

How can we reduce litter in the environment?

Scout explores litter and how long it can last in the environment.

Key Question

Key Stage 1:

What is litter?

Key Stage 2:

Why is litter so damaging for our environment and watercourses?

Activity

Litter Timeline

1. In small groups, students should review a few items from the equipment list.
2. They could ask the following: What is the item made from? How long might it last in the environment?
3. Following this discussion, they can create their litter timeline by attaching a time label to each item with days, months, years etc. based on how long each item will last.
4. They can then put the items in order from shortest to longest lasting.
5. Each group should be able to explain why they have chosen the order.



Top Tip:

- Examine each item carefully.
- Is it hard, soft, can it bend?
- How tough is it?



Equipment (optional):



- Ball of string (cut 1.5m lengths)
- Wooden pegs/ paperclips
- Crisp packets
- Plastic bottles
- Drinks cans
- cardboard
- Paper
- Glass bottles
- Balloons
- Single use carrier bags



How can we reduce litter in the environment?



Key Points:

- Litter can find its way into our rivers through drains etc.
- Once in the environment, some items especially plastics can sit there for a long time (up to 450 years)



Apply to different learners:

More support:

- Provide examples of how long items last in the environment first to allow comparison
- Make a true or false quiz instead for each item or a match up exercise where the item labels are already printed out with the time in the environment

Challenge:

- Does it matter how long some items take to decompose in the environment? Are they still harmful even being there a short time?
- Are some items still harmful even when you can no longer see them?

More questions to ask:

1. Were you surprised by how long things can last in the environment?
2. What do you think happens to the litter we see next to and in rivers and the sea?
3. How might litter affect animals?
4. How can we reduce the amount of litter we produce?

Further Resources:

For more activities, worksheets and lessons, visit theriverstrust.org by scanning Scouts QR code!

With thanks to:



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Other activities you could try:

1. Plastic Art
2. Microplastics washing machine activity



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