

Leave No Trace Principle 3 Dispose of Waste Properly

Name: _____



Your journey to becoming an environmental steward continues here! Follow the Tahoe Rim Trail through the 7 Leave No Trace (LNT) Principles to develop outdoor ethics and earn your Leave No Trace Awareness certificate! Now stay on trail to learn LNT Principle 3 - Dispose of Waste Properly.

No matter where you are, whether you are in a city or in the wilderness, it's important to know how to 'dispose' or get rid of waste properly so that you can 'minimize' or decrease the negative impacts of garbage on the earth! Before you eat that apple or use that disposable water bottle, know what it is and where it goes!

THINK: Somethings can be recycled, some can be trashed, some reused or donated, and some can even be 'composted'—broken down into soil. Match each waste item to its proper 'disposal' or throw away method by writing the number of the waste item next to its best disposal method.

HINT: If you don't know what the disposal method is, click on it for more information!



1



2



3



4



5



Trash Your Trash!

Where does trash go?

In the trash can! Know what animals are in your community and make sure you have the right trash and recycle bins to protect them! **HINT:** In the Tahoe Basin, bear boxes and bear canisters keep bears from eating trash in your neighborhood and in the backcountry!



Into landfills. Trash that does not get recycled gets delivered to landfills where it sits for many years. There, it starts to break down and may become nutrients for the earth. **HINT:** It can take millions of years for some pieces of trash to break down in a landfill!

Into the ocean. Trash from trash cans, landfills, and streets can get blown into rivers and sewers and end up making its way into the ocean. **HINT:** When trash ends up in the ocean, it can kill and harm animals that eat it or get tangled in it.



HINT: Don't put it in the trash can just yet... Make art with it! Create something cool like an ornament or puzzle out of things at home! Click [here](#) for fun recycled craft ideas!

Time Will Tell

Once trash items make it to a landfill, they don't just disappear, they decompose!

Decomposition is the breakdown of things over time such as food, plastic bags, glass bottles, clothing, and even animals that were once living. Some things may only take a few weeks while others may take millions of years to completely break down. The process looks like this:



Now let's discover how common items and trash in our house decompose!

We are going to make a 'trash timeline' to discover how long it takes for these items at home to fully break down.

- Banana Peel
- Aluminum Soda Can
- Plastic 6-pack Holder
- Plastic Bag
- Glass Bottle
- Nylon Fabric
- Leather
- Styrofoam Cup
- Batteries
- Wool Sock
- Tin Can
- Newspaper
- Orange Peel
- Fishing Line
- Rubber Boot

Here's the game - You are going to create a timeline out of trash and items in your home. Make a long line on the ground out of any material you have at home like chalk, a rope, scarf, or whatever you can find! To represent how long things take to fully break down, one end of the line will represent 1 day and the other end 2 million years. Gather as many of the items from the list as you can. It's alright if you don't have all of them! Now think, how long does it take for each item to decompose? Arrange your items on the timeline based on how long you think each one takes to break down.

1 Day

2 Million Years

Reorder....

Now snap a photo of your trash timeline and let's reorder it. See the picture below to find the actual time it takes for each item to decompose!



...Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Reflect

1. Were you surprised about how long it takes for some items to decompose? Explain.
2. As you can see, some 'single-use items', disposable items we throw out after one use, take a VERY long time to decompose. What are three multi-use substitutes you can use instead of a single-use item? **HINT:** To decrease how much waste you make, participate in "Waste-Free Wednesdays" by using only multi-use items and eating all of your food!

3. When hiking or camping, how can you dispose of waste properly in the wilderness? **HINT:** Pack it in, pack it out!
4. Why do you think it's important to dispose of waste properly?

HINT: When you are in the wilderness, at a beach, or park, don't forget to pack out your trash! Make it look like you were never there. That includes human waste! Watch [this video](#) from the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics to learn how to use a wag bag when going #2 in the backcountry. Don't be that guy →



"Hey! Clean up after yourself...will ya!"

You did it! After filling out this worksheet, **pack it out** and get ready to trek on to the next Leave No Trace principle! Keep an eye out on our [webpage](#) for the next worksheet.

Take one step closer to earning your Leave No Trace Awareness certificate by sending this worksheet and a picture of your trash timeline to juliak@tahoerimtrail.org. Further your impact by supporting the TRTA's mission to [inspire stewardship](#).