

# EPISODE FOUR

# WASTE

## TEACHER'S NOTES



Age Suitability 8-12 years ( 2nd – 6th Class)

### Focus:

In this episode, we focus on the issue of waste, which refers to anything we throw away because we no longer need or want it. If waste isn't properly managed, it can harm the earth, animals, and plants. We learn that Ireland creates millions of tonnes of waste every year. Around the world, people have polluted the Earth with rubbish. Even outer space is filled with human-made junk called space debris!"?

Solutions to the waste problem include buying only what you need, avoiding single-use items, choosing products with little or no packaging, reusing items as much as possible, and recycling or upcycling when waste cannot be avoided.

In this episode, the Researchers and the Disruptors come up with creative and bold ideas for cleaning up waste, and for giving discarded items a new lease on life!

### Points for Discussion:

- What is waste?
- Can you name some things we throw away as waste?
- What happens to waste when we put it in the bin?
- Why is it important to take care of waste properly?
- What is recycling, and why do we do it?
- How does waste harm animals, plants, and the earth?
- Can you think of items you've used today that will become waste?
- What are some ways we can reduce the amount of waste we create?
- Why do you think single-use items are a problem?
- Ireland produces a lot more waste per person than many other countries. We even produce the highest amount of plastic waste per person out of all of the countries in the European Union! What do you think would happen if everyone in the world produced as much waste as we do in Ireland?"
- If you were in charge, how would you help reduce waste in our school or community?

Teaching materials written by Claire Romito



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# Suggested Activities:

- Classroom waste audit - Collect the classroom waste for a week and conduct a "waste audit" by sorting through it to see how much is recyclable, compostable, or landfill-bound. The students could create graphs to illustrate the results and come up with ideas on how the class could reduce waste moving forward.
- Trash to treasure competition – The students could take discarded items and repurpose them into something useful or decorative. They could present their creations to the class, explaining what waste they used and how their item can help reduce waste.
- Waste sorting relay – The aim of this activity is to teach students how to properly separate waste. Set up a relay race where students must quickly sort different waste items into the correct bins. After the race, discuss why each item belongs in its category and what happens to it after it's disposed of.
- Waste-free school campaign - In small groups, the students could plan a campaign to reduce waste at school (e.g., setting up recycling bins, reducing plastic use, or holding a "no single-use plastic" day). They could design posters, create a presentation, or even make videos to spread their message.
- Field trip to a recycling plant or landfill – Many local recycling facilities and landfills offer free tours for groups of students so they can see firsthand what happens to waste. After a trip to such a facility, the students can have a group discussion about what they learned and what surprised them.
- Class debate: "Should We Ban Single-Use Plastics?" – The class could be divided into two groups: one supporting the ban on single-use plastics and the other against it. Have students research and prepare arguments, then hold a formal debate. Afterward, reflect on the points raised and have students vote on the issue.

# Curriculum Links:

This programme and resource compliment the teaching of Social, Environmental, and Scientific Education (SESE), as well as Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE) from the Irish Primary School Curriculum (1999). Specifically, the "Environmental Awareness and Care" strand of both the Science and Geography curricula, and the "Environmental Care" sub-unit of the "Myself and the Wider World" strand from the SPHE curriculum are relevant.



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