

## PL2: Plastic timeline answers



<b>2 weeks</b>  Apple Cores	<b>4 weeks</b>  Paper towels	<b>6 weeks</b>  Banana peels
<b>2-3 months</b>  Waxed cartons	<b>6 months</b>  Cotton clothing	<b>2 year</b>  Orange peels
<b>5 years</b>  Heavy woolen clothing	<b>5-15 years</b>  Cigarette butts	<b>30-40 years</b>  Disposable nappies
<b>50 years</b>  Tin cans	<b>75-80 years</b>  Crisp packets	<b>200 years</b>  Aluminium drink cans
<b>500 years</b>  Plastic bottles	<b>1000s of years</b>  E-cigarettes	<b>1-2 million years</b>  Glass jars and bottles

### Did you know:

- More than 4.5 trillion cigarette butts make their way into the environment every year (Globally)<sup>i</sup>.
- Cigarette butts leak toxins that contaminate water and harm marine life.
- Cigarette filters have been found in the stomachs of fish, birds, whales and other marine creatures, who mistake them for food.
- Whilst cigarette butts, which are generally made of plastic (cellulose acetate), take between 5 and 15 years to decompose, most components in e-cigarettes will likely take much longer and may never decompose completely.
- Around 5 million single use vapes are improperly discarded every week in the UK. (2023)<sup>ii</sup>
- When improperly discarded or littered, e-cigarettes release heavy metals like mercury, lead, and bromines, as well as battery acid, lithium, and nicotine into the environment.
- Plastic never fully decomposes, it turns into microplastics (tiny pieces of plastic) which continue to pollute the environment, food and water.

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0013935119300787>

<sup>ii</sup> [Number of disposable single-use vapes thrown away have in a year quadrupled to 5 million per week - Material Focus](#)