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## WHEN IS PLASTIC A PROBLEM?

Plastics have become a huge pollution problem that won't go away easily in our country or in many other parts of the world. Use this true or false quiz to assess your plastic pollution understanding:

**T or F** Plastic discarded on land can get washed into rivers and end up in the ocean.

**T or F** Plastic can harm animals in the environment through ingestion or entanglement.

**T or F** Scientists estimate that 8 million metric tons of plastic enter our oceans every year.

**T or F** Scientists have found plastics in the depths of the world's oceans and at the summits of some of the world's highest mountains.

**T or F** 50 percent of plastic used globally is used only once, and then is discarded.

How did you do? The answers to all of the questions above are true!

Why do you think action is needed around plastic pollution locally?

Why do you think action is needed around plastic pollution globally?

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## ACTION STEPS

Of what you learned today, what is most important to you?

How will you use this learning in real-life scenarios?

## MAKE A PLEDGE!

Write one or two pledges for combating plastic pollution.

Thank you for helping to fight plastic pollution.

Share your stories on social media: #EXPEDITIONPLASTIC



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Learn more about National Geographic's Sea to Source Expedition at [NationalGeographic.org/projects/plastic](https://NationalGeographic.org/projects/plastic)

Learn more about and download the Marine Debris Tracker app at [marinedebris.engr.uga.edu](https://marinedebris.engr.uga.edu)

# PLASTIC POLLUTION ACTION JOURNAL

NAME:

This six-step booklet is designed to help with thinking about our relationships to plastic and also plastic's relationship with our natural environment. Add your thoughts and ideas. Collect data, and analyze it. At the end, think about how we can all take action as individuals, and also together, locally to globally.

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## HOW IS PLASTIC PART OF MY LIFE?

Plastics are lightweight, durable, and long lasting. No wonder they are used for so many purposes in our daily lives. Think about how you use plastics:

I use these items...

... to do these things:



Plastic bag



Plastic bottle



Have you ever found plastic items to be a problem? Explain...

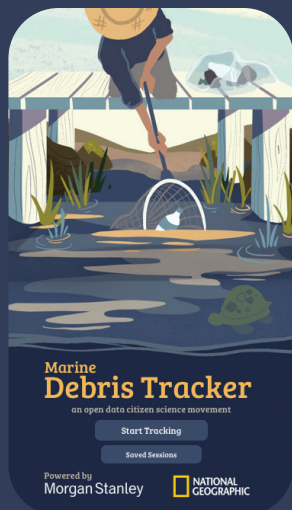
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## USING SCIENCE TO UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM

We know plastic pollution is a problem, but there's a lot we don't understand. Researchers from Bangladesh, India, U.S.A., and U.K. are working together as part of National Geographic's Sea to Source Expedition to try to answer these questions:

- How does plastic move from land to rivers and ultimately into the ocean?
- What are the most commonly littered plastics? Where do we find plastic littered on land?
- Are there microplastics in the air, water, and sediment near rivers?
- Why do people use plastic? What are the barriers to change?

What questions do you have about plastic?



### DATA FOR RESEARCH

To help answer questions about common types of plastic, we are using an app called **Marine Debris Tracker (MDT)** to record the plastic we find in the environment.

You can help us track this litter. As you observe litter on land or in water with your school or community, use the Litter Tracking Sheet 4 to share your findings.

The data you collect can help us understand the most commonly littered plastics and where we find them.

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## LITTER TRACKING SHEET

Working with a partner or group, keep track of plastic litter\* found on land or in water by writing a tally mark for each item found in each category below.

	TOTAL
Plastic food wrappers	<input type="text"/>
Plastic bottles	<input type="text"/>
Plastic caps or lids	<input type="text"/>
Plastic bags	<input type="text"/>
Plastic straws	<input type="text"/>
Plastic utensils	<input type="text"/>
Foam or plastic cups or plates	<input type="text"/>
Personal care items	<input type="text"/>
Plastic string or tape	<input type="text"/>
Fishing rope or net pieces	<input type="text"/>
Hard plastic fragments	<input type="text"/>
Thin plastic fragments	<input type="text"/>
Foam fragments	<input type="text"/>
Cigarettes	<input type="text"/>
Other <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Analyze this data in 5. You can also submit data via the Marine Debris Tracker (MDT) app. Thank you for contributing valuable data to scientific research.

TOTAL

\*Data for non-plastic litter can also be added to MDT. Tally this data as "other" items.

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## ANALYZE & FIND SOLUTIONS

Look at your data. What is the most collected plastic waste?

Where did you see the most litter? Why do you think it was there?

How can you use the four Rs toward solutions?

### 4 Rs

**REDUCE**  
To decline in size, amount, numbers, or intensity

**REUSE**  
To use something more than once

**RECYCLE**  
To recover waste and reprocess it into useful material

**REFUSE**  
To be unwilling to accept

### WHAT YOU CAN DO