

The Source Search

Wyoming Social Studies, Language Arts

Objectives:

- Students will learn the natural origins of familiar and common items.

Background:

Many people have the misconception that farms simply provide us with raw produce and other foods. In reality, agriculture also provides us with a wide variety of raw materials from which we are able to make clothes, books, cosmetics, medicines, sports equipment, and much more.

Young children especially may hold to the fallacy that items originally come from stores or factories without recognizing their true origins. Before an item ever leaves a factory or enters a store, it was first created in part or in its entirety in the natural world, or through agriculture.

Activity Procedures:

1. Begin by telling the students a short story about how you got ready for school that morning, what you did after school the day before, or other typical activity. Make a list of the common items used and food eaten in your short story. Discuss with students the types of things they use or eat everyday. You may wish to have students work in pairs to cut pictures from magazines or draw pictures representing items they use regularly. Or skip this step and create your own set of pictures including such items and pass them out to pairs of students. For future use, mount pictures (food, cars, soap, clothes, computer, etc.) on poster board and laminate.
2. If students have cut their own pictures have them share and explain how or when they are used. With each picture, ask the other students if they have pictures of similar items. Set the similar items aside to avoid duplication. Ask if anyone has different pictures to share. Have the students separate the remaining pictures into categories such as food, clothing, transportation, health, recreation, and education (or come up with your own categories). Discuss which items are “needs” and which are “wants.”
3. Inform the class that they will be dividing these items again according to their original sources. Collect all of the pictures except duplicates. Show the students the four containers labeled “Store,” “Factory,” “Natural World,” and “Farms.” Explain that they will be putting the pic-



Standards

Social Studies

Production, Consumption,
& Distribution: 3.1, 3.2

People, Places, &
Environment: 5.4

Language Arts

3rd Grade:

Speaking and Listening:

3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5

4th Grade

Speaking and Listening:

3.1, 3.2, 3.5,

Materials

- Four containers:
labeled “Store,” “Factory,”
“Natural World,” and
“Farms”
- Scissors
- Crayons
- Paper

Estimated Time

30 Minutes

Grades 3-4

notes:

- tures into the appropriate containers.
4. The relay race! Split the class into two groups and have them form two lines. Place the containers on the opposite side of the room. (You may need to move the desks, go outside, or go out into the hall to provide the appropriate amount of space.) Place the pictures in two piles (the same number of pictures in each pile) a few feet in front of the lines. Tell the students they will be having a relay race to sort the pictures. One student from each team will pick up a picture, place it in the container that represents where the item came from (the source), then run back to the line to tag the next person in line. The first student will go to the end of the line and the student tagged will select another picture and continue “the relay race” until all of the pictures have been sorted.
 5. Ask the students to gather around you as you go through the pictures in each bin. As you hold up each picture, the students can show whether they agree or disagree by giving a “thumbs up” or a “thumbs down.” Begin with the “Store” container. Review one or two items, asking the students if they can be traced back any further than the store. Does anything actually originate in the store? (No, but that is where we buy the items.) Encourage the students to offer suggestions on where the items should be placed. Continue on to the “Factory” bin. Where do the raw materials used to make these items come from? Can these items be traced back to a different origin? (Yes, the natural world or farms.)
 6. Review the “Farm” bin. Do any of these items originate in your area? What categories do they belong in? (Refer again to step 2.) Could we live without these things? (No, they are essential to life.) Discuss the importance of farms and how their resources are renewed every year.
 7. Last, review the items in the “Natural World” container. This should contain a wide variety of items such as wooden objects from trees (though you may point out much of our timber is grown on farms today), metal items from minerals mined from the earth, and plastics and synthetic materials made from petroleum products. What categories do these objects fall into? (Refer to categories created in step 2.) Explain that some of these items are made from “renewable” resources while others are made from “non-renewable” resources. Discuss what these terms mean. (Renewable resources can be replaced over time. This includes plants, trees, solar and wind energy. Non-renewable resources are those which cannot be replaced in this geological age. This includes petroleum-based products such as plastic.) Point out a

few items from each category (renewable/non-renewable) Point out that some non-renewable resources can be recycled. What are some examples? (Some plastics, tin, and aluminum.) Are any of these resources found near your area? Do farms use items from the natural world?

8. Conclude by discussing how important it is to protect our farms and natural resources. What are some ways of doing this? Explain that our quality of life depends upon how well the farms and natural world are taken care of. To insure that quality food can be continually produced, the soil, water, and air must be protected. Discuss farming practices that include this caring attitude towards the earth and environment.

Additional Activities:

- Find out what products and resources are found in your area. How do we use them everyday?
- Can you identify resources supplied in your local area?
- What is the difference between needs and wants?
- Identify the origins of 3 everyday items.



Materials Adapted from Project Seasons

vocabulary:

- *raw materials*
- *resources*
- *natural world*
- *renewable*
- *wants*
- *needs*

