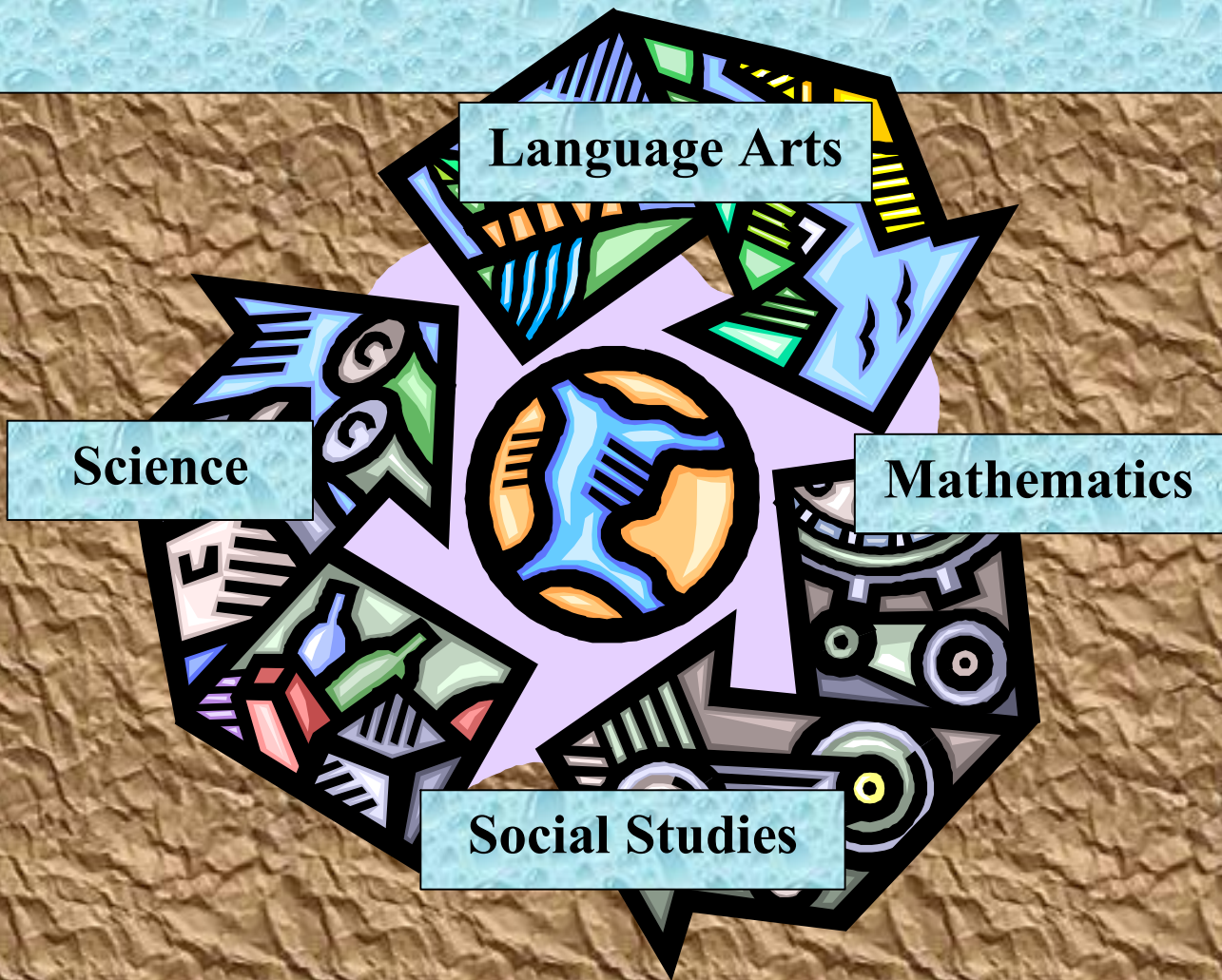


# **Garbology**

## **A Thematic Unit about Trash**

**By Nancy L. Wilkinson**



**Garbology  
Science Activities  
Lesson 21  
A biodegradable Experiment**

**Objective:**

Students will find out how long it takes for a piece of newspaper to biodegrade.

**Materials:**

- 1) Four pieces of newspaper
- 2) Water
- 3) A place to bury the newspapers or 2 dark boxes.

**Opener:**

Ask the students what they think is needed to make something biodegrade. (The answer is water, sunlight and air.)

**Activity:**

- 1) Take 4 pieces of newspaper. Place 2 sheets in the sun.
- 2) Place the other 2 sheets of newspaper in the ground (far apart) or in 2 dark boxes filled with dry dirt.
- 3) Pour water dialing on one of the newspapers that is in the sun.
- 4) Do not do anything to the second sheet of newspaper that is in the sun.
- 5) Add water daily to one of the buried pieces of newspaper.

**Closure:**

After at least 2 weeks, look at the four pieces of newspaper. Which one has degraded the most? Record your observations. Why do you think this happened? What do you think landfills need to do to make things biodegrade more quickly?

Newspaper 1	Newspaper 2	Newspaper 3	Newspaper 4
Placed in the sun and watered daily. Allow air to get around the newspaper.	Placed in the sun and not watered at all. Allow air to get around the newspaper.	Placed in the dark and watered daily. Allow air to get around the newspaper.	Placed in the dark and not watered. Allow air to get around the newspaper.