

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# How Long to Disappear?

In this week's *Scholastic News*, you read about a school that helps care for the environment through activities such as recycling. People recycle because some items can take a long time to decompose (or decay) in a landfill site. This chart shows how long it takes some common items to disappear. Use the chart to answer the questions below.

OBJECT	LENGTH OF TIME
disposable diaper	500 to 600 years
cotton sock	5 to 6 months
Styrofoam cup	1 million years or more
glass bottle	1 million years or more
leather belt	40 to 50 years
wooden block	10 to 20 years
banana peel	3 to 4 weeks
paper box	1 to 2 months
plastic bottle	1 million years or more
aluminum can	200 to 500 years



SOURCE: ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION

- Which item from the chart can take more than 1 million years to decompose?  
 (A) Styrofoam cup      (C) plastic bottle  
 (B) glass bottle      (D) all of the above
- Which item from the chart takes the shortest amount of time to decompose?  
 (A) paper box      (C) plastic bottle  
 (B) wooden block      (D) banana peel
- How long does it take for an aluminum can to decompose?  
 (A) 5 to 6 months      (C) 200 to 500 years  
 (B) 40 to 50 years      (D) 500 to 600 years
- True or false: It takes a leather belt longer than a wooden block to decompose.  
 (A) true      (B) false
- True or false: It takes an aluminum can longer than a glass bottle to decompose.  
 (A) true      (B) false
- A glass bottle takes much longer to decompose than a banana peel. What reasons can you think of that would explain this large difference?  
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- Given what you've learned from the chart above, why do you think it's important to recycle items such as plastic bottles and glass bottles?  
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