

PRIMARY ACTIVITY: How Many Years to Disappear?

Directions: Use this as an introduction to a unit on recycling/solid waste disposal. Students will be surprised at how long it takes for most buried trash to disappear. (Answers are at bottom of page.)

| How Many Years To Disappear? | | | | | |
|--|------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| If you bury these objects, mark how long you think it will take for them to disappear. | | | | | |
| OBJECT | 0 - 1 year | 1 - 100 years | 100 - 500 years | 500 - 1,000 years | 1,000 - 1,000,000 years |
| Disposable Diaper | | | | | |
| Cotton Sock | | | | | |
| Styrofoam Cup | | | | | |
| Glass Bottle | | | | | |
| Leather Belt | | | | | |
| Wooden Block | | | | | |
| Banana Peel | | | | | |
| Paper Box | | | | | |
| Plastic Bottle | | | | | |
| Aluminum Can | | | | | |

Answers: Diaper: 500-600 years, Cotton Sock: 5-6 months, Styrofoam Cup: 1 million years or more, Glass Bottle: 1 million years or more, Leather Belt: 40-50 years, Wooden Block: 10-20 years, Banana Peel: 3-4 weeks, Paper Box: 1-2 months, Plastic Bottle: 1 million years or more, Aluminum Can: 200-500 years.