



CREATOR CHALLENGE / ENGLISH C1 / AGES 16+

Plastic Plot Twist

WATCH A SHORT FILM. CREATE A STORY THAT MAKES PEOPLE LOOK AGAIN.

THE BRIEF

Your school media team has one minute to make an everyday plastic item interesting. Use a cup, wrapper or bottle as the main character. Give its story a twist that challenges an easy assumption — without making a claim you cannot defend.

Your film inspiration

The Story of Plastic (Animated Short), The Story of Stuff Project, 2021. Approximately four minutes. Watch the official upload:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iO3SA4YyEYU>

The film argues that plastic pollution must be considered across the product life cycle and that responsibility extends beyond individual disposal choices. It is a campaigning film: investigate how it persuades its audience. [1, 2]

YOUR DELIVERABLE

A 45–60-second original clip, live performance or narrated storyboard. Include one film-based idea, a recognisable school situation, a qualified claim and a practical next step. No one needs to appear on camera or post publicly.

Teams: 3–4 | **Workshop:** 90 minutes

Choose your format: thriller / satire / advert parody / object animation

Bring: pens, paper, clean props; one school-approved recording device per team if filming. Paper production works equally well.



01 / WATCH LIKE A CREATOR

Spot the move

FIRST WATCH: NO WRITING. SECOND WATCH: COLLECT THREE MOMENTS.

Before viewing, choose one clean item. Give it a ten-second introduction in the first person: "Everyone thinks my story starts when ..." Keep it: the same prop can become your main character.

FIRST WATCH / THE CENTRAL ARGUMENT

In pairs, finish: "The film wants its audience to stop assuming that ... and start considering ..."
Disagreement is useful if you can point to a specific part of the film.

A MOMENT THAT CHANGES THE FRAME

Describe one scene or idea that takes the story beyond litter. Explain what it adds.

A TECHNIQUE THAT GETS YOUR ATTENTION

Identify a contrast, metaphor, direct address or emotional appeal. What does it encourage the viewer to feel or conclude?

A CLAIM THAT NEEDS CHECKING

Record one claim in your own words. If it includes a statistic, note its subject and date. What evidence would you need before reusing it today?

Use pauses, a replay or the creator's linked annotated script. Do not copy the full script into your work. A forceful presentation is not itself proof.



02 / CUT-OUT CREATIVE BRIEFS

Choose your plot twist

ONE CARD PER TEAM. INVENT YOUR OWN CHARACTERS AND DIALOGUE.

MINI-THRILLER

THE CUP THAT GOT AWAY

A cup believes that reaching a bin ends its story. A detective asks what happens next. End with a question the school can actually investigate.

ADVERT PARODY

THE PERFECT GREEN AD

A fictional brand calls its packaging “planet-friendly”. Freeze the advert and make the tiny disclaimer take over the screen. Ask for evidence; do not target an actual company.

OBJECT ANIMATION

MY SECOND LIFE

A wrapper auditions for a new role. The casting panel wants to know what is genuinely possible locally. Let uncertainty become part of the joke.

COMEDY SCENE

THE GROUP CHAT

A bottle, a consumer, a producer and a school buyer blame one another. Interrupt the argument with a proposal requiring more than one actor.



03 / PRE-PRODUCTION

Make it sharp and defensible

AGREE THE STORY BEFORE YOU START RECORDING.

Our chosen format: _____ Working title: _____

THE NON-NEGOTIABLES

Use your own words and images. Include at least one idea prompted by the film, but do not present a dated film statistic as a current fact. Give your fictional school scenario a clear label. End with a feasible action or an answerable question.

Our hook in one sentence

The assumption we will challenge

The claim we can support and its source

The condition or uncertainty our audience must hear

C1 language tools

"That claim holds only if ..." / "What the label leaves unclear is ..."

"Although this addresses ..., it does not establish ..."

"The film makes a persuasive case for ...; we would still need ..."



04 / STORYBOARD

Six shots one story

SKETCH EACH SHOT. PUT SPEECH OR CAPTIONS UNDERNEATH.

HOOK / 0–8 sec Speech / caption: _____ _____	SETUP / 8–16 sec Speech / caption: _____ _____
COMPLICATION / 16–25 sec Speech / caption: _____ _____	TWIST / 25–35 sec Speech / caption: _____ _____
QUALIFICATION / 35–45 sec Speech / caption: _____ _____	ACTION / 45–60 sec Speech / caption: _____ _____

Timing is a guide. For a 45-second version, shorten the first four sections and keep the qualification and action. Rehearse aloud; a 90–120-word script is a starting point, not a requirement.



05 / SCREENING ROOM

Would you share this?

SHOW IT TO ANOTHER TEAM. LISTEN BEFORE YOU DEFEND IT.

THE SCREENING RULE

Watch or listen once without interruption. The audience then identifies the message in one sentence. If it differs from the creators' intended message, find the moment where the meaning became unclear.

THE MOMENT I REMEMBER

Name a specific shot, line or performance choice. Explain why it stayed with you.

THE CLAIM I WOULD CHALLENGE

Point to the exact wording. Ask what evidence or qualification would make it stronger.

THE ACTION I UNDERSTAND

Who is being asked to do what? Could a student take part without spending money?

FINAL EDIT

Change one misleading or unclear element. Then credit the inspiration: "Film inspiration: The Story of Plastic (Animated Short), The Story of Stuff Project, 2021." Credit any additional evidence separately. Classroom screening is enough; online publication is optional.



TEACHER GUIDE / KEEP FOR FACILITATION

Run the 90-minute film lab

PREVIEW THE SHORT. CHECK SCHOOL ACCESS TO THE OFFICIAL LINK.

Minutes	Activity
0–8	Prop introduction and challenge briefing
8–20	Two viewings with pauses; record three moments
20–30	Discuss persuasion, evidence and the date of claims
30–40	Choose a brief and agree the central claim
40–55	Storyboard and rehearse
55–70	Record, perform or finish a narrated storyboard
70–85	Screen in pairs of teams and give targeted feedback
85–90	Revise one element and close the workshop

Viewing discussion

Expected central argument: focusing only on discarded plastic overlooks production and wider systems. Students might identify the overflowing-bath metaphor, the shift from disposal to production, or direct audience address. Ask what each technique foregrounds and leaves out. The film advocates policy and producer responsibility; students may question its framing. [1, 2]

Model qualification

“This packaging is described as recyclable, but the label alone does not establish that our local system accepts and processes it.” This is an original example, not a quotation from the film.

C1 feedback

Give 0–2 points each for: clear, coherent message; precise and flexible language; justified use of evidence and qualification; effective audience engagement. Explain one improvement with an example. This is formative feedback, not CEFR certification.

Access and participation

Offer shared viewing, pauses and the official script link. Narration, props, captions and editing are equally valuable roles. Provide a paper option. Assess communication, not equipment, acting confidence or willingness to appear online.



TEACHER GUIDE / SOURCES

Film access and publication

THIS PACK CONTAINS ORIGINAL TASKS. THE FILM REMAINS WITH ITS CREATOR.

Use the animated short, not the feature documentary. The creator's screening page explicitly states that the animated short can be used without special permission. The feature-length film has separate screening arrangements. [3]

For a downloadable school resource

Share this activity pack and link to the official film. The pack includes no film stills, transcript extracts or copied animations. Do not treat permission to view as permission to remix the film. For student clips, use original drawings, props, footage and sound; arrange permissions before showing identifiable people publicly. Default to a classroom screening.

Handling dated claims

This film was released in 2021. Its annotated script cites earlier sources, including a 2016 packaging study and a forecast concerning 2025. Treat these as claims made in the film's historical context. If students want a current statistic, require a current primary source and matching definitions; otherwise omit the number. [2]

Reuse

Free educational use and adaptation of this activity pack; not for resale. Film rights remain with their owners. Supplied EU4Blue and funding marks retain their existing rights. This is independently developed teaching material, not an official resource endorsed by the filmmakers.

[1] The Story of Stuff Project. The Story of Plastic (animated short), 2021.
<https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-plastic-animation/>

[2] The Story of Stuff Project. Annotated script.
https://www.storyofstuff.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/SoSP.Movies.SOP_short.Script.pdf

[3] The Story of Stuff Project. Host a Screening.
<https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/the-story-of-plastic-documentary-film/how-to-watch/host-a-screening/>

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