
Should We Ban Plastic Straws?

Segment Length: 3:23 minutes; 4:26 minutes

Videos:

“Here’s How Plastic Straws Are Wrecking Our Oceans”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?&v=kCwtlzABUpY>

“Plastic Straw Myths”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=513EnQlwRfs>

Guide:

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

Analysis Questions:

1. The USA Today video tells us that plastic straws are one of the leading contributors to ocean pollution. How does Angela Logomasini frame the contribution to ocean pollution made by straws?
2. Why do activists say straws should be banned rather than advocating for more recycling? How can straws sent to recycling plants still end up harming the environment?
3. What are the downsides of paper straws to consumers? To activists who want to save the environment?
4. By 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean, according to the USA Today video. Based on the video, how could Kristin Tate and Angela Logomasini argue that banning straws is not the solution to reducing plastic in the ocean?
5. Angela Logomasini believes the facts do not support a plastic straw ban, yet many activists have called for exactly that. How might she explain this?
6. Banning plastic straws may not solve the problem of plastic waste in the ocean, but isn’t it a good start? Use Angela Logomasini’s and Kristin Tate’s comments in the Stossel on Reason video to answer from their perspective.
7. The USA Today video notes that companies like Alaskan Airlines have chosen to stop using plastic straws without government legislation. Why would a profit-seeking

company choose to use more expensive straws? How can this fact be used to argue for a plastic straw ban? How can this fact be used to argue against a ban?

8. Even if the government does not ban plastic straws, shouldn't individuals choose to use paper straws instead? What would Angela Logomasini say?
9. Using the information presented in the USA Today video, respond to the following question from the perspective of someone who favors a ban on plastic straws: If some people don't want to use plastic straws, they don't have to; why do activists insist that everyone join them in switching away from plastic straws, even if they don't want to?