

How long does litter take to break down activity sheet instructions (for leader)

This fun, interactive activity is all about how long common litter items stick around in the environment. It's a great way to get people thinking about waste and the impact it has on our planet.

Participants will be given a sheet showing a mix of everyday litter items and different decomposition times. Their task? Draw lines to match each item with how long it takes to break down — sounds simple, but it might surprise them!

How to run it

- Hand out the match-up sheets.
- Ask people to guess and connect the items to their decomposition times — no Googling allowed!

Once everyone's had a go, reveal the answers (below) and spark a quick discussion:

- Which item shocked you the most?
- What could we do to reduce this kind of waste?



Banana Skin

around 2 months



Newspaper

up to 6 weeks



Drinks Can

200 years



Plastic Bag

around 20 years



Plastic Bottle

up to 450 years



Sweet Wrapper

20 – 500 years!

Keep the conversation going

This activity is a great way to spark change, ask the participants if:

- "Did anything decompose faster than you thought?"
- "Which items do you use every day without thinking?"
- "What small changes could we make to avoid long-lasting waste?"

Top tip:

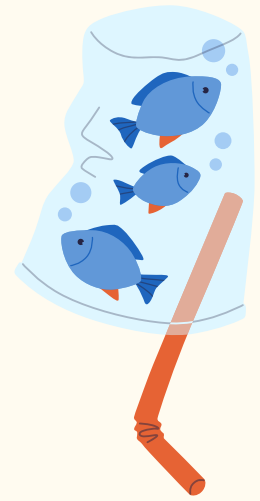
You can even turn it into a group challenge:

- Split into teams, award points for each correct match, and see who's got the best eco instincts!



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How long does litter take to break down? (Activity sheet)



Plastic never truly goes away—it just breaks into smaller pieces.

The items shown below pollute the environment for generations, long after we've forgotten about them. Always remember to recycle your waste to avoid it entering our waterways!



Drinks Can

**450
years**



Banana Skin

**2
Months**



Newspaper

**200
Years**



Plastic Bag

**6
Weeks**



Plastic Bottle

**20
Years**

Draw a line from the object to the correct amount of time it takes to decompose

