



Garbage and Recycling



What happens to items when they end up in a landfill? How long do you think they will last there? Do they disappear/disintegrate/biodegrade immediately? Or will they continue to take up space in the landfill? First, let's learn some vocabulary words:

Trash – anything item that you thrown out or that is unwanted.

Recycle - to collect and reprocess a material so it can be used again to make a new product. An example is collecting aluminum cans, melting them, and using the aluminum to make new cans or other products.

Biodegrade – anything that can break down or degrade naturally

Longevity – how long something can last or keep going

Then, let's talk about how we can help.

Take a guess at how long these items will take to biodegrade. You can guess by the number of weeks, months, or years. (Answers on pg. 2)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| •Bananas _____ | •Tin cans _____ |
| •Paper bags _____ | •Aluminum cans _____ |
| •Cotton rags _____ | •Plastic 6-pack rings _____ |
| •Wool socks _____ | •Plastic jugs _____ |
| •Cigarette butts _____ | •Styrofoam cups _____ |
| •Leather boots _____ | •Glass bottles _____ |

Play the recycling game.

- Participate in a relay race that makes use of recycled materials and other cleaned "trash". How quickly can you sort through it and put it in the right bins?

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!

- Recycle anything you can to prevent items from reaching landfills and causing harm to our communities.



PICK THE BIN

CHOOSE WHERE EACH ITEM SHOULD GO



COMPOST

RECYCLING

GARBAGE

ANSWERS

tin can -- 80 to 100 years
 banana -- 3 to 4 weeks
 aluminum can -- 200 to 500 years
 paper bag -- 1 month
 plastic 6-pack rings -- 450 years
 cotton rag -- 5 months
 plastic jug -- 1 million years
 wool sock -- 1 year
 styrofoam cup -- unknown?
 cigarette butt -- 2 to 5 years
 glass bottle -- unknown?
 leather boot -- 40 to 50 years

PARK YOURSELF AT

Yellowstone National Park



Yellowstone National Park is a wilderness recreation area atop a volcanic hot spot. Mostly in Wyoming, the park spreads into parts of Montana and Idaho. Yellowstone features dramatic canyons, alpine rivers, lush forests, hot springs and gushing geysers, including its most famous, Old Faithful. It is home to hundreds of animal species, including bears, wolves, bison, elk and antelope.

Don't Trash the Geyser.

Yellowstone is known for its geysers but trash should not be part of the beauty. Think before you trash.

"After Ear Spring erupted on September 15, employees found a strange assortment of items strewn across the landscape around its vent," officials wrote on the Yellowstone National Park Facebook page. "Some are clearly historic: they'll be inventoried by curators and may end up in Yellowstone's archives".

What have people been throwing into the geyser? Some of the historical waste that Ear Spring "coughed" up includes a large chunk of cinderblock, a broken bottle, several metal warning signs, old aluminum cans, plastic cups, cigarette butts, someone's rubber heel insert, a vintage pacifier from the 1930s, and an 8-inch-long plastic drinking straw. (Note: please do not try to drink a geyser!)



[Watch the video](#)

How Yellowstone supports waste reduction and recycling.

- In 2017 park employees, visitors, and partners diverted about 60% of the waste through recycling and composting initiatives.
- Check it out: <https://www.nps.gov/yell/getinvolved/recycling.htm>



[Watch for more Yellowstone NP fun](#)