



The Messy Meter

Recommended Ages:
5-7

Estimated Time:
20-25 minutes

Subject:
Where do grocery and household products come from?

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

PANTRY STAPLES:

- Glue
- Index cards
- Black marker
- Scissors

SPECIALTY SUPPLIES:

- Local Grocery or Supermarket Ad.



Where Do Our Grocery & Household Products Come From?

With an imaginary trip to the grocery store (via a grocery store circular), we explore and understand that all the products in our everyday lives -- no matter how fabricated or processed -- originate from nature or agriculture.



STEPS

1. Using the black marker and index cards, create four labels, one with each of the following names: FARM; NATURAL RESOURCES; STORES; FACTORIES
2. Place the label cards side by side on a flat surface
3. Cut out 20-25 items from the grocery store circular ad, including packaged goods, household cleaners, packaged foods, meats and produce.
4. Glue those 20-25 items on index cards.
5. Discuss the following: Ask your child where they think the material or ingredients on each index card comes from originally. Where did the ingredients come from before they were changed into the item on the card? For example, if a food container is made of plastic, from where did the minerals or elements in the plastic originate?
6. Do this for each of the items, and place each product card under the corresponding label card (steak, under farms; bottled water, under natural resources, and so on).
7. Once all the cards are sorted, ask the child to observe any differences between the categories. They should notice that no items are filed under the STORES or FACTORIES cards since factory-produced items originate from elements that were extracted from nature.
8. Finally, explain that farms need water, soil, sunlight and oxygen to thrive, grow plant life, and raise animals.

BONUS FUN!

Make it a game! If you have more than one child/activity participant, have a relay race between teams. If you choose to keep score to identify a winner, tally the number of cards in the correct boxes for each team.



QUESTIONS TO ENGAGE YOUTH

1. What does agriculture mean? (The science or practice of farming including cultivation of the soil for the growing of crops and the rearing of animals to provide food, wool, and other products).
2. Are there everyday items you use that are not included in the picture cards? Do you know where they are sourced from?
3. Let's think about bottled water. Where do you think the water comes from, and how do companies get it? What about plastic water bottles? What materials are bottles made from, and how much work do you think goes into extracting those materials from the Earth to create the bottles? Consider the sustainability of water bottles, and ask yourself if there are ways to use fewer resources from the Earth to drink water than plastic bottles

EXPLANATION

About the activity: While many everyday items are built, processed or manufactured at a factory and eventually sold at a store, it is important for youth to understand that they begin as a resource of the natural world and/or a product of agriculture. Even our modes of transportation (e.g. cars or bikes), building materials (e.g. steel or wood), various technological devices (e.g. cell phones or computers), are made of materials that originate from nature

Resources such as metal and glass are made from minerals that are extracted from the Earth through the process of mining. Most plastics are a byproduct of oil which is extracted from beneath the Earth's surface. Other everyday items we rely on are products of agriculture. Farms vary in size and location and include many different products ranging from food and clothing to fuel and building supplies.

Kids will likely recognize that farms provide us with whole, raw foods like fruits, vegetables, milk, meat, and eggs. They might even recognize that foods such as bread, pasta, cheese, frozen chicken nuggets, and canned foods also come from a farm, but are first prepared and packaged at a food processing facility. However, in reality, **agriculture** also provides us with a wide variety of raw materials used make clothes, books, cosmetics, medicine, sports equipment, and much more.

Everything we create and use in our everyday lives originates from a natural resource, such as land and water.

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