



ACTIVITY 4.B *The History of Things*

for **Module 4:** **Let's Get to Work: Water, Energy, and Waste**

General Description: After watching a video documentary that can be viewed online, the students will reflect on the origin and regulation of things in their everyday lives, emphasizing the use of energy in production processes.

Materials:

Internet connection (and use of computer equipment) to access this link:

<http://www.storyofstuff.com> (English)

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-5645724531418649230> (Spanish)

Projection screen/Powerpoint projector for showing the video (optional)

Duration:

2 hrs

Location: Classroom. We recommend using the school's auditorium (in case you need a projection screen/projector)

Pedagogical method: Reflection, analysis, and description.

Instructions:

The teacher invites the students to watch the documentary "The History of Things." Explain that each part of the production, distribution, and waste process presented in the video uses energy and materials that come from natural resources.

After the video ends, return to the classroom and divide the students into groups of 2-4. Assign each group a school article/item (example: chalkboard, notebook, pencil, pens, desk, etc.) Invite them to ask themselves where these things come from and where they end up. Put up at least 5 of these guiding questions on the board to help initiate the process of analysis.

How long can it be used? What is its shelf life?

Where was this product made?

Which materials were used to make it?

Which parts of the production process used energy?

How did it get here? Was it by boat, plane, train?



Where am I going to dispose of it? What happens when it is thrown away?
How many years does it take the materials to decompose?

About 20 minutes into the activity, ask the students to choose a representative from their group. Invite each representative to present the history of their item. For homework, have each student do a history of their favorite toy or item.

Reflection

How can we produce things using less energy and natural resources? Consider these options: use other materials, produce locally, reuse items and buy less. Recycle the materials that were used to make other products. Ask the students to discuss this activity with their friends and family members.