

Penguin



Readers



Plastic

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A close-up photograph of a pile of discarded plastic waste. The items include a yellow plastic bottle with a blue cap, a black plastic bottle, a clear plastic bottle, a light blue plastic container, and a green plastic bottle. The background is filled with more plastic debris, creating a sense of a large amount of waste.

CHAPTER ONE

The story of plastic

There is a lot of plastic in the world today.
We **use** plastic bottles and plastic bags.
Plastic things can be big or small, **hard** or **soft**.



We eat food in plastic packaging, with plastic forks.



We drink from plastic cups, with plastic straws.

And we pay for things with plastic money.



At work and at school, we sit on plastic chairs at plastic tables.



Every day, we use plastic pens, computers and phones. Plastic is an important part of our world.

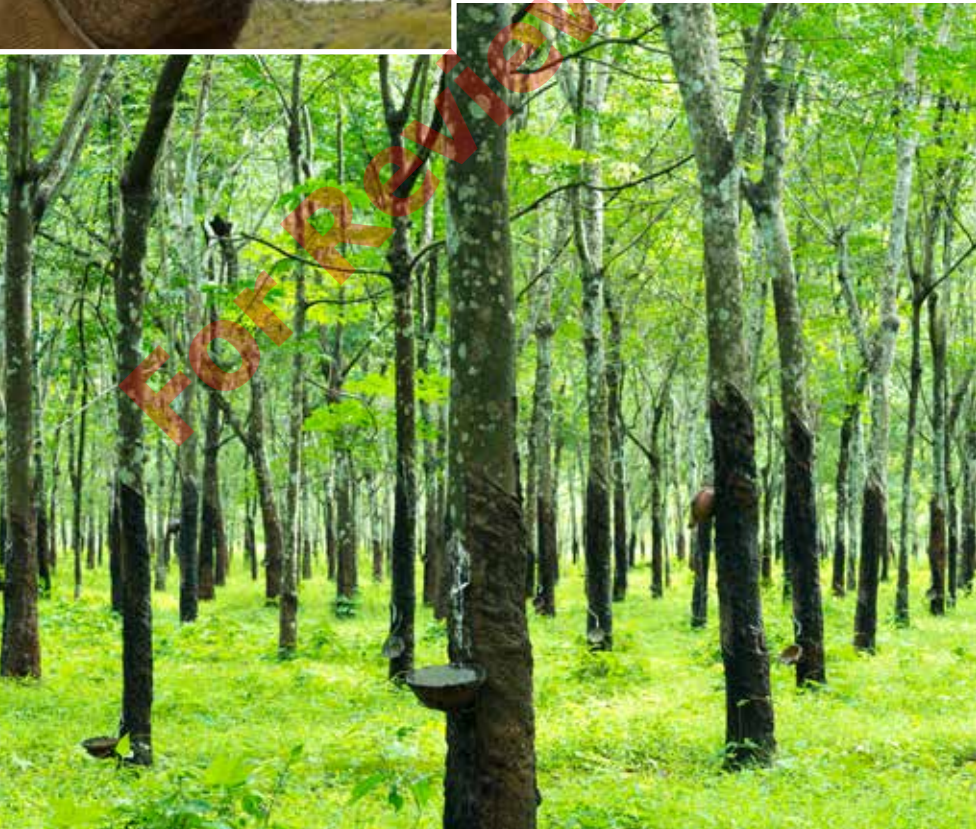


Before plastic, what did people make things with?



In the past, people took things from nature.

They used parts of animals to make things, and they used a lot of **plants** and trees.



Rubber comes from trees.
It is soft and **strong**.



Companies make lots of things from rubber. They make **tyres**, clothes and toys.



Alexander Parkes made the first plastic, in England, in 1862.

Parkesine was a very hard plastic, but it could **break** or start fires.



Then, American John Wesley Hyatt made games with celluloid in 1870.

