

LEAVE NO TRACE FOR EVERY KID™ TRASH TIMELINE

ACTIVITY



AGES Any

GROUP SIZE Any (with 20 or fewer, each person can have an active role in this activity)

TIME 15-20 minutes

MATERIALS Trash Timeline Cards from the Activity Materials packet.

LEAVE NO TRACE OBJECTIVE To provide a visual and hands-on method exhibiting how long it takes for trash to decompose. Also ideal for combining a STEM curriculum with Leave No Trace (see debrief).

DIRECTIONS

Distribute each of the pictures, as many to each participant as necessary to distribute all pictures, as evenly as possible. Distribute the time pages in a similar manner. Try to ensure that no person holds both a picture and its associated time page.

Next, have the participants roam around, trying to figure out which pictures match up with which time periods. As they make their matches, you can comment on their accuracy and have them try to correct any errors.

This activity gets the participants to talk to



each other and to figure out how long each item takes to decompose. When they finish, it would be nice to have them line up in order from shortest to longest time.

Note: See below for a list of the decomposition rates for common items. The cards do not indicate which item matches up to which time frame. Write this list down or use this page as a reference.

Orange or Banana Peel	-----Up to 2 years
Cigarette Butts	-----1 to 5 years
Leather	-----1 to 5 years
Wool Socks	-----1 to 5 years
Gum	-----5 years
Plastic-Coated Paper	-----5 years



BIGFOOT'S PLAYBOOK

This activity comes from Bigfoot's Playbook, a collection of 38 experiential education activities specific to the Seven Principles that help kids understand what it means to Leave No Trace in their lives and their community. To learn more, please visit: lnt.org/bigfoots-playbook.

Plastic Bags-----10 to 20 years
Nylon Fabric-----30 to 40 years
Tin Cans-----50 years
Aluminum Can-----80 to 100 years
Plastic 6-Pack Holder-----100 years
Glass Bottles-----1,000,000 years

Variation: Split your group into teams for a mini competition to see who can most accurately pair the images to their timeline date in the shortest amount of time. Instead of partners, the teams will simply be creating a timeline on the ground using the trash images and date range cards. This will require you to print out and use multiple sets of the Trash Timeline Cards from the Activity Materials packet.

DEBRIEF

Consider the following questions:

- What object's decomposition rate surprised you the most?
- What are some factors that relate to decomposition? Can we list them?
(Examples: microbes, soil type, time, moisture, heat, the item itself, size of the item, elevation, slope, aspect, temperature, and season.)



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