

NATURAL SCIENCES – GRADE: 7
MEMO- IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The environmental impact of mining precious metals.

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1. What is mining? **the process of extracting precious metals and stones from underground.**
2. What is the impact of the mining process on the environment? **Soil is damaged and changed because of the chemicals used and the blasting of bedrock. Processed rock is dumped on mine-dumps, dust of which is harmful to people and the soil cannot support plant life. Chemicals used seep through the ground into ground water, poisoning it. When soil and water is affected, entire ecosystems that rely on this area are negatively impacted.**

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The environmental impact of plastic.

1. Why are plastic bags useful to us? **Light weight, cheap, strong, easy to carry, flexible and waterproof. Etc.**
2. If they are so useful, how can they have a negative impact on the environment? **Made from polyethylene which is made from natural gas and petroleum (non-renewable resources). Plastic litter and can cause blocked drains and sewage systems which can lead to flooding. Animals eat or get tangled in the litter which results in serious injuries, starvation even death. Plastic takes a long time to decompose resulting in the slow release of harmful chemicals into the soil.**

Non recycled waste is dumped in landfills. Some plastic that are dumped in landfills can take up to **1000 years** to decompose. When they do decompose they release harmful chemicals into the soil.

3. What can you do? **Reuse, reduce and recycle.**

The environmental impact of fossil fuels.

COAL	OIL	NATURAL GAS
<i>Used to generate electricity. Needs to be mined from underground.</i>	<i>Used to make petrol and diesel. Found in the ground between layers of rock. Have to drill an “Oil well” and pump it to the surface. Transported in pipelines under the sea from oil-rigs or in ocean tankers.</i>	<i>Energy sources for heating and cooking as well as for vehicles and to generate electricity in some countries.</i>

4. What are the negative impacts these fuels have on the environment? **Fossils fuels have to be burnt to produce energy- this causes air pollution and the release of toxic gasses into the atmosphere. They have to be mined in some way or the other which impacts**

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the environment in many ways. Crude oil spillage in the ocean is harmful to marine life.