

# Teacher Resources Pack

## Plastic, Drastic, Fantastic



*A Polka and Akademi Production*

Artistic Direction and Choreography  
by **Suba Subramaniam**

**Akādemi POLKA**



Dear Teacher/Parent/Carer

We are so pleased that you came to visit us at Polka Theatre for **Plastic, Drastic, Fantastic!** We hope you enjoyed seeing the production and visiting our brand-new venue.

Here are a few **activities** to do with your children and young people after you have seen the performance. These exercises are creative and drama based, which is good for **developing speaking** and **listening skills**, as well as expanding **concentration** and **imagination**.

The activities are suitable for children in **KS2** or ages **7 - 11** years. Please pass on any of the activities to your children to do at home to encourage and engage **creative minds!**

We would love to hear what you think about these exercises and how your children got along. Please send any feedback to [creativelearning@polkatheatre.com](mailto:creativelearning@polkatheatre.com).

We look forward to seeing you again soon,

Polka Theatre's Creative Learning Team

**Key  
Curriculum  
Links KS2  
(ages 7-11)**

The key environmental themes link to **Citizenship** and playing an active role as citizens, **Science** through exploring materials and their properties, and **Geography** by recognising how people can manage environments sustainably.

To **appreciate** our planet and treat it with **respect**.

To act **responsibly** to care for the planet and animals that inhabit it.

To consider the **consequences of our actions** on the natural world.

To talk about and share our **opinions** on things that matter to us.

To consider **alternative approaches** to the use of plastics.

## A Note From The Director

It's wonderful to be here with this show that started its life at Polka Theatre nearly 3 years ago when I was a Creative Lab Artist, exploring our cultural relationship with all things plastics. Plastic Drastic Fantastic is a brand new show that highlights the complex relationship we have with this material; the fantastic usefulness it offers as well as the drastic consequences to the environment.

The show will encourage you to see plastics in a new light through our magical, recycled, sustainable set. Three stunning, highly skilled dancers will weave real life situations and create new relationships with plastic items, forging hope, positivity, delight and fun. Akademi works with South Asian dance forms to present shows that have relevance to current themes and society – illuminating issues and inspiring discussion particularly for younger generations.

We're so pleased that you could join us today – please do also visit the foyer installation and let us know your response. We invite you to not just recycle, but conserve and take care of this wonderful stuff.

**Suba Subramaniam**

Artistic Direction and Choreography

## Background on Story

This dance work looks at our relationship with plastics. It's in all our lives, every day and in so many ways. It is hard to imagine our lives without them. However, plastics are a major pollutant. Plastic leads to destroying the marine life and polluting the earth. Millions of tons of plastic are in the environment as waste, especially in the oceans and seas. Some estimates point out that the volume of plastic in the ocean will be more than fish by 2050.

So we have to **reduce, reuse, recycle and refuse** plastics where we can.

This dance work looks not only at the pollution aspects of plastics but at how plastics are in all our lives. It's properties like strength, durability and usefulness. We want to show you the beauty of plastics as well as how it can affect our oceans. You will see plastic bags being used as everyday objects. You will see a plastic bottle being used to make everyday things.

We hope through this dance work, you'll think of plastics differently.

## **Bottle Game**

This activity is great for warming up the body in a creative way. The physical movement energises the group and brings focus, as well as improving coordination, balance and posture. Movement positively affects cognitive development, physical health and mental wellbeing.

### **How to lead the activity**

The children stand in a circle or in a space in the room.

The teacher asks the group to imagine they are deep sea divers going on a plastic bottle collecting mission. Take 5 deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth in preparation to dive.

The teacher asks the children to balance on one leg, lean forward slightly and then 'swim' through the air using their arms and other leg to do swimming strokes as they balance. To help balance, focus on a spot on the ground. Repeat on the other leg.

When you have swum down deep ask the children to stand with two feet on the ground ready to collect plastic bottles. They stretch up their arms as high as possible to grab imaginary bottles, then stretch to the side, out front and then all around to collect as many bottles as they can. You could play music for them to move to.

The teacher invites discussion around why there are so many plastic bottles in the ocean. What can be done about it? What will happen if we keep throwing bottles in the sea? How can we reduce our use of bottles?



## **This Is Not A Plastic Bottle, This Is A...**

This activity is great for widening imaginations and encouraging children to share their ideas with the rest of the class. It encourages pupils to speak clearly and confidently, improvise and think on their feet.

### **How to lead the activity**

The children sit or stand in a circle.

The teacher takes a plastic bottle and says “this is not a plastic bottle, this is a...” and they turn the bottle into something else using mime skills. E.g. It becomes a telephone/hat/toothbrush/umbrella. The rest of the group have to guess what the bottle has become.

The teacher passes the bottle to their neighbour and they have a turn, “this is not a plastic bottle, this is a...” Keep on going until everyone in the circle has had a turn. Make sure the person acting doesn’t say what they have turned the bottle into!

The teacher tells the groups that a plastic bottle can become many different things. Invite discussion around what we can do to reuse plastic bottles. Think about storage, art, gardening, building and...



## Whispering Waves

This activity increases physical confidence, focus and balance. The children are encouraged to collaborate and explore non-verbal ways of communicating. They also respond to different music styles/tempo. The activity uses alliteration to describe a setting.

### How to lead the activity

The children stand in a circle or in a space in the room.

The teacher plays gentle music and asks the children to imagine their hands are the waves of the ocean. Keeping their feet in one place, the children move their hands in waves all around them in response to the music. What shapes can they make? Can they move up high/down low? Repeat with a piece of fast paced music.

Do the activity again. This time the teacher asks the group to repeat whispered descriptions of the ocean using alliteration as they make their waves. Use the descriptions below or create your own with the group.

*Wading through the watery waves  
Silver, swirling, shimmering sea  
Green sea grass grows  
Timid turtles tumble by*

Show some of the Whispering Waves to the rest of the group. Repeat but using different voices to say the words. How does this change the way we move? Try: quiet/loud/excited/nervous etc.

The teacher asks the children to think of another place they could journey through. Ask for suggestions for different ways to move and then repeat the movement and chant, changing expression/volume each time. You could use:

*floating/speeding/diving through the ocean...  
Trudging/skipping/creeping/tiptoeing through the forest...  
Wandering/staggering/crawling through the desert...  
Clambering/scrabbling/hiking up a mountain...*

The teacher starts a discussion around what animals might live in the different places. How can we make sure they are kept safe?

As an extension the teacher asks the children to work with a partner to create a short movement piece using their arms as waves. The children then add their own alliteration descriptions (or extend them into poems) and perform for the class.

## Splashing In The Ocean

This activity encourages children to experiment with vocal volume and expression, as well as increasing their spatial awareness and physical story telling. It uses imaginative play for children to explore different geographical (or story!) locations and experiment with different verbs for movement.

### How to lead the activity

The teacher asks the children to move around the space as if they are swimming through water. As they move they chant, "I'm swimming through the ocean, the ocean, the ocean. I'm swimming through the ocean and I stop!" Repeat but using different voices to say the words. How does this change the way we move? Try: quiet/loud/excited/nervous etc.

The teacher asks the children to think of another place they could journey through. Ask for suggestions for different ways to move and then repeat the movement and chant, changing expression/volume each time. You could use:

*floating/speeding/diving through the ocean...*  
*Trudging/skipping/creeping/tiptoeing through the forest...*  
*Wandering/staggering/crawling through the desert...*  
*Clambering/scrabbling/hiking up a mountain...*

The teacher starts a discussion around what animals might live in the different places. How can we make sure they are kept safe?



## Ocean Compass

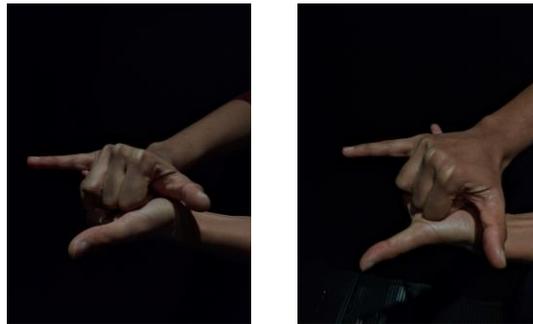
This activity uses the 4 points of the compass to engage with South East Asian dance gestures. The children learn, perform and develop sequences of movement using the gestures. Physical confidence.

### How to lead the activity

The teacher shows the class the South East Asian dance gestures for: turtles, birds and a multi-use dance gesture. Use the pictures and guide below.

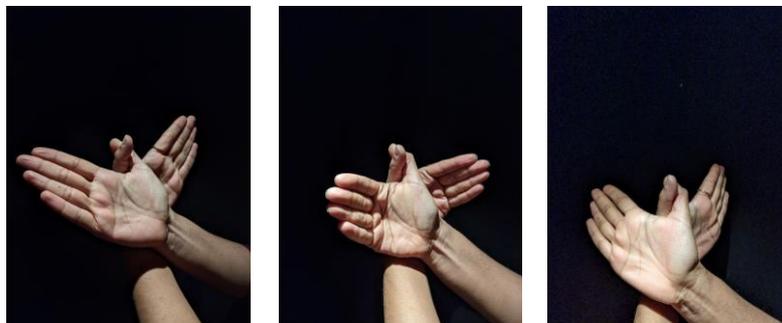
#### **Kurma Hasta:**

A double-hand gesture that portrays the turtle. With the thumb and pinky finger stretched outwards, the other three fingers of each hand interlock and fold inwards towards the palm. If you want a challenge, try moving the front thumb and pinky finger (the ones facing towards your partner) in circles, like fins that are swimming in a breaststroke type motion.



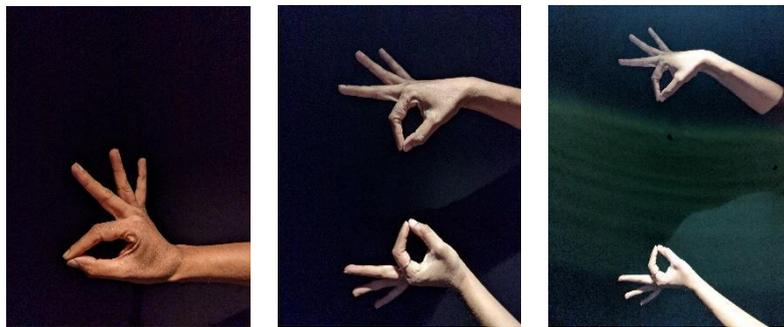
#### **Garuda Hasta:**

A double-hand gesture that shows birds flying. With your palms facing your chest, cross your hands over and interlock the thumbs. The hands become the wings of the bird and the thumbs are the bird's body. You can move this gesture up from your chest towards the sky and follow it with your eyes, to show a bird in flight. If you want a challenge, try curling and uncurling your fingers in unison to mimic the flapping of the birds wings.



**Hamsasya Hasta:**

This is a single-hand gesture that you can do with just one hand or both hands and it's got a big range of uses. Join your thumb and forefinger together at the tips, and splay out the other three fingers. Stretch out the thumb - forefinger combination so that the hole they make is teardrop-shaped. In the show, you might have noticed us using this gesture as a way of signalling that we are holding a piece of string or cloth, to show water droplets falling from the net, or to show a necklace. Can you find any of your own meanings and uses for this gesture?



The teachers labels each side of the room North, South, East and West.

When the teacher calls out North the children go there and perform the turtle gesture. When the teacher calls out South the children go there and perform the birds gesture. When the teacher calls out East the children go there and perform the multi-use gesture.

When the teacher calls out West the children go there and perform their own creative gesture.

After getting the group familiar with the locations and gestures repeat but this time in each spot the children find a partner and perform a short movement piece with their partner. Choose some to share with the group.

## **Agree/Disagree**

This activity encourages children to share and challenge their opinions. Through engaging in discussion and debate they are supported to consider how people can manage environments sustainably, and think about the consequences of their actions as citizens. This activity also promotes confidence in sharing ideas and speaking to a wider group.

### **How to lead the activity**

The teacher puts a sign at one end of the room saying AGREE and a sign at the other end of the room saying DISAGREE. They tell the class that the centre is neutral or 'I don't know' and there is an invisible scale between the two signs.

The teacher reads out the below statements (or use your own). The children go and stand on the scale wherever feels right for them. If they agree 100% they stand by the AGREE sign. If they almost agree they stand near the sign etc. Start with some funny statements to get the children familiar with the set up.

*Chocolate is the best food ever*  
*Sundays are the best day of the week*  
*Tennis is better than football*  
*Humans are more important than animals*  
*Ocean pollution is a big problem*  
*I do lots to help the planet*  
*I am not responsible for the rubbish I make*  
*Plastic should be banned*  
*Single use plastic should be banned*  
*Protecting the environment is the responsibility of the government*  
*It is my responsibility to look after the planet*  
*I can't do anything to help the planet*  
*Plastic bottles should always be recycled*

After reading each statement, the teacher leads a discussion asking why people are standing in particular spots. Does anyone want to move places after hearing what others have to say?

## Bottle Moves

This activity encourages focus, collaboration and physical expression. The children are encouraged to explore non-verbal means of communication. Through sharing their ideas and performing their confidence will grow. The children experiment with decision making and how they can move their bodies.

### How to lead the activity

Each child in the class will need a plastic bottle. They then stand in a space in the room.

**Part 1:** The teacher plays music and asks the class to imagine that their plastic bottle is bobbing on the surface of the sea. The weather gets stormier. What shapes and movements can they make with their whole bodies as the bottle moves through the water. Choose some children to share with the class.

**Part 2:** The teacher asks the children to work with a partner. They stand facing each other and create a short movement piece with their bottles interacting with each other. Choose pairs to share with the class.

**Part 3:** The teacher asks pairs to join up and make a group of 4. The groups then devise a movement piece using their bottles. The teacher asks them to include:

*Some synchronised movements*  
*Different levels (high and low movements)*  
*Fast and slow movements*  
*A clear beginning, middle and end*

**Part 4:** The teacher asks the group to add in lines of text about the importance of reduce/reuse/recycle. They say these over the top of the moves. Choose groups to share with the class.



## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Advert

This activity encourages children to share their ideas and opinions in a creative way, and encourages them to take on the role of an active citizen. They will be urged to use persuasive language and the features of an advert, increasing speaking and listening skills, confidence in presenting and collaboration skills.

### How to lead the activity

Plastic Pollution is one of the most important environmental issues that we face. The teacher tasks the children with creating short TV/YouTube Info Advert persuading people to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle their plastic. The children work in groups of 3 or 4 to create and perform the adverts which should be no more than 1 minute long.

Before starting the teacher asks the class for ideas/advice they could use in their adverts to persuade people to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. The teacher asks them to think about:

**IMPACT: What is the impact of plastic pollution on our world?**

*Damage to ecosystems, health, animals etc*

**IMPORTANCE: Why is it so important to reduce plastic waste?**

*Reduces pollution, helps the environment, saves energy, reduces carbon emissions*

**WHAT WE CAN DO: What can we do to reduce plastic waste?**

*Reduce (use reusable bottles or...), Reuse (make art from recycled materials or...),*

*Recycle (clean, sort and recycle our rubbish...)*

The teacher encourages them to use persuasive language and features of adverts: Rhetorical questions, alliteration, positive language, information, a catchy slogan, bossy verbs etc.

The children perform their adverts for each other and discuss the ideas shared.

As an extension task the children could design leaflets/posters persuading people to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

## The Life Of A Plastic Bottle

The activity involves story sequencing and physical story telling. The children are encouraged to consider what happens to rubbish once we throw it away and to take responsibility for their actions. They make decisions collaboratively and have the opportunity to share their ideas with the rest of the class both through performance and discussion.

### How to lead the activity

The teacher asks the class about the life of a plastic bottle. First it is made in a factory, The teacher leads a discussion on the impact of what happens after the bottles are thrown into the river. How can we take responsibility for our rubbish?

*The Bottle Factory*  
*The Bottle's Journey to the Shop*  
*The Bottle Being Sold*  
*The Bottle Being Drunk*  
*The Bottle Being thrown into a river*

For each title the teacher gives the group 1 minute to create their picture and then counts down, "5,4,3,2,1 FREEZE!" and the groups freeze in their still images. Look at some of the groups as you do.

The teacher then asks the groups to make the next 3 (or more) still images in the story. Task them with creating a title for each image and give them around 10 minutes to create and practice their images. Choose some groups to perform to the rest of the class.

The teacher leads a discussion on the impact of what happens after the bottles are thrown into the river. How can we take responsibility for our rubbish? and practice their images. Choose some groups to perform to the rest of the class.

The teacher leads a discussion on the impact of what happens after the bottles are thrown into the river. How can we take responsibility for our rubbish?

## Pollution Acrostic Poem

This activity is great for getting children writing and using creative language. They will also consider the impact of plastic on the environment and what we can do to try and help.

### How to lead the activity

The teacher leads a discussion with the class highlighting their main ideas around plastic pollution and the importance of reducing waste, reusing plastic objects and recycling.

The teacher holds up a variety of different plastic waste objects (carrier bag/bottle/packets etc) and asks the children to describe them using similes or alliteration. E.g. The carrier bag floated like a jellyfish through the cool, blue waters.

The teacher asks the children to write an acrostic poem about POLLUTION. The children are encouraged to use similes, metaphors and alliteration.

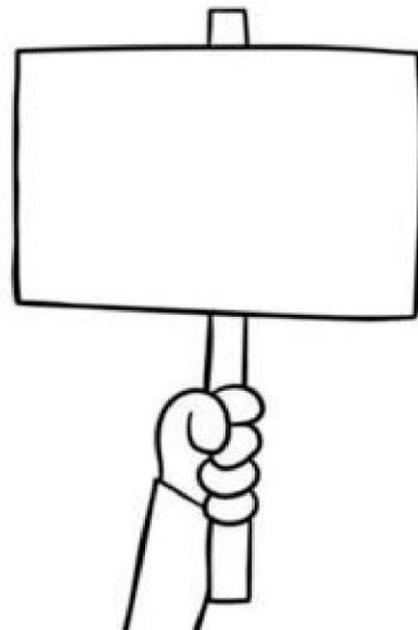
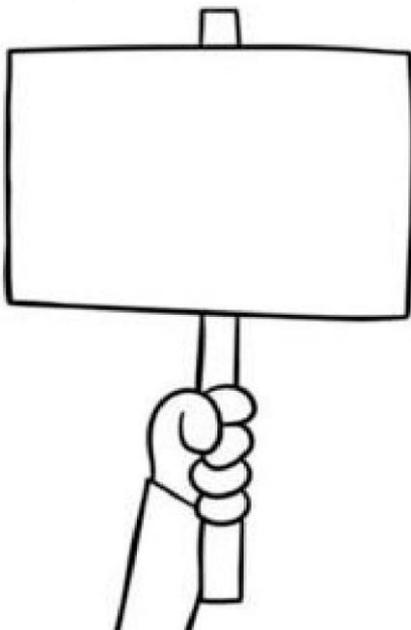
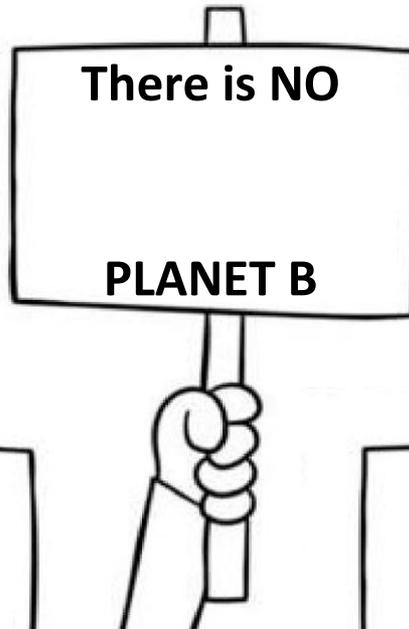
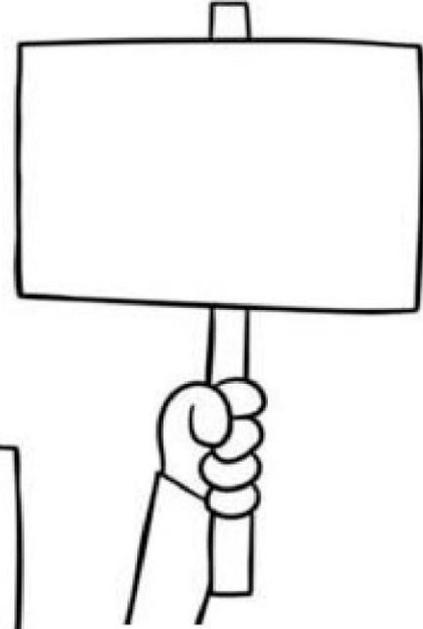
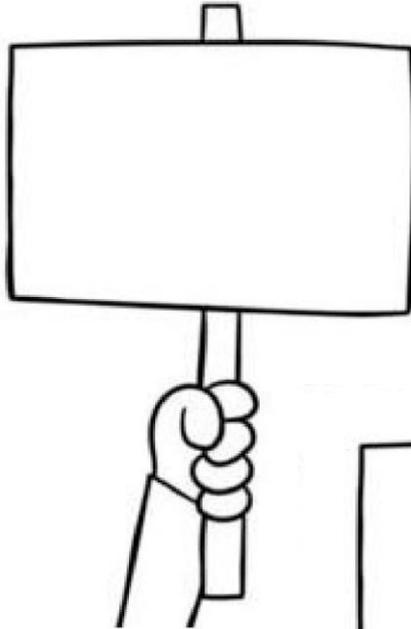
The teacher can print and use the template on the next page for the children to write on or they can create their own.

The teacher can ask the children to illustrate their work.

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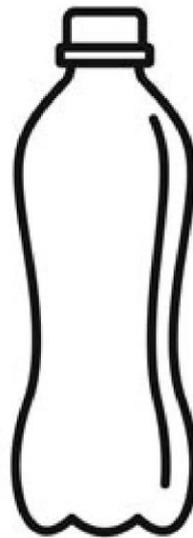
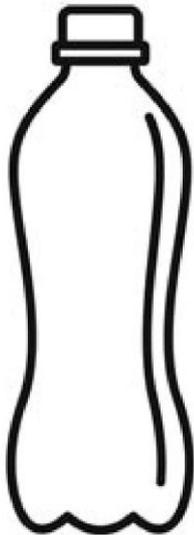
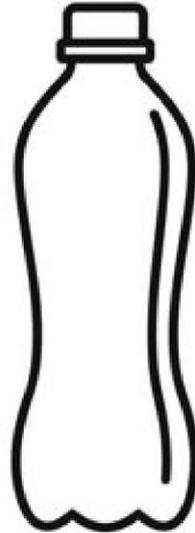
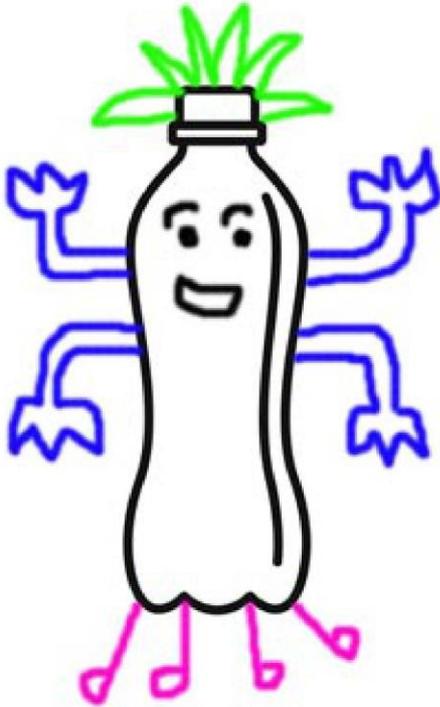
### Protest Placards

Write a slogan in each placard to encourage people to care for the planet...



## Bottle Beasts!

Create your beasts by drawing on the bottles...



We hope these activities have been useful to help bring a bit of *Plastic, Drastic, Fantastic* back to your classrooms or homes!

We can also provide plenty of opportunities for follow-up activities. Polka's experienced team of actors, directors, storytellers and puppeteers are on hand to deliver a range of workshops in your school.

We can create tailor-made workshops for you and your pupils based on any theme you like, including exploring the themes and production elements of the performance you have just seen!

For more information, please visit our website:

[www.polkatheatre.com/schools](http://www.polkatheatre.com/schools)

Or contact Elysia, Polka's Schools Relationship Officer to request a workshop enquiry form.

We look forward to seeing you at Polka Theatre again soon!

Best Wishes,

Polka Theatre's Creative Learning Team

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***Teacher Resource Pack content created by Del Taylor***