What do we do with our waste plastic?

Plastic has many uses in our everyday lives and helps us do a lot of things. However, when we have finished using that plastic, we have to think about how we manage our plastic waste. If we don't manage our plastic waste well, it can end up in the environment where it can stay for a very long time and potentially end up hurting plants and animals. In this lesson, children will explore the different things that happen to our plastic waste and will learn about the waste hierarchy by playing a game to choose the best waste management solution for different types of plastic waste. They will learn that when considering whether to buy items made from plastic, they should consider what will happen to that item when they have finished using it and the impact that will have on the environment.

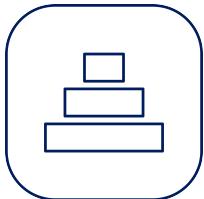### Science concepts
The children will consider
- that some plastics can be repurposed or reused when they have been used for their original purpose
- that there are many ways of dealing with plastic waste, and some waste management methods are better than others
- how, as consumers, our decisions about how we get rid of waste plastic has an impact on the environment

Science skills
- evaluating

Key vocabulary
avoid, dispose, marine animals, microplastic, rank, recycle, reduce, repurposed, reused, tyre particles, waste hierarchy, waste management

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You will need

Each small group will need:
- a set of waste hierarchy cards
- a selection of waste to sort* (one set could be shared between the class)
- Additional Printable: Waste hierarchy cards

*In the video, the items included for sorting are a sandwich bag, a clear takeaway container, a single-use plastic bottle and a plastic toy. Other items you could include are plastic packaging from fruit and vegetables (avoid), plastic milk containers (recycle, reduce, avoid where possible).

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