

Session 2019	Page 1/1
Examen : BTS Management des Unités Commerciales Épreuve orale de langue vivante étrangère : ANGLAIS (LV1)	

The planet is on edge of a global plastic calamity

Plastic pollution has grabbed the world's attention, and with good cause.

More than 100 years after its invention, we're addicted. To pass a day without encountering some form of plastic is nearly impossible. We've always been eager to embrace the promise of a product that could make life cheaper, faster, easier. Now, after a century of unchecked production and consumption, convenience has turned to crisis.

Today you'll find plastic where you least expect it, including the foods we eat, the water we drink and the environments in which we live. Once in the environment, it enters our food chain where, increasingly, microplastic particles are turning up in our stomachs, blood and lungs. Scientists are only beginning to study the potential health impacts.

That's why we urgently need consumers, business and governments to step up with urgent, decisive action to halt this crisis of consumption of single-use, throwaway plastics. If we do that, we'll also help fight climate change, create a new space for innovation and save some species in the process.

Those who say there are more important environmental crises to tackle are mistaken. In today's world, protecting our environment is not about choosing one issue above another. The deeply interconnected systems that make up the natural world defy such a narrow-minded approach. Beating plastic pollution will preserve precious ecosystems, mitigate climate change, protect biodiversity, and indeed human health. Confronting this crisis is a fundamental battle that must be fought today as part of the broader struggle for a sustainable tomorrow.

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