

Title: EVERY LITTER BIT HURT

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Grade Level: 3

Concepts:	Disciplines:
2.Ecosystems	1.Science
3.Carrying Capacity	2.Social Studies
6.Resources	3.Mathematics
8.Values and Attitudes	
11.Individual Acts	
12.Stewardship	

Objectives:

Students will collect, bury, exhume and examine a collection of litter to observe and record nature's decomposing process in order to distinguish organic biodegradable as well as non-biodegradable wastes.

Rationale:

The amount of solid waste each person generates is astounding. By observing how nature deals with waste, a consciousness of personal disposal habits can be directed to conserving, recycling and to avoid littering.

Materials Needed:

Assortment of trash/garbage; digging tool

Directions:

In the classroom, examine, label and list on a chart each item to be buried and the date. Using a shovel, spade or garden digger, a hole should be dug at least six inches deep. The trash specimens should be placed in a clockwise fashion along the bottom in the same order as they are listed on the chart. Be sure the dirt is loosely packed over the hole. Give the elements two days before re-examining the hole's contents. When exhuming, carefully remove the cover soil, watch for scavengers at work. Be sure to date and chart the progress of decomposition for each item. Recover the hole and follow the schedule for repeating the process until all the organic trash has "disappeared" and that which is not biodegradable becomes obvious.

Special Notes: 1.Mark and protect the experimental burial area

2. If the experiment is conducted during dry spell, water the area periodically

3. Define for children the words:

- a. Decompose
- b. Organic
- c. Biodegradable
- d. Non-biodegradable

Activity Sheet

E.T

EVERY LITTER BIT HURTS

NAME _____

A. OBSERVATION RECORD

DATE LITTER BURIED

DATES OF EXHUMING / OBSERVATION

1.----- 2.-----3.-----

SUGGESTED ITEMS	DESCRIBE APPEARANCE AFTER		
	2 DAYS	1WEEK	3 WEEKS
Orange Peel			
Aluminum Foil			
Meat Scraps			
Paper Towel			
Bread Crust			
Plastic Wrap			
Zip Top From Can			
Apple Core			
Styrofoam Cut			

- B. 1. Which items were the first to decompose?
2. After 3 weeks, which items looked like they would decompose?
3. After 3 weeks, which items showed no signs of decomposition?
4. From what you have observed, what kind of problems does this make for communities in taking care of trash and garbage?

