

# Litter Breakdown Timeline

Create a wall display or game



## Wall Display

Create a 'Timeline' by attaching a long piece of ribbon across the display board.

Print off the following sheets in colour, single-sided and cut out images and breakdown figures.

Attach the images and decomposition times along the ribbon to illustrate the length of time each item takes to decompose.

## Game Instructions

**Challenge your students to estimate how long rubbish takes to decompose - they will be surprised!** This activity can be done individually or in small groups.

1. Print off copies of the Quiz Sheet (page 3).
2. Print off the Match Up Sheets (page 4 to 8) in colour, single-sided and laminate. Then cut along the black line separating the litter images and breakdown times.
3. Spread out the litter images and breakdown time sheets for students to try to match up and fill in the quiz sheet.
4. Read through the Answer Sheet (page 2) together & see who got the most correct answers.
5. Discuss the consequences of littering, e.g. makes the area unsightly, attracts rats, may harm other wildlife, pollutes water ways, can be fined for littering, etc.

**Please Note:** The figures shown here are just estimates, and may vary depending on the local environmental conditions (e.g. heat, wind, rain, etc.) Items sent to landfill may take even longer than the times suggested here due to the anaerobic (lack of oxygen) conditions when the rubbish is compacted.

# Litter Breakdown Times

How long items take to decompose when discarded as litter

Paper – 1 month



Apple – 2 months



Cotton Clothes – 5 months



Banana Peel – Up to 2 years



Cigarette Butt – 2 to 5 years



Steel Can – 80 to 100 years



Aluminium Can – 200 to 500 years



Plastic Bottle – 450 years



Disposable Nappy – 300 to 500 years



Glass Bottle - Never



# Litter Breakdown Quiz Sheet

Match up the images of the items below with the time cards to estimate how many weeks, months or years it takes for these items to breakdown and rot away when discarded as litter.



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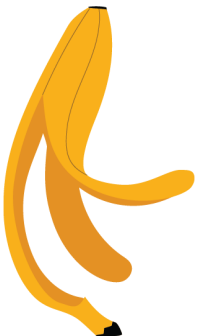
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Name.....



Paper

1 month



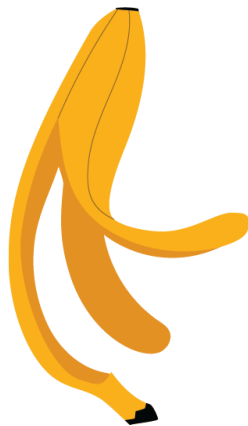
Apple

2 months



Cotton clothes

5 months



Banana peel

Up to 2 years



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Never



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