# The treatment of oil spills – student sheet

In this experiment you will be looking at an unusual and interesting way of chemically treating a microsize oil spill.

Students must wear eye-protection. Avoid inhaling fumes from paraffin.

## Procedure

1. Half-fill a 100 cm3 beaker with water.
2. Using your pipette, add some oil or paraffin to the beaker to give a thin layer on top of the water.
3. Cut off the end of a pipette to form a scoop as shown below.

Diagram

Description automatically generated

1. Add two scoops of polymer powder to the beaker and stir with the end of the pipette.

## Student questions

1. What do you observe?
2. How do you explain your observations?
3. If you were to do this experiment on a large scale to try to deal with an oil slick at sea, what would be the advantages of using this polymer powder and what difficulties might you encounter?

## Health, safety and technical notes

* Read our standard health and safety guidance here <https://rsc.li/3LNbkfo>
* Students must wear suitable eye protection (splash proof goggles to BS EN166 3)
* Avoid inhaling fumes.
* Paraffin is FLAMMABLE, ensure no naked flames or other sources of ignition (see CLEAPSS Hazcard [HC045b](https://science.cleapss.org.uk/Resource-Info/HC045b-Hydrocarbons-aliphatic-saturated-1.aspx)).