

Fact File

The problem with rubbish.



People in the UK are producing more and more rubbish. It has to go somewhere and at the moment most of it is either buried or burned. We are running out of places where it can be safely buried, and if it is burned dangerous fumes may be produced. This is a problem for cities all over the world. In some countries rubbish is even put onto ships and dumped in the sea or taken to other countries to be dumped.



We all throw away rubbish every day. You might think you're being clean and tidy when you throw your rubbish in the bin, but what happens to it after that?



A typical family may produce 50 Kg of rubbish every week. That's more than 2 tonnes a year.



More than a third of all the waste is packaging - cardboard boxes, plastic trays, plastic wrappings and polystyrene. Most of it is not needed.



At the moment nearly all the rubbish we produce (10 million tonnes a year) is put into holes in the ground called landfill sites. When this first started it seemed like a good idea, but now landfill sites are causing lots of really major problems.

The ground needs to be given back lots of organic waste so that it can feed more crops. We are taking more and more food out of the ground without giving anything back. When we put organic waste into a landfill site it doesn't rot down and return to the earth - its just wasted.



In a landfill site everything gets included - paint, batteries leaking acid, oil and lots of other chemicals. All mixed together they can produce dangerous fumes and gases.



We are running out of space! As time goes by more and more land is needed for these landfill sites. Especially around towns and cities there is a real shortage of places to bury all the rubbish being thrown away.