

So imagine, you're out walking your dog. You take him over by the grass and after a few moments of you waiting for him to "do his business" you realize he won't because there's actually nowhere where he can. The city you live in also has a major litter problem(see where your city lands at on [America's Dirtiest Cities](#).) About 3 months ago I posted a blog about this topic. In the post I uncovered some of the facts of our litter problem and exposed some of the rumors with it. I also threw in a short mention of the reasons I could find that people say they litter and in this post I plan on digging deeper into these "whys" with the help of some of my own research and where we can go next in our mission to combat littering. Visit my post on SLA's website [here](#).

After writing my first blog post I began thinking about "who exactly are the litterbugs?" and before my field study I turned to the world's leading fast food chains for an answer. According to Keeping Britain Tidy's [yearly report](#) in 2011, large companies like McDonalds are responsible for nearly 13% of Britain's litter problem, Subway, Greggs and KFC were also amongst the top litterers. This information led me to another question "why is no one trying to stop it?" In the U.K. a spokesman for McDonalds stated they "are doing their best" and in the same post James Meikle of The Guardian gives them rather plausible answers I'd admit(View his post [here](#). There's one particularly I was fond of, that "Companies could also reduce prices for who stayed to eat food on their premises." And that leads me to my third question "why are businesses not doing this?", that I do not know, but I do know why some of our friends are not.

In my social experiment I went out to try to find some specific questions and below are the answers. The main questions were:

Who is littering?

Simply people who do not care. The people I found littering the most were those eating snacks, cheap drinks or things like chips, there was also more litter from those from a fast food restaurant.

Do they subconsciously litter, or was it of their intent?

I think when people litter they are more aware than they seem when they are. With a close look, there is almost always a hesitation between, finishing the item, putting their arm down and dropping it. I'm guessing there is something that clicks in your head before that "oh, there isn't anything to set this down on." This was actually the question I found most interesting in my study.

How many others(friends of the litterer maybe) urge them to stop littering?

It's sad to say but people hardly ever say anything to those that they are walking with, when littering, hardly even anything was said. The conversations(unless through phone) that they would have would take a brief pause when the person you're walking with decides to litter. I decided that I would conduct a smaller experiment inside my social experiment too to compare with the results I found when the situation was flipped, where I would act as the one littering. Unlike people who were with a friend, it seemed that when I littered, I was confronted by people with friends, typically the larger the group, the higher the chances of them getting involved in my "mistake." Still more than those whose friend littered, I was frowned upon and looked back at by many individuals(not too many kids) passing by me.

How could seeing litter or people litter could influence a child?

Children who looked as if they were at least 10 years old joined in on the littering, kids before this age often watch silently as trash hits the ground, and stare back into it while passing by, it seems the younger kids have a greater interest in litter than most others today. Judging by the toddlers' actions the litter did influence many children.

Why people litter?

For finding the proper place to put something. Many of them do not litter until near litter, or the places people can not easily identify , like deep into grass. It also makes sense that if your hands are full, to release whatever is bringing you the discomfort. This goes hand in hand with my question "Who litters?"

Which spots do people litter in most often, are there any specific places and why?

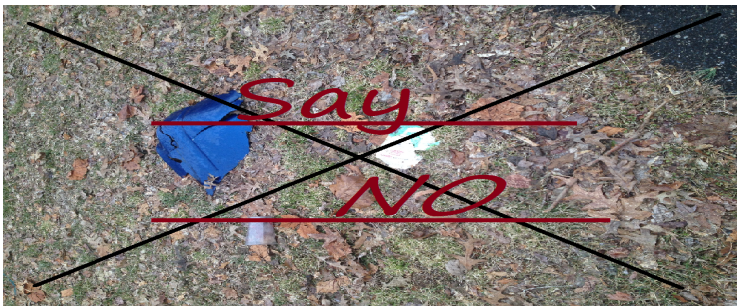
There weren't many spots, so in the spots that they do have, they are very much used it was in these spots I found it easy to determine a pattern. The people's favorite spots seemed to be



the parts of the fields that formed walkways, and near where cars drove by on the road.

It makes sense that this is where most litter happens because, with the help of the answers of my other questions, it would seem that our friends don't pick up litter because they must always be on the go, too busy.

Now is the time to start the second part of the project, it's time for the Agent of Change. As my first blog readers may have guessed, this is the time where we go out into our world, and fix real life problems and because our topic is about littering I would like to initiate a clean up in a particular spot in my city. On N 1599 Wanamaker St., Philadelphia, I found a couple great examples of some of the harshest conditions of litter in the city in a couple of lots. Although these generally are not the prettiest neighborhoods, it is highly populated and I believe where we start high populated, the better we do for our community. I will try to gather a few friends of mine who are "not busy" and move this trash out of the area. It can be hard trying to start change, but I think that this issue has a significant value in our community, especially given the facts in my last blog post. I think it is important that I restate that litter is the underdog of trouble, the sooner we can fix the problem the better off we'll be. I encourage all readers to join me and help fight these litter monsters by coming out to help clean local neighborhoods.



Sources can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/a/scienceleadership.org/document/d/1zG5CB1tUUGQQpByVprFEOKM PWDNx9DKRWXHqYivf36c/edit>