



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
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## **Flexible Enthusiasm: Consumption and Awareness of Plastics in Our Lives**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 09.07.01, published September 2009  
by Stephanie Brown-Bryant

The production and consumption of plastics have infiltrated our lives at an alarming rate. From our homes to the water we drink, it is almost inconceivable to have a world without plastics. As plastics technologies grow, so do environmental and health concerns. Consumer awareness and the importance to protect our natural resources are of great importance to our environmental future. Landfills and toxic air are reminders of how our habits formed by marketing trends have created lifestyles filled with waste. While most consumers are not aware how predominant a role plastics play in our lives, concern has shifted to the health implications that we must confront. Considerable attention is given to the history of plastics, the role advertising plays in consumption, societal and legal controversies and the need to be agents of change. Students will use background information to evaluate opinions and use hands-on methods to exhibit a concrete need to reduce plastic consumption. Students will evaluate the concerns surrounding the production, use, and recycling of plastic. In addition, students will become more aware of their personal actions as consumers and how a shift in thinking may actually make a difference in our future. Students will interactively share knowledge and are encouraged to take action to fight the growing problem.

(Developed for Science and Technology, grades 6-8; recommended for Science, grade 6-8)

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