

Plastic pollution: lesson 4 of 4

Take action on plastic

Clean up, cut down and
speak up



Students from Zamboanguita Science High School at a coastal clean-up with MCP Photo: MCP

The best choices come first

Clean-ups and recycling help, but the best way to stop plastic reaching the sea is not to create the waste in the first place.



Who can fix the plastic problem?



Us

Refusing, reducing and reusing, and sorting our rubbish.



Companies

Making less plastic packaging, and taking back what they sell.



Governments

Laws, waste collection and recycling for every barangay.



The whole world

Countries are still negotiating a global treaty on plastic.



Laws in the Philippines

- Since 2000, the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (RA 9003) has required rubbish to be sorted at source and every barangay to have a recovery facility.
- Since 2022, the Extended Producer Responsibility Act (RA 11898) requires big companies to recover their plastic packaging: 20% by the end of 2023, rising to 80% by the end of 2028.
- Around the world, talks on a global plastics treaty failed to agree in 2025, and were still going on in 2026.



Rubbish collected on International Coastal Clean-up Day.
Photo: MCP



Choose your project



Project 1

Clean-up with data

Clean a beach, riverbank or schoolyard, and count what you find.



Project 2

Campaign

Persuade your school, a shop or your barangay to cut one kind of plastic.



Project 3

Upcycle

Turn waste into something useful, and keep it out of the bin.



Project 1: clean-up with data

1. Plan with an adult: where, when, and how to get there safely.
2. Bring gloves, sacks or buckets, and a clean-up data card for each team.
3. Pick up rubbish and count every item on the data card.
4. Weigh the sacks if you can.
5. Share your results with your barangay, your school or MCP.

Stay safe

Wear gloves and shoes.

Never touch needles, glass or chemicals. Tell an adult.

Stay away from the water's edge unless an adult says it is safe.



Project 2: campaign

1. Choose one target: straws at the canteen, sachets at the sari-sari store, or plastic bags at a market.
2. Collect evidence: use your class data and the facts from these lessons.
3. Suggest a better option, and explain why it works for them too.
4. Make a poster, write a letter or give a short talk.
5. Follow up: did anything change?



Project 3: upcycle

1. Collect clean plastic that would otherwise be thrown away.
2. Design something useful: a plant pot, a pencil holder, a bird feeder or an eco-brick.
3. Build it, and write a label saying what it was made from.
4. Remember: upcycling is great, but using less plastic in the first place is even better.

Ideas

Bottle-top mosaics

Bottle planters for the school garden

Woven bags from old sando bags



My plastic promise

One plastic item I will refuse:

One thing I will reuse:

One person I will tell about what I learned:

Well done! You have finished the plastic pollution lessons.



Photos and sources

Photos: Zamboanguita Science High School clean-up, beach clean-ups and collected rubbish by MCP. All illustrations drawn for this lesson by Marine Conservation Philippines.

Sources:

- OECD (2022). Global Plastics Outlook.
- Republic Act 9003 (2000). Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.
- Republic Act 11898 (2022). Extended Producer Responsibility Act.
- Research Institute for Sustainability (2026). Global plastics treaty negotiations.
- Marine Conservation Philippines. Organise a clean-up.

Full links are in the teacher reading. Free to use and share for education. Made by Marine Conservation Philippines. More free lessons: marineconservationphilippines.org/resources/teachers-resources/

