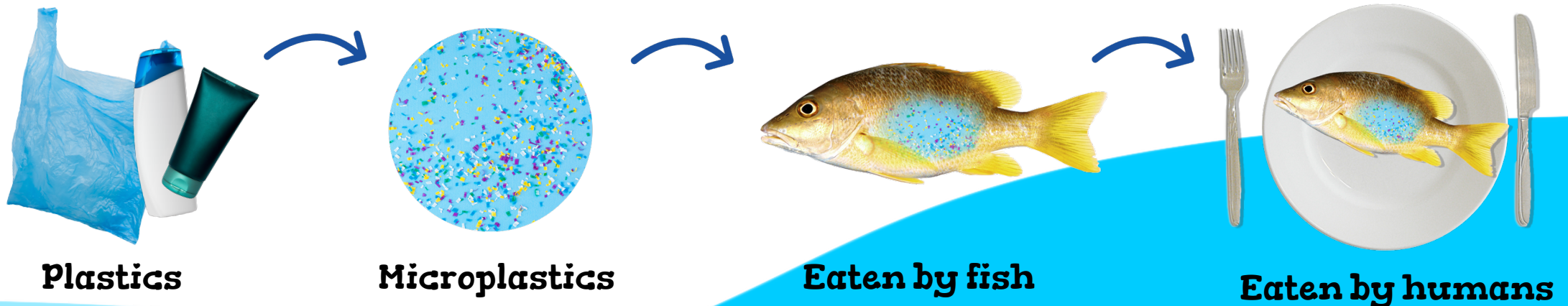
How does this affect sea creatures?

- Sea creatures can mistake plastic for food.
- Their stomachs can get so full of plastic that there is no room for real food.



What about microplastics?

- Remember plastic does not disappear, it just breaks up into smaller pieces (microplastics).
- Fish often eat the microplastic by mistake, the plastic may then enter the **food chain!**



What are other dangers?



Sea creatures can get **trapped** or **tangled** up in litter.

They **struggle** to free themselves, especially when they do not have two hands to help!



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Try the tangle activity

Ask a partner to pretend their hand is a bird or a fish.

Take a rubber band and wrap it around their fingers (not too tight!).

Challenge your partner to remove the rubber band (on their own) without using their other hand.



How does litter get there?

Litter dropped on the street or towpath doesn't stay there.

Rainwater and wind carries plastic waste into canals, streams and rivers, and through drains.

Drains, rivers and many canals lead to the **ocean!**



Rain washes
litter into
drains

Litter travels
along rivers
from cities

Underground
drains lead to
rivers or the sea

Canals often
lead to rivers
or even to the
sea

Follow the path
of a piece of
litter to the sea.

