**Teachers’ notes**

Top tips to get the most out of using articles in class

Articles can be a good way to link to applications of science that is covered in the curriculum and to real world examples. It is also a good way to support students with linear assessment and developing their understanding of the connections between scientific ideas. For example, this article could be used to link to: polymers, bioaccumulation, ecosystems and food chains. The activities can be adapted easily to suit your group and topic. We’ve come up with a few ideas to get you started.

Idea one: any questions?

What questions do the students have about the article once they’ve read it? The students could write three or more questions and also decide who exactly they would ask them to eg plastic manufacturers.

Idea two: create a concept map

Ask your students to create a concept map, picking out the key points from the article. The focus is on justifying the links, not on whether the links are right or wrong. Higher ability students should be able to do this independently and lower ability students could use the keyword cards on the **Concept map** handoutto show how they link together.

1. In pairs, choose two cards and discuss how these words are connected.
2. Place the cards on the sheet of paper, join up the words with a line and write along that line the justification for your connection.
3. Now bring a third card and connect this to one, or both of the existing cards.
4. Continue until you have used up as many of the cards as you can.
5. You can add your own cards on the blanks.

Idea three: evaluating the evidence in the article

Using a series of statements (see **True, false or not enough evidence** handout) ask your students to scan the article for evidence and reasons as to whether each statement is true, false or not does not have enough evidence to support it. One way to approach this would be to ask students to skim and scan in pairs, identifying evidence and discussing their reasoning. They could then annotate Post it notes and stick them next to the relevant parts of the article or make notes in a table, like the one shown below, ready to share with larger groups or the whole class.

Idea four: write an exam paper

Working in pairs or threes, and using information from the article, ask your students to write an examination style question. They should then check the questions can be answered from the article and make a draft mark scheme. Groups then swap questions, but notthe mark schemes and try to answer each other’s questions, making a mark scheme as they go. Questions and mark schemes are then returned to the original group who compare their own and the other group’s mark scheme and write a model answer for their original question. To scaffold this activity, from the start, show students an example of a question and mark scheme. This is a great opportunity to see how deeply the students understand the article and the topic you are linking it to.

Idea five: choose from a task menu

The student handout **Task menu** shows a menu style format of ideas. Let your students choose two or more of the tasks related to the article to complete either in a lesson or as homework.

You can find all the resources mentioned in this edition here:

www.stem.org.uk/ca/plastics

You might also find these resources useful:

**Plastics in the ocean: resources for biologists**

www.stem.org.uk/lxbt2p

**Plastics in the ocean: resources for chemists**

www.stem.org.uk/lxbt3g