



Upstream[®] Battle

2024/25

Arrochar Litter Sink education and art programme

Why take part

We would like to invite your pupils to take part in Upstream Battle®, our campaign that explores the source to sea journey of marine litter.

It's estimated that up to 12.7 million tonnes of plastic get into the sea each year – that's a truck full of litter a minute. It's killing wildlife, threatening ecosystems and habitats, and is extremely difficult and expensive to clean up.

We know that 80% of all marine litter comes from land, so we need to face this problem upstream where litter is washed into gutters, blown into streams or carelessly discarded. We must stop this cycle of litter and prevent it from entering the sea in the first place.

This year's Upstream Battle education and art programme focuses on Loch Long and the Arrochar community in Argyll and Bute. An area of just under 1,000 people with spectacular mountains and incredible beauty and wildlife, making it a very popular destination for outdoor sports and tourism. But which also sees around 62,000 items of marine litter every year. How is this possible?

What is the Arrochar Litter Sink?

The Arrochar Litter Sink is an area of foreshore that receives a disproportionately high level of marine litter as a consequence of combined wind, wave and water currents bringing in waste from all around the world, most coming from the River Clyde and wider Irish Sea. The resulting deposition is at such a level that it has been known for hundreds of tonnes of waste mixed with sea weeds to be left in the small bay after just one storm.

What can we do about it?

Education and art programme

In order to bring about change we are inviting schools across the West Partnership local authorities, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and Argyll and Bute to learn about source to sea marine litter through the example of the Arrochar Litter Sink and to create awareness or solutions through participating in our [Marine Litter Art Competition](#).

We invite your pupils to join us for a live lesson to learn more about the Arrochar Litter Sink and the problem of source to sea litter; research the 'source to sea' pathway of marine litter and explore how litter in their community could end up in the sea; come along to a live workshop that will help to inspire entries for the art competition. Following their investigations, we invite pupils to represent their thoughts in an artistic medium, such as models, sculptures, photographs, video or poetry. The more imaginative, the better! There will be prizes for best entry

Activity	Task
Live Lesson, Thursday 14 November 2024	With an input live from Arrochar, this online live lesson will look at the journey of litter from land to sea, how this is particularly affecting places like Arrochar, the negative effects of litter on the environment and what can we do about it.
Litter Survey and Investigation	A hands-on activity to measure litter levels in your school's neighbourhood, reflecting on how this litter might reach and affect Arrochar's ecosystem. We would encourage you to look at our resources and guidance on conducting a litter survey on our Collect Data page .
Source to Sea pathway	<p>Invite your pupils to find out which water courses exist near their school, and to draw a map or flowchart of the pathway/s that litter could take and how it can get to the sea. Would all types of litter follow the same pathway? Would all types of litter take the same time? Which is the wildlife that could be affected along its journey?</p> <p>This activity could be carried out as a simple diagram of the school area to show movement of litter to drains and streams, or something more complex, such as a report on the results from your Litter Investigation.</p>
Campaigning Through Art Workshop, Wednesday 8 January 2025	Interactive skills workshop to give pupils tips on how to represent their thoughts, feelings and emotions about marine litter through their chosen medium to make sure their voices are heard.

Marine Litter Art Competition	<p>As a class or group, your pupils will be invited to create a piece of art which helps to explain the problem of marine litter or that explains what you will do to help solve it.</p> <p>Refer to the Competition brief and guidelines.</p>
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Competition brief

Your artwork can take any form you wish – models, sculptures, photographs, video or poetry are all accepted – however there are a few key principles it must comply with

Design principle	Details
Waste Reduction	<p>Your artwork must reuse existing materials, such as paper, plastics and metal.</p> <p>You cannot buy anything especially for the competition, as that defies the principle of waste reduction.</p> <p>You can use litter collected as part of your Litter Survey, however, please ensure this is thoroughly cleaned beforehand and only use non-hazardous materials. See the “Guide to staying safe” section on our Clean Up Scotland document.</p>
Reuse and Recycle	<p>If a physical piece, you must ensure your artwork is able to be recycled afterwards. This is one of the key aspects of the STEM challenge, as you must identify a way to create your piece without using non-recyclable materials such as plastic Sellotape, paint or glue.</p> <p>If you collect any litter as part of your Litter Survey that is not contaminated and can be recycled, please do so, if it is not recyclable then dispose of correctly.</p> <p>Your artwork can be on display for as long as you wish, but we are trusting you to dispose of it sustainably when the time comes.</p>
Message and Story	<p>Your piece must convey your message about Source to Sea Marine Litter in a fun, creative and artistic way that will be understood by a range of audiences.</p>
Videos	<p>All videos must be recorded in landscape and be a maximum of 3 minutes.</p> <p>No AI or copyright music or materials to be used in the video.</p>

Guidelines and advice

The artwork should be a collaborative piece, i.e. one entrant per class or group of pupils. It should be accompanied by a brief description of your work. This should be no more than 500 words.

We would particularly like to see entries which engage with the wider community or inspire long-term action.

The competition is open to all ages, from early years to high school establishments, in the following local authority areas:

- East Dunbartonshire
- East Renfrewshire
- Glasgow
- Inverclyde
- North Lanarkshire
- Renfrewshire
- South Lanarkshire
- West Dunbartonshire
- North Ayrshire
- South Ayrshire
- Argyll and Bute

Final entries must be submitted electronically to upstreambattle@keepscotlandbeautiful.org by Friday 7 February 2025. If your entry is a model or sculpture, please email a high-quality photograph.

The overall winner will be presented with a prize at the event.

If you have any queries relating to the art competition or any information contained in these resources, please contact upstreambattle@keepscotlandbeautiful.org



We support the ambitions of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Keep Scotland Beautiful is your charity inspiring action for our environment. We work with you to help combat climate change, tackle litter and waste, restore nature and biodiversity and improve places.



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