Climate and Nature Summit
Back to Basics: Recycling - Teacher's notes

Video objectives

The aim of this lesson is to help students:

- Understand more about the process and impact of recycling
- Pose waste and plastic recycling as a global justice issue
- Suggest some collective and individual actions we can take to transform our systems

Recycling is a broad topic, and constitutes many different processes and materials. This video concentrates on the ethical and environmental implications of global plastic recycling systems.

Global citizenship education

This video approaches the issue of recycling from a global citizenship education (GCE) approach. GCE is "a lifelong educational process, which aims to increase public awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, inter-dependent and unequal world in which we live. By challenging stereotypes and encouraging independent thinking, GCE helps people to critically explore how global justice issues interlink with their everyday lives and how they can act to build a better world." (Irish Aid, 2020)

Worldwise Global Schools defines the guiding principles of GCE as:

- Unlearning and reconstructing
- Find root causes of injustice
- Prioritising human rights
- Making local to global links
- Acting in solidarity

This video uses these guiding principles to approach the topic, and these teachers notes will support you to better engage with the topic.

Learning outcomes

See the last page of this document for a list of the connections between this video and curriculum outcomes at Junior and Senior Cycles.

Additional support

- Alex Whyatt, the creator of this video, will be holding an online CPD session on the 19th November which will be co-hosted by the ISSN and ESCI Ireland. Register at this link.
- An accompanying student worksheet can also be downloaded from the ISSN website.

- There are more resources to explore waste and recycling on the WWGS website including a thematic workshop with Claire Downey from CRNI and other CPD and teaching resources.

Final task

If students are very motivated by the final task of designing a waste-free school, discuss some ways in which they might implement some of these ideas. How can they engage with different stakeholders to reduce school waste?

- Other students
- School teachers
- School administrative, janitorial and canteen staff
- School management
- Board of management
- Local businesses

Templates for school-based climate action can be found on pages 69 - 76 of GAP's TY resource.

Follow-up resources

More information on the topic can be found on the websites of these orgsanisations:

- Global Action Plan
- Irish Schools Sustainability Network
- CRNI
- CirculEire
- Story of stuff
- EPA statistics on waste
- Rediscovery Centre
- Worldwise Global Schools
- RTE: What really happens to our recycling
- Discarded: Communities on the frontlines of the global plastic crisis

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Learning outcomes

This video supports students to approach the following learning outcomes.

Junior Cycle

Applied Technology • 1.6 - Understand the role, impact and potential of existing and emerging technologies • 3.8 - evaluate the impact of technologies on their lives, society and the environment
Business Studies • 1.1 - Review the personal resources available to them to realise their needs and wants, analyse the extent to which this impact on individuals and society • 1.9 - Debate the ethical and sustainability issues that arise from their consumption of goods and services and evaluate how they can contribute to sustainable development through consumer behaviour
CSPE Short Course • 2.1 - Communicate how they are connected to and dependent upon eco-systems, people and places, near and far • 2.4 - Discuss sustainability strategies that individuals, communities, businesses, agriculture and governments can employ to address climate change • 2.9 - Analyse one global issue or challenge, under the following headings: causes, consequences, impact on people's lives and possible solutions • 2.10 - Evaluate how they can contribute to responding to one challenge currently facing the world
Science • 3.10 - Evaluate how humans contribute to sustainability through the extraction, use, disposal and recycling of materials

Senior Cycle

Business (until Sept 2025) • 6.7.8 - Identify important environmental issues in business • 6.7.14 - Discuss the social responsibilities of business
Climate Action and Sustainable Development • 2.3 - outline and identify root causes of climate injustice • 2.4 - examine the impact and effectiveness of a personal behaviour in reducing negative consequences on the environment; compare to collective actions that aim to achieve wider systemic transformation through addressing root causes • 2.5 investigate the effectiveness of a climate action in a school-based setting
Engineering • 2.Plastics - Outline of the sources, physical structure, manufacture, classification and main forms of plastics
Geography • 4.3 - A single interdependent global economy has emerged with different areas having different roles • 6.2 - Economic activities have an environmental impact
Politics and Society • 8.1.2 Describe how their own purchases contribute to or address environmental justice, global poverty or underdevelopment through terms of trade dominated by western companies
Technology • Materials and production > Resource management: Recognise the need for economic and sustainable use of energy and materials (including recycling) and take account of time and other factors