



## Creating a Sustainable Tomorrow, TODAY!

### Learning Targets

- Learn the effects of plastics on ocean life
- Collaborate with peers to innovate solutions

### Standards

- UN SDG 12 & 14 – sustainable consumption and production; life below water
- NFTE Entrepreneurial Mindsets – Communication & Collaboration; Opportunity Recognition

### Age Range

- 4<sup>th</sup> grade and up

### Time Commitment

- 20-30 minutes
- Additional time to execute



Every year, millions of people throw out their phone cases, which contributes to overcrowded landfills with plastic parts that take 100+ years to break down. That's why, at Otter Products, they developed the WAKE case, an innovative phone case that utilizes ocean-based plastics in order to extend the life of these materials and reduce environmental waste. In addition to this new product, Otter also launched Lifecycle, a case recycling program that encourages customers to send their old WAKE cases back, allowing Otter Products the opportunity to recycle and reincorporate the material into future WAKE cases. This Lifecycle program enables landfill diversion while helping us achieve a more circular economy.

## Your Challenge

Otter Products has taken some concrete steps to sustainability within the company. Their distribution centers recycled more than 80% of the scrap they produced, diverting 500,000+ pounds from landfills in 2023. Roughly 50% of the plastics used in some of the most popular phone case designs are recycled. It is estimated that more than 4.6 million pounds of recycled plastic was repurposed by the company in 2023, and the count keeps growing. Otter Products packaging contains nearly no plastic and is curbside-bin recyclable.

More and more companies are working toward sustainability with the products they offer. Patagonia urges customers to send back their used gear for repurposing. Allbirds and Rothys both make footwear from 100 percent recycled materials. Green Toys sells children's toys made from recycled milk jugs. WeWOOD will plant one tree for every customer who purchases a watch from their company.

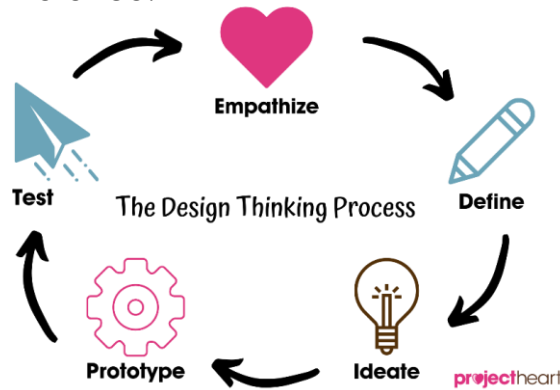
What more can be done? Can you and your friends devise a campaign to spread the word (think social media and viral TikToks) about the work these companies are doing? Can you run an event to get more people involved? Is there an efficient and effective plan to add more ways to collect old cases, to send in their used Patagonia items, etc.? What are the barriers for these programs and how will you use your time and talents to create solutions?

Helpful websites could be

- <https://www.otterbox.com/en-us/sustainability.html>
- <https://theoceancleanup.com/>
- <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/trust/archive/fall-2020/confronting-ocean-plastic-pollution>
- <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/hazards/marinedebris/plastics-in-the-ocean.html>
- [https://academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Viral\\_marketing](https://academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Viral_marketing)
- <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/302286>

## Getting Started

To effectively create change, you need to follow a plan of action. We use the Design Thinking Process to help us better understand the problem we see and walk us through steps to creating a plan to make a difference!



## The Design Thinking Process



Empathize

To **empathize** means to understand and share the feelings of another. As it relates to the design thinking process and [Project Heart](#), to empathize specifically means to learn about the audience or group that you wish to impact.



Define

**Define** means to share your problem statement with others. As it relates to Project Heart, the define stage of design thinking means you've thought about your personal passions and how to apply the 3Ts of your group to make a greater social impact. The define state helps you clearly state the need or problem so others can understand.



Ideate

To **ideate** means to form an idea, thought or concept. As it relates to the design thinking process, to ideate specifically means to brainstorm ideas based on what you have learned about your target audience and the point of view or problem statement you have defined. Related to Project Heart, your ideas should also incorporate the specific time, talent and/or treasure that you wish to contribute.



Prototype

To **prototype** means to model or create an example. As it relates to the design thinking process, to prototype specifically means to execute one or more of your ideas.



Test

To **test** means to check the quality, reliability or performance of something. As it relates to the design thinking process, to test specifically means to gain feedback on your prototype from your target population.

## Activity

**Use the spaces below to work through the design thinking process.**

Tips: To build empathy, do some research and potentially interview experts in the field. Think about the problem as well as what others are doing to solve it.

When you've decided on your prototype idea, remember to access the Illumination Fund for materials funding <https://myprojectheart.org/illumination-fund>



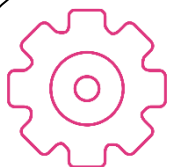
**Empathize**



**Define**



**Ideate**



**Prototype**



**Test**

**Reflect**