

# UNDERSTAND SOMEONE TALKING ABOUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

In this subtopic, you will learn to **understand spoken English** about **single use plastics**, a topic that appears frequently in news, everyday conversations, and environmental discussions.

You will learn:

- Key vocabulary about plastic waste
- Common phrases used when describing environmental problems
- How to recognize opinions, facts, and suggestions
- How to understand short talks, interviews, and explanations about plastic pollution

This subtopic prepares you to **listen actively**, take notes, and understand the main message even when some words are unfamiliar.

## Key Vocabulary: Single Use Plastics

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Example
<b>Single-use plastics</b>	Plastics used once and thrown away	<i>Straws and plastic bags are single-use plastics.</i>
<b>Pollution</b>	Damage to the environment	<i>Plastic pollution is increasing every year.</i>
<b>Landfill</b>	Place where waste is buried	<i>Most single use plastics end up in landfills.</i>
<b>Microplastics</b>	Small plastic fragments	<i>Microplastics can enter the food chain.</i>
<b>Ban</b>	Prohibit / make illegal	<i>Many countries ban plastic bags.</i>
<b>Eco friendly</b>	Good for the environment	<i>Reusable bottles are eco-friendly.</i>
<b>Waste</b>	Things we throw away	<i>Plastic waste has become a global issue.</i>
<b>Recycling system</b>	The process for collecting and reusing materials	<i>A good recycling system reduces pollution.</i>

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## Common Phrases When Talking About Single Use Plastics

- *“Most of these plastics are used for just a few minutes.”*
- *“They often end up in the ocean.”*
- *“They take hundreds of years to decompose.”*
- *“We can replace them with reusable options.”*
- *“Governments may introduce bans or regulations.”*
- *“Companies might reduce packaging if consumers ask for it.”*

Understanding these phrases helps you predict the speaker’s intention.

## Listening Strategy: Identifying the Speaker’s Purpose

When listening to someone talk about single use plastics, ask yourself:

1. **Are they explaining the problem?**  
*“Plastic pollution has increased...”*
2. **Are they giving an opinion?**  
*“I think people should stop using plastic bags.”*
3. **Are they suggesting solutions?**  
*“We could carry reusable containers.”*
4. **Are they describing consequences?**  
*“If we keep using plastics, the oceans will suffer.”*

## Model Listening Text (Short Talk)

*Read as if you were listening to someone speaking.*

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## “The Problem with Single Use Plastics”

*“Hi everyone. Today I want to talk about single use plastics. These are items like plastic bags, bottles, straws, and wrappers that we use once and then throw away. They may seem harmless, but they cause serious problems. Many single use plastics end up in the ocean, where they might harm marine animals. Sea creatures may eat them because they look like food. Another issue is that these plastics take hundreds of years to break down. As they decompose, they release microplastics, which could enter the food chain. The good news is that we can reduce the problem. If we use reusable bags and bottles, we may create much less waste. If more people recycle, pollution might decrease. Small actions can make a big difference.”*

### Model Dialogue: Discussing Single-Use Plastics

**Olivia:** Have you heard about the new law on single use plastics?

**Mark:** Yes! They might ban plastic bags next year.

**Olivia:** That’s great. Most plastic bags end up in landfills or rivers.

**Mark:** And they may take centuries to disappear.

**Olivia:** I know. We could start using reusable bags instead.

**Mark:** If everyone does that, plastic waste might decrease a lot.

**Olivia:** Exactly. Small changes can help the environment.

### Mini Reading Practice (Short Interview)

**Interviewer:** Why are single use plastics a big problem today?

**Expert:** Well, people use them every day, and most of them are thrown away immediately. They may end up in the oceans, where they can harm fish and birds. Also, these plastics might release toxic chemicals as they break down. But if we recycle more and choose eco friendly products, we could reduce the damage.

#### **Reference:**

*Cambridge University Press & Assessment. (s.f.) Comparison and Contrast 3: Comparative and Superlative Adjectives and Adverbs; Articles; Common Expressions That Show Similarity. Cambridge University Press & Assessment. Recovered from:*

[https://www.cambridge.org/us/files/6015/4896/3663/Grammar\\_and\\_Beyond\\_Essentials\\_Level\\_4\\_Unit\\_7\\_Sample\\_Content.pdf](https://www.cambridge.org/us/files/6015/4896/3663/Grammar_and_Beyond_Essentials_Level_4_Unit_7_Sample_Content.pdf)