

If you ask your restaurant server to skip the plastic straw at dinner, you keep one item out of the trash. But if you convince a restaurant manager to stop handing out plastic straws to every diner, you can make a much bigger difference! Here's how to ask your favorite eatery to ditch single-use plastic.

## WRITE A LETTER

### Introduction

- Tell the business owner how much you enjoy going there. Do you have a favorite dish or dessert they serve? Let them know!
- Then mention the plastic item you've seen on a recent visit, like a straw or bag.

### The Problem with Plastic

- Explain why plastic pollution is a problem for the planet. For example, if you're asking the restaurant to stop automatically giving out plastic to-go bags, you could say that sea turtles can be harmed when they mistake the plastic for food.
- Include facts and details about plastic: You could say that nine million tons of plastic waste end up in the ocean every year, and 700 species of marine animals have been affected by plastic. Visit [natgeokids.com/ocean-plastic](http://natgeokids.com/ocean-plastic) for more facts.
- If any other restaurants in your town have reduced their single-use plastic waste, mention that they made the switch and this place could too.

### Make Your Request

- Ask the restaurant to reduce their plastic waste. You could ask a restaurant to hand out plastic straws only if a customer requests them, or ask an ice-cream shop to swap out plastic spoons for a compostable version.
- End your letter by thanking the business owner for listening.
- Mail your letter or drop it off in person next time you visit.

Get a parent's permission before doing any of these things.

## SPEAK UP

Speak face-to-face with a manager about plastic, whether you're dropping off your letter or just visiting the restaurant.

- With a parents' permission, politely ask your waiter if you can speak to the restaurant manager.
- Shake the manager's hand and look them in the eye when you talk to him or her.
- Tell them why you enjoy coming to this restaurant.
- Give one fact about the plastic pollution problem and then make your request.
- If you brought your letter, hand it over to the manager.
- Thank them for their time.

