

# Litter breakdown wall display

A visual way to understand how long items take to decompose



1. Print off the following sheets in colour, single-sided and cut out images and breakdown figures. Laminate if you intend to keep this display.
2. Create a 'Timeline' by attaching a long piece of ribbon across the display board.
3. Attach the images and decomposition times along the ribbon to illustrate the length of time each item takes to decompose.
4. Also see the Litter Breakdown Game which can be used in conjunction with this wall display.

**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.

**How long  
does litter  
take to  
break down?**

**How long  
does litter  
take to  
break down?**



Paper

1 month



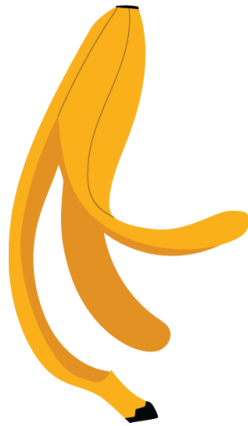
Apple

2 months



Cotton clothes

5 months



Banana peel

Up to 2 years



Cigarette butts

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 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

