Archaeology has often been described as the “science of trash”. Today you will be divided into research teams to analyze modern garbage (actually just lists – the real thing would stink up the lab). The goal of your team is to use this garbage to make hypotheses about the behavior of those that left the garbage and to reconstruct aspects of their culture and society.

Try to answer the following questions. At the end of this section, your group will present your answers to the rest of the lab, so make sure you write down your answers and choose a spokesperson. (Please note, in this exercise, as in real archaeological research, not all questions are answerable).

**Technology and Economics**
What type of food did they eat?
How did they “get” their food (store, market, backyard, field)?
What did they do for a living?

**Social Organization**
What is the age of people living in the household?
How many people live in the household?
How many males/how many females?
What was the household’s socioeconomic status?

**Religion**
What was their belief system?

Is there any other information you can pick up from the “garbage” you have been given? Are there any problems you encountered trying to interpret the garbage?

**Lab Write-Up:**
In no more than two pages:

1) Summarize your answers to the questions above; be sure to indicate what items of garbage led to each answer.

2) 100 years have passed since the garbage from your household was first deposited. Some materials (plastic, metal, etc.) can survive for 100 years in the ground. Other materials (paper, plant materials, etc.) cannot survive. If you **only** had the trash from your household that had survived for 100 years, how would that change your interpretation of the trash? Describe the items that would still be visible after 100 years, and explain how you would interpret those items if you had no knowledge of the other materials that were originally in the household's trash.