

Paper Bags

Paper is made from trees which are a natural source

Paper bags:

- are convenient
- light and easy to carry
- easy to store
- cheap compared with many other types of bags
- can be decorated in any style or colour
- may be coated in plastic to waterproof
- may be made from recycled paper
- paper is biodegradable: can be composted: will break down in landfill and can be recycled to make new products
- new trees can be grown to provide paper for new bags

Described by a company that sells paper

- making paper uses lots of water, chemicals and energy
- paper bags are often just used once
- recycled paper is not such good quality as new paper
- plastic coated paper bags are not recyclable

Described by an environmental group



Light Plastic bags

Plastic bags :

- are very convenient and used often
- may be different designs and colours
- are light and easy to carry and to transport
- can be made in different thicknesses
- take up little space so easy to store a large number
- are very cheap compared to other types of bags
- can be reused many times for different uses
- some may be recycled to make new objects

Described by an organisation of plastic bag manufacturers

- most light plastic bags are made from oil
- many are only used once.
- plastic bags are put into rubbish and may end up on landfill sites or being burned
- often found as litter in towns, in country side and on beaches
- can damage seas, coastline and wildlife

Information from a conservation group



Heavy Duty Plastic Bags

Heavy duty plastic bags:

- are very convenient, quite light and easy to carry
- can come in many colours and designs
- take up little space so easy to store a large number
- easy to transport
- are cheap compared to other types of bags
- are strong and can carry heavy loads
- may be reused many times
- supermarkets may replace torn or damaged bags
- some plastic bags may be recycled to make new objects

Information from plastic bag manufacturer



Plastics

- are made from oil products
- are difficult to recycle
- plastic bags are put into rubbish and may end up on landfill sites or being burned.

Information from an environmental group

Natural Fabric Bags

- made from fabrics from plants (eg. linen, cotton, hemp, jute)
- made in different shapes and sizes and decorated with patterns or logos
- are strong, can be used many times and last a long time
- some may be washed
- cheap for each use compared to other types of bags
- may have a plastic coating to make them waterproof
- may be repaired or the fabric may be re-used
- fabric waste is not harmful and some may decompose. It may be separated from other waste and re-used

Information from fabric bag company

- large amounts of water and pesticides are used to grow plants for fabrics
- energy is needed to make and transport fabrics and around the World

Information from an environmental group



Synthetic Fabric Bags

- made from materials like plastics (eg nylon, polyester)
- may be made from recycled material (eg rPET from plastic bottles)
- made in different shapes and sizes and may be decorated with patterns or logos
- are strong, can be used many times and last a long time
- some may be washed
- cheap for each use compared to other types of bags
- may have a plastic coating to make them waterproof
- may be repaired or the fabric used to make something else
- are made from oil products
- are difficult to recycle
- may be put into rubbish and end up on landfill sites or being burned

Information from fabric bag company

Information from an environmental group



Re-usable bags

- heavy duty plastic and fabric bags may be re-used over and over again.
- fabric bags may be washed and re-used
- re-using bags is better for the environment than always using new ones
- re-usable bags may need more material when they are made but this is better for the environment than having to make new paper bags or new thin plastic bags which will be thrown away after one use.
- they may be cheaper over time especially when used many times
- re-using bags is better as throwing away bags may cause air and water pollution and hurt wildlife



Information from a group who advises businesses