



Starting from Scratch

is an activity we have done many times with our farm tour groups. It is a great way to get the children moving but also have them gain an understanding of the main sources of our food and products we use everyday in a fun and active way.

Through categorizing and sorting they discover the store is where you purchase most items you need; the factory is where items can be made but the source of the raw materials for these items comes from either the natural world or farms.

Discussion can be extended to:

- What are renewable, non-renewable resources the items are made from.
- How farming practices can keep the farm sustainable and provide food for ongoing generations. Care needs to be given to the soil, water and air to ensure adequate and continued food production.
- Stewardship of our natural resources and farmlands is important in ensuring a high quality of life.

You can adapt this activity to the classroom, the outdoors or to an online forum:

Source - Shelburne Farms *Project Seasons*

Starting from Scratch

Objective: Students will learn about the origins of everyday items and foods.

Grade Level: 2-6

Materials: 4 bins labeled Farm, Factory, Store and Natural World. For the items you can cut pictures from magazines or collect actual items from home they use every day (i.e. empty food containers, old toys etc.)

1. Begin by asking the children to list and record their daily activities and the items which they use every day. They are to note specific activities, the items used, and foods eaten. They can then cut out pictures to illustrate these items and foods, draw them or collect them from home depending on where you are doing this activity.

2. Have the students share their items and routines with the class.

Compare - How many students recorded similar activities, items and foods? Did anyone have something different? Which things are necessary for life? Which make life more comfortable or enjoyable?

3. Explain they will trace these items back to their source. Collect the items and pictures, remove duplicates. Show them the 4 bins (or categories) Store, Factory, Natural World and Farm. Have them sort the pictures or items into the appropriate bin.

4. **Outdoors:** this activity can be made into a relay race having 2 teams. Place the four bins in a line a few feet in front of the students with the collection of pictures/items in a pile just in front of their lines. To start one student from each team selects an item or picture and runs to place it into the appropriate bin then returns to the end of their line. The next child in line repeats the process until all items and pictures are sorted.

Indoors: the children vote on which category the items belong in and have a running list of items under each category.

Online: Show and Tell could work here where each child can choose an item to present, classifying it into a category then tracing its source to the raw materials it is made of.

5. Review the items in each bin. The students can show their approval or disapproval for each item with a show of thumbs up or down.

Start with the **store bin** - ask does anything originate in the store? (No, that is where we purchase the things we need and use daily). Where should these items be placed.

Move onto the **factory bin**- Where do the raw materials come from to make these items? Can they be traced even further back to their source? (Yes, to the natural world or farms.)

Review the items in the **natural world bin**. Some of the objects are made with renewable resources, others non-renewable. Ask the students to define these terms. Have them sort the items into these two categories. Point out that some non-renewable items can be recycled (tin, aluminum, certain plastics)

Lastly, review the items in the **farm bin**. Can we live without them? (no, food is essential to life and so are farms!) Discuss the idea of farming as a renewable resource with food being produced year after year.

6. Complete this discussion by talking about the wise care of our natural resources and farmlands. Stress that the stewardship of farmland goes hand in hand with that of the natural world to ensure a high quality of life. Discuss farming practices that reflect this caring attitude towards the earth and environment. What can they do at home to care for the natural world around them in the items they use everyday (reuse, reduce, recycle – composting being one of them if that is possible for them)?

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