

How Long Does it Last?



Group Size:	Any size
Age Group:	6 to 12 years
Time:	30 minutes
Objective:	To demonstrate how important it is to "Trash Your Trash" by illustrating how long it takes for specific items to decompose (to break down organic matter from a complex to a simpler form, mainly through the action of fungi, bacteria or solar radiation).
Materials:	Trash Deck (included) A flip chart of Leave No Trace Seven Principles. Actual trash items to match the deck.

Preparation

Set up a flip chart with the Leave No Trace Seven Principles.

Collect trash items to match the illustrations in the Trash Deck for younger groups to easily identify (*optional*).

Introduction (5 minutes)

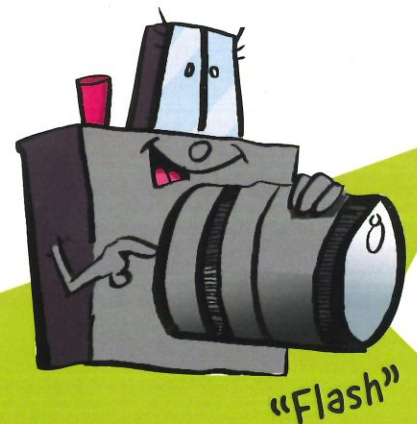
Introduce yourself and welcome participants to the PEAK program. **Ask** how many have been hiking, camping, fishing, boating or on a picnic? **Ask** participants if they have a favorite place they visit and why. **Ask** who knows how to Leave No Trace while outdoors? Explain that Leave No Trace is information and skills that help people protect themselves and also the areas that they visit (e.g. state or national parks, forests, trails, campgrounds, etc.). Leave No Trace is about making good decisions to protect the world around you—the world we all enjoy. **Read** each principle.

The Discussion/Activity (20 minutes)

Lay the cards on the ground with the picture of the trash item facing up. If you have collected the item to match the card, place it beside or on top of the card. **Ask** the group to guess the time it takes each item to decompose. (**Teaching tip:** define decompose—to *break down*—for younger groups). After they have guessed for one, tell them what it actually is and discuss the amount of time it takes for the item to break down. Were they way off? Have they seen this item outside, perhaps where people have littered? Do this exercise for each card perhaps paying closer attention to the ones for which the guesses are way off. End the discussion by stressing the importance of the "Trash Your Trash" Principle. Many people think it's okay to leave food items outside like apple cores or fruit skins because they are "natural." Even food takes a long time to break down and is harmful to wildlife that might eat it!

Wrap Up (3–5 minutes)

Explain how the Leave No Trace Seven Principles teach people to care for the environment while enjoying outdoor activities. Recreation can sometimes cause impacts (damage) to the land, but by following the Seven Principles, we can enjoy our favorite places every time we visit. **Point** to the flip chart and **read** the principles again. **Hand** out a plastic reference card to each participant. **Tell** them to keep these cards, and use them as a reminder of how they can enjoy outdoor activities more wisely. **Ask** for any last questions. Thank them for their time and attention, and tell them you hope to see them again!



Wool socks:
1-5 years

Disposable diaper:
10-20 years

Paper:
2-4 weeks

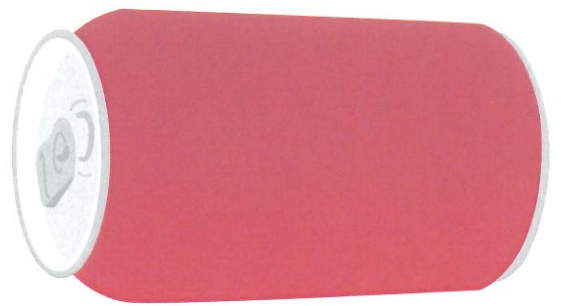
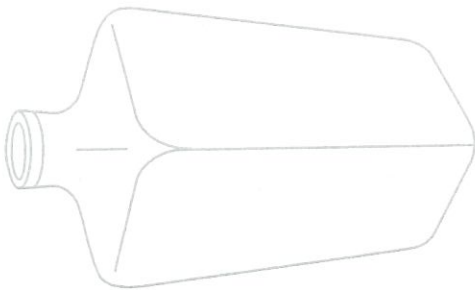
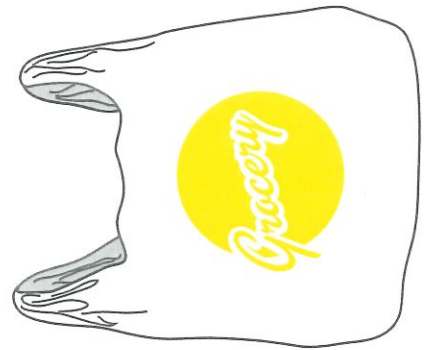
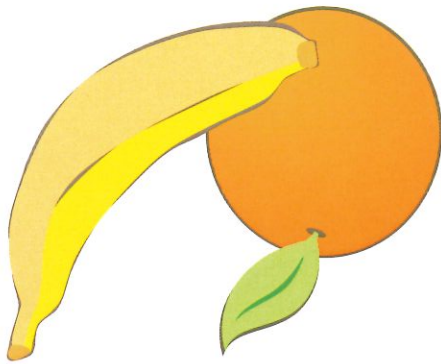
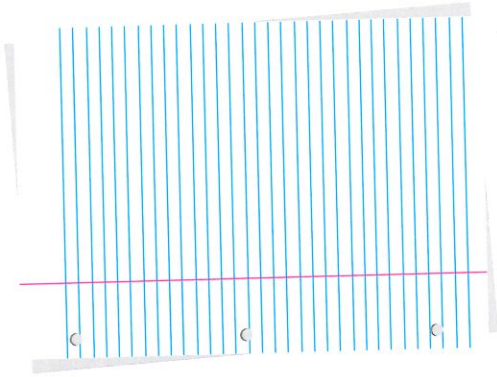
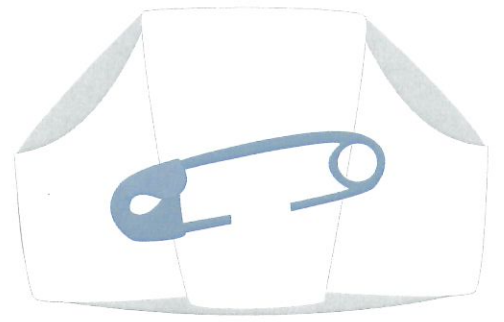
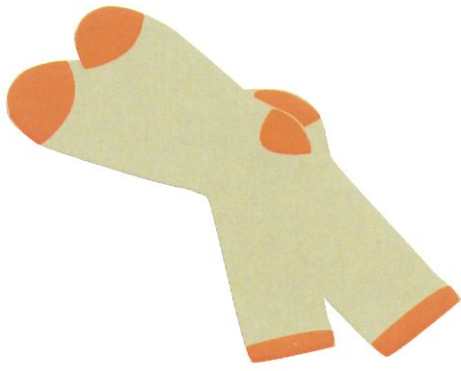
Leather:
up to 50 years

Orange or banana
peel: **up to 2 years**

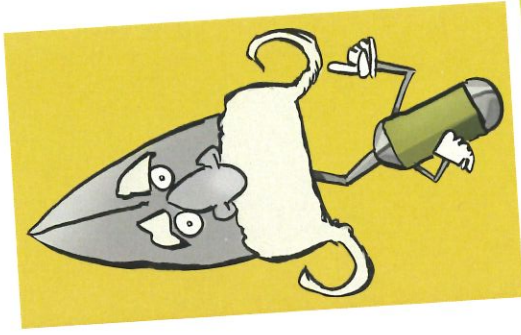
Plastic bag:
10-20 years

Glass bottle:
1,000,000 years

Aluminum can:
80-100 years



Cigarette butts:
1-5 years



Trash Deck

