

Read the following passage and answer the question that follows:

What are the great advantages of plastics over other materials? First of all is the comparative ease with which they are shaped. Articles varying in size from the head of a drawing pin to a complete motor car body can be pressed out one after another. For some of the stronger articles heating may be necessary for as long as an hour, but for most it is a matter of a few minutes or even seconds. Then there is the fact that they finish with a high polish. Wood usually needs elaborate polishing and constant repolishing. The plastic article is “born polished” and will retain its gloss almost indefinitely, requiring, at the most, washing to remove grease and dirt.

Although plastics require no actual polishing, most of them will take a dye very easily in the manufacturing process and can therefore be used for decorative purposes. The dye is generally incorporated at the grinding stage, when the dried resin is reduced to powder and mixed with a filler. Almost any desired colour can be produced. These dyes are so firmly fixed in the substances they do not affect the taste of food served on plastic dishes. The plastic itself resists the attacks of such acids as are found in food and alkalis of moderate strength.

Then we have the individual properties of the different plastics. Some, like bakelite, are remarkable for the insulating properties and form a good substitute for glass or rubber in electrical apparatus. Perhaps the word “substitute” is not correct, for it generally implies something inferior, whereas plastics have electrical properties equal to the older insulators, and other properties, such as strength and permanence, vastly superior. Some plastics are valued for their great tensile strength, which may be as much as 12.000 lb per square inch; others for their heat-resisting qualities. Or for their transparency.

Question:

In not more than 120 words, summarize the advantages of plastics over other materials.