

**KEEP
NEW ZEALAND
BEAUTIFUL**



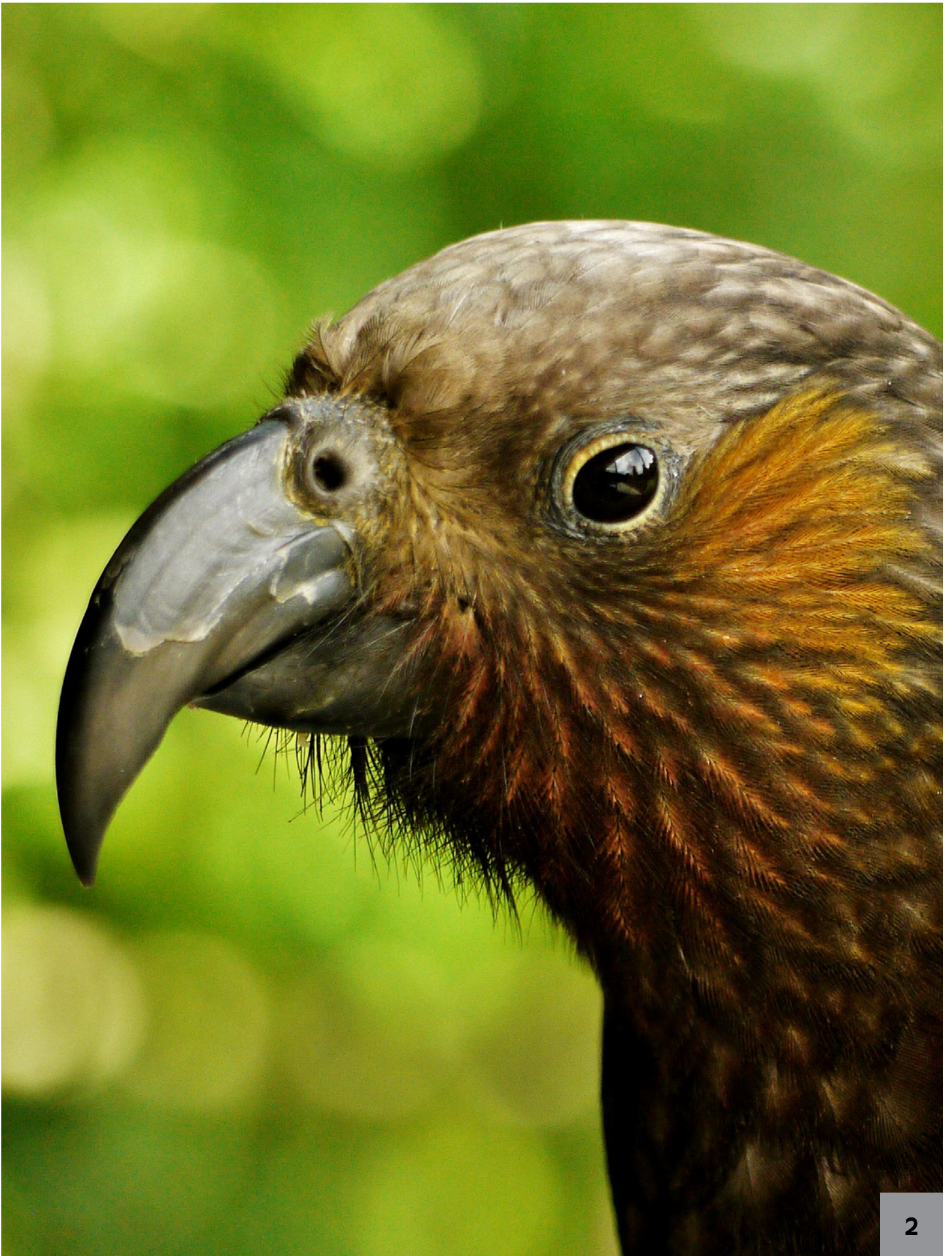
MARS WRIGLEY
Foundation

A GUIDE TO WRITING LIKE AN ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALIST

Young Reporters
for the Environment

www.yre.global





**KEEP
NEW ZEALAND
BEAUTIFUL**



YOUNG REPORTERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

YOUTH-LED ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM

YOUNG REPORTERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

LITTER LESS CAMPAIGN is an international project from the Foundation for Environmental Education. In New Zealand it is coordinated by Keep New Zealand Beautiful and proudly brought to you by the Mars Wrigley Foundation.

KEEP NEW ZEALAND BEAUTIFUL

We are a non-profit charitable organisation with a vision for all New Zealanders to actively work to restore, enhance and protect our environment. Our mission is to provide the education and resources you, and your community need to keep your own little corner of New Zealand beautiful.

FOUNDATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

FOUNDATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION (FEE) is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation aiming to promote sustainable development through environmental education (formal school education, training of staff and general awareness raising).

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HEY, YOUNG REPORTERS!

If you're reading this guide it's because you care about your environment. You understand that writing is a powerful tool for telling people about what's happening in the world and want people to be aware of what's happening in their own backyards.

You also might know that by submitting an article to New Zealand's YRE competition you have the chance to have your article featured on www.yre.org.nz, win cool prizes, and use your article to gain valuable attention on an important issue.

In this guide, you will discover everything you need to know to become an effective Young Reporter for the Environment.

We have all the tips for writing a great news article, and by the time you're done you will have an excellent piece that will educate people about a significant environmental issue in your community.

Before you jump in, check out the next page for a brief overview about everything you need to know to submit your article and then, you are good to go!

**We can't wait to see the submissions from New Zealand students.
So what are you waiting for?**

YOUNG REPORTERS TEAM

Keep New Zealand Beautiful
education@knzb.org.nz

EDITOR'S GUIDELINES

Part of the fun of **New Zealand's Young Reporters for the Environment** is the chance to have your article featured on www.yre.org.nz and to win cool prizes.

In order to be eligible, there are just a few quick things you'll need to keep in mind:

1. Stories should investigate an environmental issue relating to litter, waste and/or environmental pollution and propose possible solutions.
2. Make sure you include local content. We're interested in how this topic affects your community!
3. Your article should be no more than 1000 words and include a title of no more than 140 characters.
4. Your article should include 1–3 images (photographs, illustrations, diagrams etc.), each with captions of no more than 20 words. Sources for all images must be given.
5. Your article must include a short explanation of the link between the topic and one chosen United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)
6. Share your work to a local audience through at least three channels, e.g. class/school assemblies or exhibitions, social media/blogs, school newsletters, local events, magazines, TV, newspapers etc.
7. Check out the complete competition rules at www.yre.org.nz

THAT'S IT! Now let the writing begin...

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TOP TIPS FOR WRITING

If you have a knack for the written word, this book is for you. Becoming an effective journalist will take a little practice, but the process will also be fun and leave you with a great article and superb skills.

Simply follow these six steps for writing an article that is engaging and interesting. Use this guide as a quick overview on how to write a news article, or check out www.yre.org.nz if you want more advice.

STEP #1 Choosing Your Subject

While New Zealand's YRE requires that you choose one local issue to focus on, the difficult part can sometimes be narrowing it down. Here are some tips for selecting an engaging and exciting story.



TOP TIPS

Be In the Know. Reading other people's stories will help you know what is being talked about and what other aspects of the story could be covered.

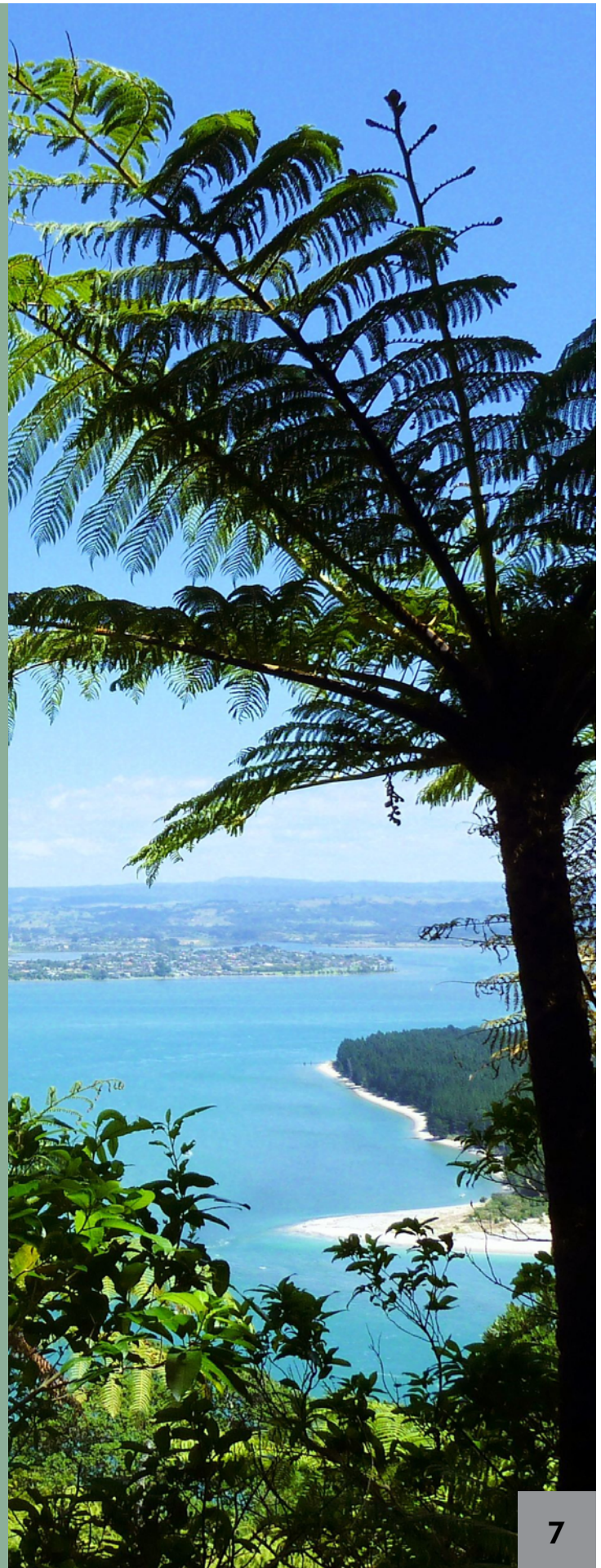
Discover Your Passion.

It's important to write about something you feel passionate about. If you are interested in the subject, it will come through in your writing.

Focus on the 'Hotspots' for waste or litter.

- Town centres
- Routes to school
- Beaches, rivers and lakes
- Fences around schools and garden beds
- Play areas and parks where groups gather
- Car parks
- Railway stations
- Shopping areas etc.

FOR MORE TIPS, PLEASE VISIT
www.yre.org.nz



STEP #2

Keeping It Local

One of the easiest and best ways to appeal to your readers is to relate a big issue back to what is happening in your own community. The challenge of New Zealand's YRE is to let the world know what environmental issues are happening in your town or neighbourhood. For an interesting article be sure to find the local appeal.

TOP TIPS

Remember Your Readers.

The first thought we have when we read an article is usually 'So what?'. So think about what would matter to your readers if you were writing for your local newspaper.

Levy the Local. We all tend to be most interested in things that are happening near to us, so act as if you are writing for your local newspaper and talk about how your subject affects your community.

Link to the Global. YRE connects local issues with others around the world. Make sure you cover the link to the global impact of the issue.

FOR MORE TIPS, PLEASE VISIT
www.yre.org.nz



QUESTION:

What are the first three questions that come to mind when you are thinking about your subject on a local scale?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

STEP #3:

Do Some Digging

To be an effective reporter you're going to have to get the facts. There will often be many people and sources to choose from and making a careful selection of sources will help create a factual and engaging article. Performing interviews is ideal, but you should do some digging as well – check out the Resources section of the KNZB website for more tips.

In your investigation try to answer these questions:

- Who is involved?
- How long has this been a problem?
- How do people feel about the issue?
- What have you done in response to this issue?
- Where have you gone to look for information?
- Why are you concerned about this issue?
- How have you become involved?
- What is preventing people from becoming involved?
- How many people recycle in your neighbourhood?
- Are there other clean-up projects taking place during the year to tackle waste problems?
- Can the source of the problem be identified?
- How can the problem be solved?
- What can be done in order to avoid re-occurrence of the problem in the future?

FOR MORE TIPS, PLEASE VISIT
www.yre.org.nz

Check out
www.yre.org.nz for a
list of resources. Better
yet, when you find a
good one share it with
other Young Reporters
by emailing it to:
education@knzb.org.nz





TOP TIPS

Get Them Hooked. Begin with the most interesting part of the article before going into the facts. You want to get people interested and reading more!

Leave Your Opinions At Home. Don't tell people what you think. The job of a reporter is to present all the arguments and facts in a piece so the readers can come to their own conclusions.

Include Quotes and Interviews. Don't forget to include quotes and interviews in your report. Try to interview a variety of people such as teachers, councillors, students and other local stakeholders.

Be Yourself. Write as if you are talking to a friend. Explain the problem and then use your research to highlight what is being done to find solutions to the problem.

Keep 'Em Short. Keeping your paragraphs to a couple of sentences each can help to make the reading manageable and ensure people will keep reading to the end!

The Golden Rule of Plagiarism. Don't do it. Any ideas you get should be credited to the original source. If you're not sure, check with someone.

STEP #4

Writing

By now, you should have a head full of information and a blank page in front of you – don't worry! Now is when you will turn all your research into a news article.

Here you will find some top tips for how to write an effective piece. Check out the next page for an article case study.

FOR MORE TIPS, PLEASE VISIT
www.yre.org.nz

OUR PLASTIC RUBBISH KILLING SEA LIFE

By Sophie Barclay

New Zealand Herald, 5:30 AM Monday Mar 4, 2013

To mark Seaweeek, Element magazine's Sophie Barclay meets those dedicated to cleaning up the oceans



Dan Godoy with a turtle harmed by eating plastics. Marine turtles can't differentiate between natural prey and plastic. Photo / NZ Herald

Dan Godoy hands me a plastic jar. It's filled with rubbish fragments: fishing line, rope, plastic bag pieces, remnants of plastic packaging, the end of an old balloon and blue, jagged hunks of a bucket, about the size of a 20c piece.

The 224 pieces of plastic were found in the stomach of one turtle.

Plastics sit in a solid knot in the stomach, causing digestive problems. When turtles feed on normal foods, these begin to ferment, creating a buildup of gas. These turtles are called "floaters" and bob helplessly on the surface. They cannot feed and their metabolism drops.

"I've seen photos of turtles that have remained at the surface for so long that they get sunburned and their shell starts to peel while it's alive," says Mr Godoy, a PhD candidate from Massey University who is researching the biology of turtles.

At least 44 per cent of marine bird species are known to eat plastic. Last year a sperm whale calf found dead in the Aegean Sea contained all kinds of rubbish, including 100 plastic bags.

A floating plastic bag and a jellyfish look nearly identical, as do fish eggs and the tiny plastic resin pellets – nurdles – used to make plastic.

Mr Godoy says most plastics eaten by turtles are clear and white.

"Marine turtles can't differentiate between natural prey and plastic." Plastics are riddled with chemicals to create useful qualities such as flexibility or transparency.

Dianna Cohen, from the US-based Plastic Pollution Coalition, is supporting Waiheke Island's BYO Bag initiative, which aims to make the island plastic bag free. She says some of these chemicals, including bisphenol A (BPA) and hormone-disrupting chemicals called phthalates, have been linked to cancer, diabetes, obesity, Alzheimer's, autism, and a number of sexual problems like lower sexual functioning, sterility and infertility in humans.

OUR PLASTIC RUBBISH KILLING SEA LIFE – CONTINUED...

By Sophie Barclay

New Zealand Herald, 5:30 AM Monday Mar 4, 2013

BPA is allowed in New Zealand, and plastics containing BPA line our canned food. Its use has been banned in some products in countries including the European Union states, China, Malaysia and America.

Wind and ocean currents direct rubbish that has been dumped, dropped, buried or blown out of landfills into 11 patches in the ocean, over a period of about five years.

Of these, the best known is the “great Pacific rubbish patch” in the northwest Pacific which stretches about 700,000sq km.

Midway Atoll is also in the northwest Pacific, just over 2000km from Honolulu and 4000km from Japan. Evidence of humanity’s “civilisation” litters the shore: toothbrushes, mugs, lightbulbs and lighters in an array of colours. And 8.6 tonnes of nets are washed up each year, often containing seals and turtles.

The water surrounding the island is littered with plastic detritus eaten by fish and mammals and regurgitated by birds to their chicks. Nearly all albatross chicks are fed plastic. Researchers found 17 bottle caps inside one adult bird’s carcass.

New research from Dr Hideshige Takada, a Japanese scientist at the Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, shows that pieces of plastic suck in toxins in the seawater.

Dr Takada is researching persistent organic pollutants (POPs) – chemicals which include harmful pesticides such as DDT, and textile flame-retardants. POPs break down slowly. They can dissolve in oil, fat and plastic (a “solid oil”).

“Concentrations in marine plastic fragments are millions of times higher than those in seawater,” he says.

Dr Takada’s study shows that microplastics are absorbing chemicals from the surrounding seawater and being transferred to the stomach tissues of plastic-eating seabirds.

POPs can harm DNA, affect the thyroid system and the brain, disrupt hormones and weaken the immune system. In 1998, mass deaths of seals in the North Sea were put down to high POP levels in the ocean.

Ms Cohen says there’s more to stemming the tide than just cleaning up our beaches. The Plastic Pollution Coalition emphasises

the four Rs – reduce, reuse and recycle and refuse.

About 225 million tonnes of plastic are produced globally each year. New Zealand imported nearly 210,00 tonnes of nurdles last year and 61 per cent of plastics made in New Zealand are used for packaging.

Single-use, disposable plastic accounts for 72 per cent of rubbish picked up on New Zealand beaches, according to research from Sustainable Coastlines. Spokesman Camden Howitt says the public has the ultimate power to stop the plastic problem.

“Although nurdles on the beach seem like a manufacturing problem, it’s really caused by demand for plastic-packaged products,” he says. “Individuals can influence this simply by choosing to buy fewer products wrapped in plastic.”

Essentially, says Mr Godoy, we need to realise that our actions have consequences.

“We always treat the ocean and the environment as though they are separate from us, but it’s an integral part of us. It’s our responsibility to acknowledge and understand what kind of impacts we have on a day-to-day basis.”

STEP #5

Editing

This is where you will turn your decent writing into a rockin' piece of environmental journalism!

You can edit your story as you write it, but you might find it easier to write the whole thing and then start going over it with a fine tooth comb.



TOP TIPS

Here are some top tips for editing. Use this as a checklist while you review your article.

Spelling. Use the spell check function on your computer and try reading your article backwards. It will help you look at the spelling of each individual word.

Check the Facts. Did you cover all the basic questions in your article?

Read out Loud. Does your article make sense? Reading your article out loud or to someone else is a good way to make sure your article is grammatically correct.

Finding Balance. Did you strike a fair balance between all opinions and sources on the issue?

FOR MORE TIPS, PLEASE VISIT
www.yre.org.nz

STEP #6

Final Touches and Submitting

You're almost finished your first piece – Congratulations! Now there are just a few touches that will help make your article especially interesting.

TOP TIPS

Choosing a Headline. It should be clear from the headline what the story is about, although you won't want it to be a whole paragraph long! Check out some headlines from your local paper to help get the idea.

A Picture is Worth... you know. As wonderful and descriptive as your piece may be, the right picture can go a long way in bringing it to life. Be sure you have permission to use the photo you're choosing, or better yet, take your own!

Referencing... Don't forget to include a reference list with your submission so you can credit quotes, information and images that you use from other sources.

FOR MORE TIPS, PLEASE VISIT
www.yre.org.nz



SUBMITTING YOUR PIECE

By the time you have finished this book, hopefully you will have tried out all the tips and tricks and created an article you want to submit to New Zealand's YRE.

You now only have to submit it for a chance to win amazing prizes. It's easy! Log on to www.yre.org.nz. Go to the Enter New Zealand's Young Reporters for the Environment section and fill in the requested information – this will make you eligible for New Zealand prizes and to have your piece on the Keep New Zealand Beautiful website.

Winners of New Zealand's Young Reporters for the Environment will automatically be considered for the international competition.

For more information visit the website, or email: education@knzb.org.nz

Thanks for participating in the **YOUNG REPORTERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT LITTER LESS CAMPAIGN!** Check out the website for more ideas to stay involved with environmental issues in your area.

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