

Trash

Presented at the New Jersey Science Convention - 2002

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OBJECTIVE:

Students will be able to state the relative biodegradability of various objects and the importance of this characteristic to the biosphere.

- A. Choose an item that is commonly put into garbage cans and subsequently becomes part of the community's solid waste.
- B. Divide each item into two pieces.
- C. One half of each item will be buried outdoors, the other half should be kept inside as a control.
- D. After a specified time period has elapsed, students can exhume the buried items and compare them with the control.
- E. Questions:
 1. Which materials seem to decay most readily and quickly? How can you tell?
 2. Which materials show the least change?
 3. What factors were present which might have caused some items to decay?
 4. Which substances would appear to be the most appropriate for use in landfills? Why?
 5. What can be done with those you determine should not be buried in landfills?
 6. Do landfills solve the problems of solid waste? Explain your answer.
 7. How can society deal with non-biodegradable solid waste?
 8. Define the term recycling. List recyclable materials.
 9. In groups, explore the advantages or disadvantages of recycling
 10. Opposing groups will present arguments for and against recycling each material.
 11. After the debate, the class will decide if it is possible to rate materials according to recycling priority.