**Directions: Fill in the blanks in the worksheet**

**Introduction:** Soil microbes are decomposers, meaning they eat dead organic material and recycle the nutrients back into the soil. In this experiment, our objective is to observe decomposition by soil microbes.

**Materials:** What materials are used in this activity?

**Hypothesis:** What do you think will happen to the paper?

**Procedure:** What was done to prepare the compost bin?

**Observations:**

1. What does the compost smell like?

2. What does the compost feel like?

3. Draw a picture of the paper towel, fruit, and compost every week.

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| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| Week 1 | Week 2 |
|  |  |
| Week 3 | Week 4 |

**Conclusion:**

1. What happened to the paper and fruit? How did this happen? What does that say about the role of soil microbes in gardening?

2. Why did we mist the compost with water and place it in an area where it would receive heat?

3. Why was the soil stirred?

4. How does composting relate to the nitrogen cycle?

5. What are some limitations to our model of a compost bin?