

Long-Lived Litter

Procedure

- 1. Collaborate** Work with a partner. Record your observations in the chart below. Use a marking pen to label each of four bowls with a different packing material listed in the chart.

Packing Materials	Observation 1	Observation 2	Observation 3	Observation 4
cellulose peanuts				
newspaper				
foam peanuts				
bubble wrap				

- 2. Experiment** Fill each bowl halfway with water. Put a few small pieces of each packing material into its labeled bowl.
- 3. Record Data** After 1 hour, look at the packing material in each bowl. Feel whether the material has softened or has begun to break down. Record your observations in your chart.
- 4. Observe** Repeat step 3 every few hours for the rest of the day.

Conclusion

Write the answers to the questions below.

1. **Compare** By the end of the day, which packing materials have begun to break down? Which materials have not?

2. **Infer** Suppose each packing material were thrown away as trash and buried under soil in a landfill. Which packing materials would not break down?

Investigate More!

Design an Experiment Experiment by putting the packing materials in soil, in a box, and between layers of paper. What makes the materials break down more quickly? Less quickly?