

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.