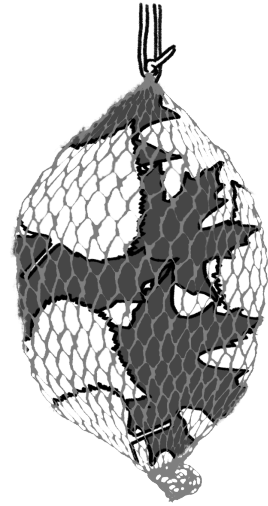


Big Idea Probe: Leaf Pack Experiment

Ms. Lin teaches science in Wisconsin. Her class has been working on a leaf pack experiment. In the experiment, the class gathers dried leaves from trees outside their school. They place the leaves in a mesh bag that allows air and water to go in and out. The mesh bag with leaves weighs 50 grams. The class places the leaf pack under a rock in a forested area behind their school.

After a month, the class will retrieve the leaf pack, dry it as needed, and measure its dry mass. Before they retrieve the leaf pack, Ms. Lin asks her students to make a prediction of what they will observe. Here's what some of the students thought.



Marco: I think the leaf pack will gain mass because decomposers from the soil will grow on the leaves.

Jessie: I think the leaf pack will lose mass because the leaves will naturally break down and the mass will disappear.

Andre: I think the leaf pack will lose mass to the air because decomposers under the rock will use the leaves for cellular respiration.

Mei: I think the leaf pack will lose mass to the soil because the leaves are dead, so they'll decay into the soil over time.

Kara: I think the mass of the leaf pack will stay about the same because the decomposers will gain mass while the leaves will lose mass.

Who do you agree with and why? It's ok to pick more than one person. Explain your thinking.
