

Have you heard about hidden plastic?

Not all plastics are easy to spot, let's take a closer look at one example of hidden plastic.

Take a look at this coffee cup. Many would call this a paper cup but did you know there is plastic hiding somewhere in this cup?

- **In addition to the plastic lid, where else in the cup do you think plastic is hiding?**



Let's learn about microplastics!

Some plastics are so small they're hard to see. Let's learn about them.

- **Write down some examples of plastic litter you have seen in the environment.**

- **Look over this list and describe the size range of these litter items.**

Have you ever heard of a plastic so tiny you may not even be able to see it? This is something called a microplastic. Microplastics are less than 5 mm in size (they can be as large as your pinky nail or even as small as the width of a strand of your hair). Microplastics are either made that small on purpose or they are found in the environment after larger pieces of plastic break up into smaller pieces of plastic.

Have a look at these two examples of microplastics.

Example 1: Microbeads

These used to be an ingredient in personal care products like face scrubs and toothpaste. They were banned in Canada on July 1, 2018.

- **Where do you think these microplastics might end up in the environment after being used?**



Example 2: Microplastic fragments from Humber Bay

This jar contains all types of microplastics collected near Humber Bay in Toronto. Have a close look and you'll see different sizes and colours. Most of these are fragments that broke off of larger bits of plastic.

- **Describe why these are challenging to clean up once they are in the environment.**



PART 2: How do you describe plastic?

Now that we've explored different examples of plastic, it's time to learn about a few different ways that we can categorize it.

- **List the plastic products from home that you have chosen to sort:**

- **List products that were moved to more than one sign (Opaque, Clear, Flexible, Rigid).
These are plastics that have more than one characteristic!**

- **Do you think the complexity of plastic materials might have an impact on their waste disposal?
Describe why or why not.**

Final reflection: Let's wrap up and reflect back on what we learned!

- **Can you list some examples of plastic products that are designed to be durable and long lasting?**

- **Can you list some examples of plastic products designed to be used for a short time?**

- **What are some words you can use to describe the different characteristics of plastic? Can you share what each of these words mean?**

- **What might happen to plastic left in the environment for a long time?**
