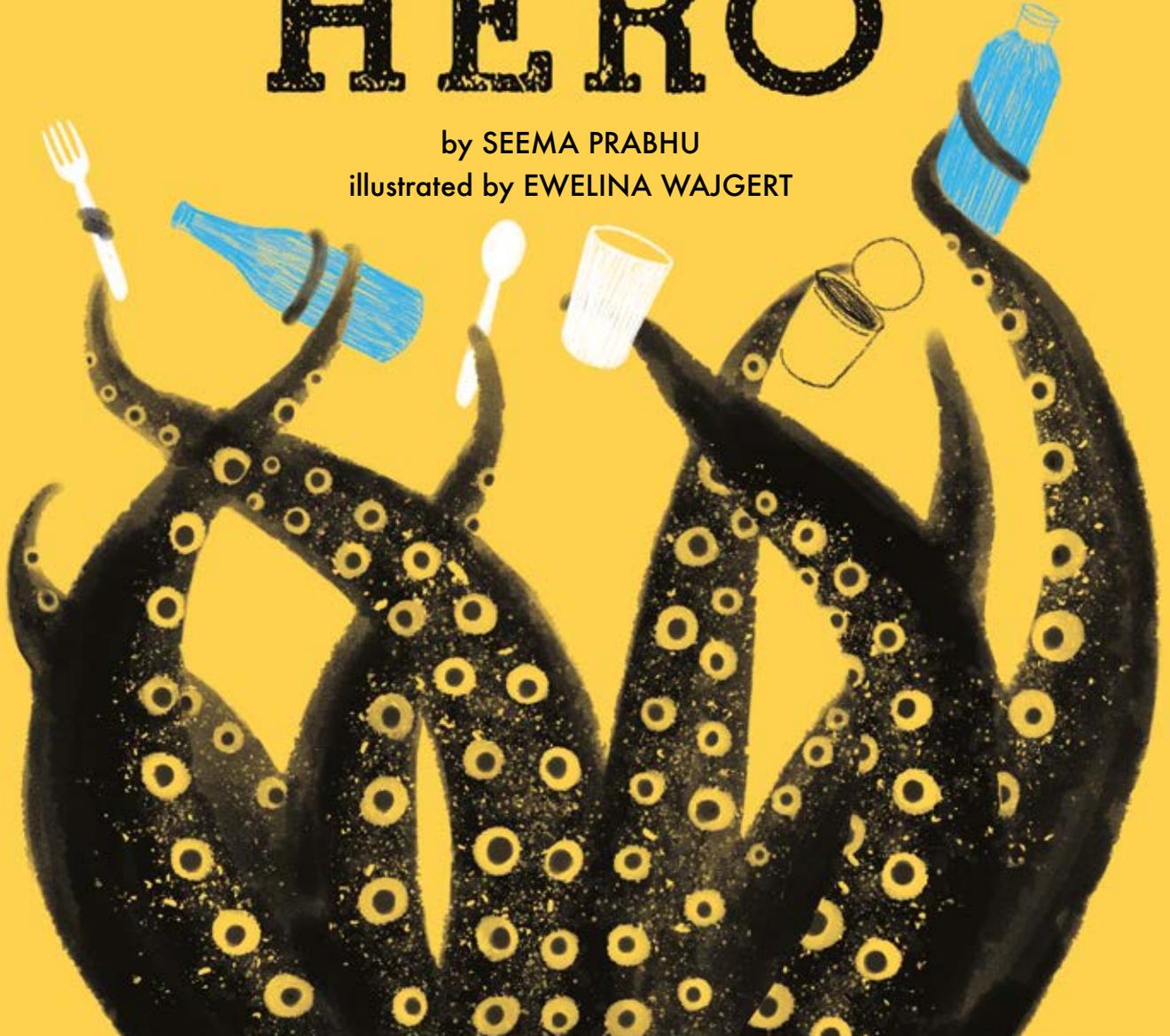


# TRASH HERO

by SEEMA PRABHU  
illustrated by EWELINA WAJGERT



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**I**t was a fine sunny day, and the creatures of Rosy Reef were out and about as usual. Turtle in particular was feeling very hungry and was looking around for some breakfast.

At last he saw a delicious-looking jellyfish floating by. "Just what I fancy!" he thought, and set off after it. But just as he was about to snap it up, there was a flash of yellow, and a big splash in the water!

When the bubbles cleared, the jellyfish was gone. Turtle was confused, and swam up to the surface to see what had happened.







There he saw a boy in a yellow shirt, holding the jellyfish up in the air. "Hey!" said Turtle, "that's my breakfast!".

"Oh no," said the boy. "That's not food. This is an old plastic bag that someone has thrown away. When it floats in the water it looks like a jellyfish, but if you eat it, it can poison you or block up your insides."

Turtle looked puzzled. He didn't know what a plastic bag was, but he didn't like the sound of it.



"My name is Trash Hero," the boy went on. "I save animals from eating the poisonous stuff we humans throw away."

"Why do you throw things away?" asked Turtle. Here in Rosy Reef, nothing was wasted.

"And especially those dangerous things!" he went on. "They shouldn't be put in the water."

The boy looked sad, but he said nothing. Instead, he looked out across the horizon and said to Turtle, "Sorry, I have to go now!"

And off he zoomed, across the water, heading for a school of fish that was about to nibble on some Styrofoam.

A large blue whale is swimming in the ocean, viewed from above. The whale's body is a deep blue, and its tail is visible on the right side. A diver in a black wetsuit and yellow fins is swimming near the whale's tail. The water is a clear, light blue color.

On and on, Trash Hero worked all day, from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

He saved some seagulls from scooping up plastic bottle tops they thought were fish; a young seal from getting tangled up in a plastic bag; and even a puppy on the beach from eating some old cigarette butts.

None of them knew what plastic or litter was, or that it could be harmful, as that stuff did not exist in the natural world.



It was like this every day now. Back in the days when his grandmother was Trash Hero, she only worked at weekends. But since he had started the job he was working non-stop. Even though he had super powers, it was tough. It seemed like more and more litter was being thrown away.

His grandma said it was all the new “convenience” plastic – straws, spoons and bags that were used for just a few minutes and then thrown away – but it didn’t seem very *convenient* to him, and certainly not to all the animals it harmed.





One morning, Trash Hero sat down on the beach, feeling rather tired. He took a sip from his water bottle and took the last cookie out of his paper bag.

He was careful not to use any of that "convenience" plastic that might harm his sea friends.

A girl walked past him, carrying a black bag, and asked if he would like to put his paper wrapper into it. She said she was collecting the rubbish on the beach to make it look nicer.

Trash Hero was surprised, and thanked her.

He explained that the litter she was collecting was also harmful to animals - and confessed that it was a hard job to try and save them all.

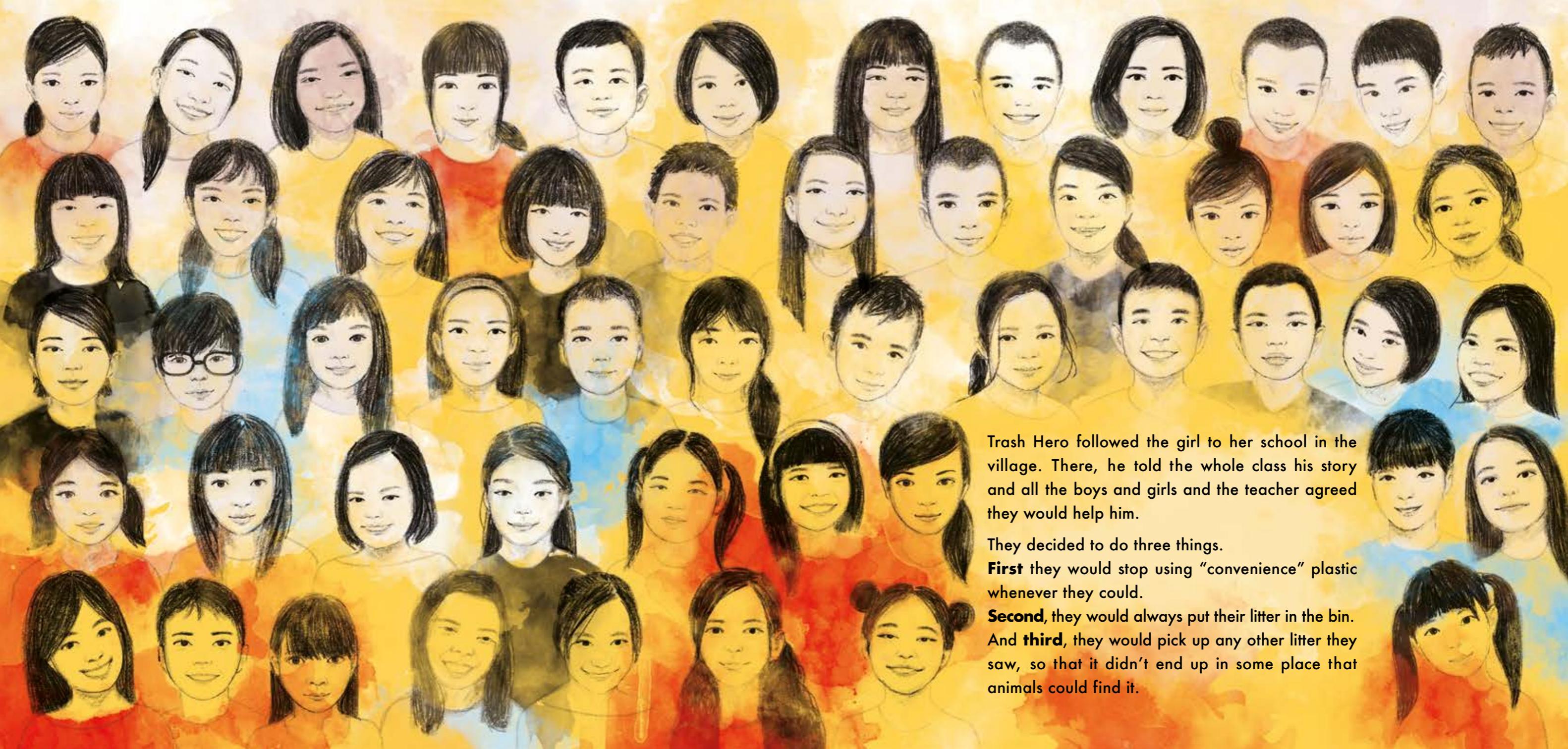
The girl looked thoughtful, and then she smiled.

"Maybe I can help you!" she said.

"But how?" asked Trash Hero. "You don't have super powers like me, to fly all around the world."

"I know," said the girl. "But I have lots of friends! Come with me..."





Trash Hero followed the girl to her school in the village. There, he told the whole class his story and all the boys and girls and the teacher agreed they would help him.

They decided to do three things.

**First** they would stop using "convenience" plastic whenever they could.

**Second**, they would always put their litter in the bin. And **third**, they would pick up any other litter they saw, so that it didn't end up in some place that animals could find it.

Trash Hero smiled a big smile when he heard that. "That means there will be less for me to collect!" he said. "And the animals will be safer too!"

The teacher agreed. She explained that *anyone* and *everyone* could be a Trash Hero and help make the world a cleaner and safer place to live.

"That's true!" said Trash Hero. "Just one person is not enough. The more Trash Heroes the world has, the better it will be!"

The children all cheered, and said they would start helping right away.

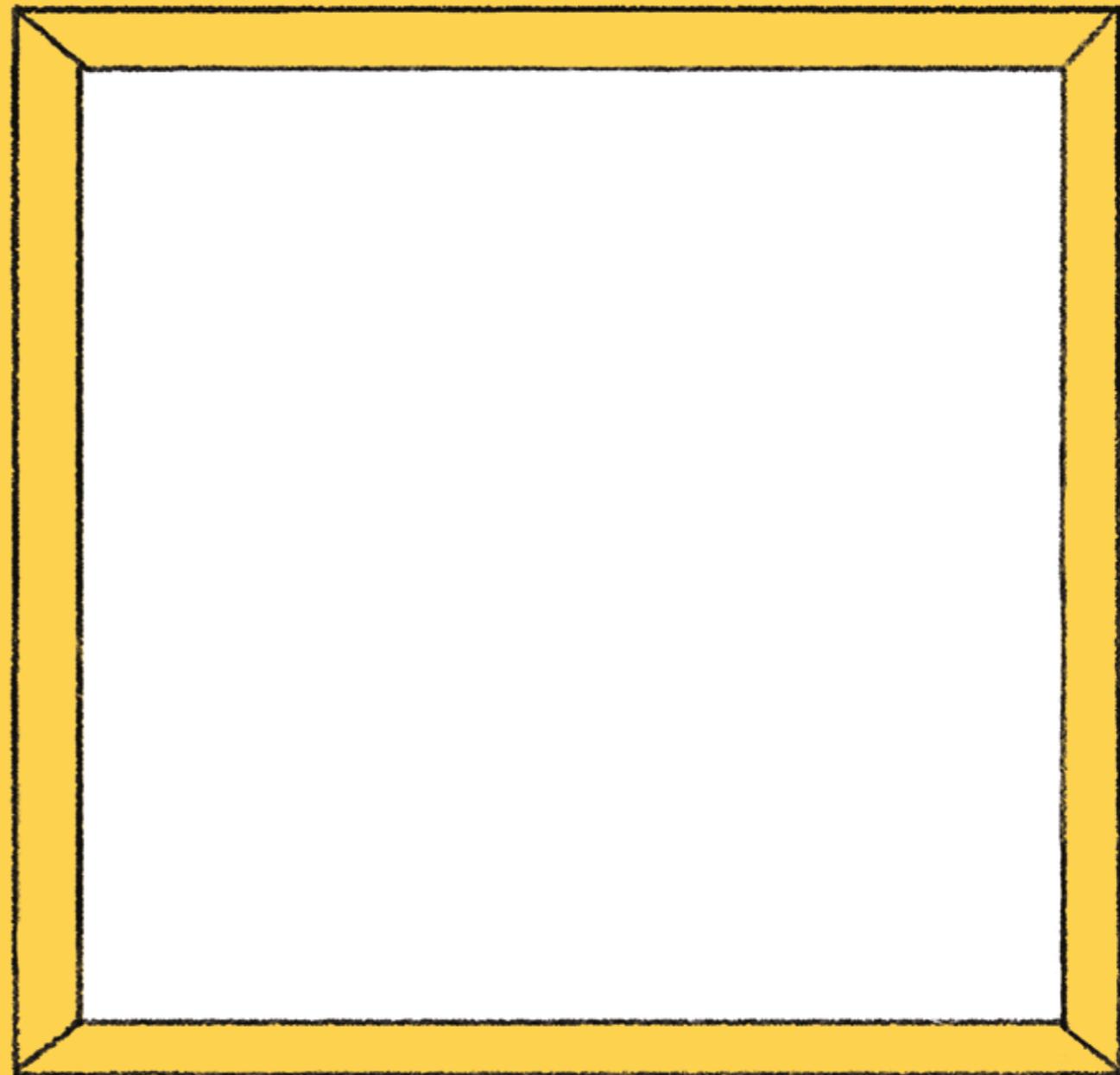
But Trash Hero could not stay any longer. He looked out over the horizon again, and zoomed off, this time to help a baby dolphin who was about to swallow a cigarette lighter.



# I'M A TRASH HERO

Name .....

Age: .....



↖ your  
portrait

## DID YOU KNOW?

Oceans contain **97%** of the earth's water and provide more than half of the oxygen we breathe.

They are also home to **250,000** species of marine life, and are an important source of food for birds and people.

Up to **12,700,000,000 kg** of trash gets into the ocean every year; and 80% of this is plastic. Plastic contains poisons and does not break down like natural waste; it may break into smaller and smaller pieces, but it will never go away.

In some areas of the ocean, like the north Pacific, tiny, toxic pieces of plastic now outnumber plankton in the water by six to one. Scientists call this a "**plastic soup**".

More than half of the plastic in the ocean is "convenience" plastic - things like bags, bottles and straws - that we use only once for a few minutes, then throw away.

Around **a million** birds and sea creatures die each year through having plastic in or around their bodies.

**Can you help to stop this?** We need new Trash Heroes to help keep waste out of the ocean and reduce the amount of disposable plastic we use.



# BECOME A TRASH HERO

Are you ready for the challenge? Complete the tasks as many times as you can. Keep your score in the chart on the next page.

**More tasks = more points!**



## 1 CLEAN UP!

80% of the trash in the ocean comes from people on land. So clearing up litter from beaches and inland areas is really important.

It's amazing how quickly you can do this when you have lots of people to help! Check if you can join a Trash Hero cleanup near your home, or organise your own with your friends and a parent or teacher.

**1 cleanup = 5 points**

## 2 BRING YOUR OWN BAG

Take bags with you when you go shopping instead of getting new ones each time. This is an easy way to *reduce waste*.

Tip: ask your parents to fold up a reusable bag and keep it with them in their handbag, car or motorbike so you always have it handy.

**Bring your own bags for one day (zero plastic bags used) = 1 point**



### POINTS CHECK

Cleanup » 5 pts

No bags » 1 pt / day

No bottles » 1 pt / day

No straws » 1 pt / day

Recycle » 2 pts / bag

Upcycle » 1 pt / item

Remember to record your score!



## 3 REFILL A BOTTLE

Instead of buying and throwing away a new bottle every time you drink, try filling up a reusable one. It will save the environment, and save you money!

**Refill a bottle for one day (zero plastic bottles used) = 1 point**



## 4 SAY NO TO STRAWS

This is another way to *reduce waste*. Plastic straws are used for just a few seconds but will pollute the environment for your whole lifetime (and more!). When you order a drink, ask for it without a straw.

**No straws for one day (zero straws used) = 1 point**

## 5 RECYCLE AND UPCYCLE

You may have a recycling centre near your home where you can take glass bottles, cans, paper and some kinds of plastic trash. These can be turned back into raw materials which are then made into new items.

**1 black bag of trash recycled = 2 points**

Some other kinds of non-recyclable trash can be "upcycled", or turned into useful objects that will keep them out of the landfills and oceans. Try making some of these at home or school.

- eco bricks (bottle bricks)
- a piece of art or sculpture
- flowerpots
- a pen holder
- jewellery

**1 upcycled item produced = 1 point**

### ► TIP

You can find instructions, and lots more ideas of how to be a Trash Hero at our website: [www.trashhero.org/kids](http://www.trashhero.org/kids)





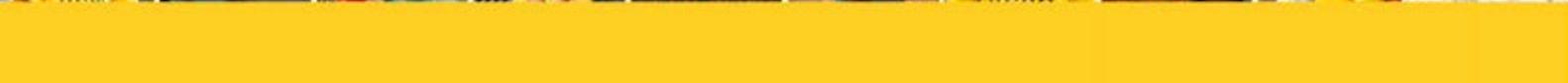


## EVERYONE CAN BE A TRASH HERO!

Trash Hero is a community-led volunteer movement founded in Thailand in 2013. We are registered as a non-profit organisation in Switzerland, and active all over Southeast Asia and around the world.

Our local chapters run weekly cleanups and bottle refill programs to clean and prevent waste. Our actions are always positive and aim to inspire behaviour change for a more sustainable future.

For more information about our activities, and how you can contact - or start! - your local chapter, please visit [www.trashhero.org](http://www.trashhero.org), or our Facebook page "trashheroworld".





*thank you*