



*How to...*

# Run a Beach Litter Art Workshop (15 mins)

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## Picking Your Materials

When collecting beach litter, or any other waste material for art, it is best to choose brightly coloured items, that are fairly whole and sturdy. For educational purposes, it's great if you have any straws, Q-tip sticks and, for older girls, plastic tampon applicators.

Only a limited number of clear plastic bottles should be included as they have limited potential, and they should have their caps. Wash everything before use!

**1 Set up** Pile all the litter up or spread it out like a tide line. Unless you have a massive pile of litter, the amount shown in the image is enough for a group of up to 6.

**2 Getting started** People are a bit unsure of handling rubbish, it usually looks pretty unsightly in a big pile, so it's important to work fast before doubts creep in. Also at first sight it offers nothing in the way of inspiration as to what could be done with it.

It is really IMPORTANT that the creative process is spontaneous - trying to create a specific outcome i.e. a robot or a boat etc, is at best disappointing and is usually unsuccessful.



**3 Choose your colours** As soon as the young people are ready to start ask them to either choose one item from the pile or pick one colour. Either way they now have a starting colour – ask them to collect everything that colour and put it all together. Now ask if this reminds them of anything.

All blue may remind them of water, green may be grass, grey may be a shark etc. Make a spread of the items into a pool or river of water, field, or shape into a shark etc. Now ask either for another colour or what could be added to the water or field or around the shark. Maybe all orange for a sun, or coloured caps for fish or flowers. Build the picture up bit by bit.

It's not necessary to use all the litter, limiting the piece to two or three colours is much more effective, unless a rainbow is being created.



*Yellow ducks in blue & green river with waterfall*



*Creating a beach litter rainbow*

**4 Work fast!** The collection of colour is what makes it look effective, not the precise positioning of items. A bottle cap will never really look like a fish, but a collection of caps of different sizes could look like a coral reef, or be made into a fish shape. The whole process should only take 5 or 10 minutes.

**5 Facilitate discussion** Now spend a few minutes admiring what has been created and evaluating the items that have been used. Where have they come from? Do the young people use any of them? How do they dispose of their plastic rubbish?

Highlight items that are thought to be flushable and the associated issues of sewage effluent, i.e. wet wipes, Q-tips, tampon applicators, microbeads. What could we do to avoid the litter ending up in the environment?

**6 To finish** Photograph the piece, and then make a dramatic display of sweeping it off the table back into the pile – after all, it is only rubbish.