

8.2

PERSONAL SUPPLY CHAIN

Summary

Do you know anyone who drinks coffee? Do they mix in sugar? Do they buy it at a store and brew it at home, or do they buy it in a coffee shop? Today, it's pretty easy to go buy coffee. However, have you ever thought about the journey that the coffee and sugar make to your local supermarket or coffee shop? Coffee and sugar grow best in tropical climates so if you live in the United States, it's unlikely that these products were produced near you. They've probably traveled great distances to get to where you live. Improvements in travel and communication over the last 500 years have led to the interconnection of the four world zones. This has shrunk the time needed to bring coffee to your neighborhood. It isn't just coffee, either. These improvements have led to an unprecedented number of products.

Preparation for the activity

Ask students to pick an item important in daily life. First, they'll research the raw materials needed to make this item, and then the process needed to put the raw materials together to create a finished product. Finally, they will look at the means of transporting the product to the local market.

Student research should be guided by the following questions:

- What are the raw materials needed for this product? Where are they found?
- What are the steps involved in making this product? Where does each step in the production take place?
- What energy is needed to produce this item? Where does that energy come from?
- What kind of transportation, if any, is needed at each stage of the production process, including getting the finished product to you?

Students should fill in the Personal Supply Chain worksheet to help them organize their research about these questions. Students should also complete a map to show the supply chain, travel route, and steps in the production process.

Presenting their findings

When students are done, ask them to tape their charts and maps to one of the walls in the classroom. Tell them to take some time to look at the work that their classmates have done. As they look at the work, they should think about the following questions:

- What is most surprising to them about what they've found in their own research and what they see in the research of their classmates?
- What evidence does the research of the class provide about the prevalence and importance of interconnection today?

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Preparation for the activity

Pick an item important in your daily life. First, you'll research the raw materials needed to make this item, and then the process needed to put the raw materials together to create a finished product. Finally, you'll look at the means of transporting the product to the local market.

Specifically, your research should be guided by the following questions:

- What are the raw materials needed for this product? Where are they found?
- What are the steps involved in making this product? Where does each step in the production take place?
- What energy is needed to produce this item? Where does that energy come from?
- What kind of transportation, if any, is needed at each stage of the production process, including getting the finished product to you?

Fill in the Personal Supply Chain worksheet to help organize your research about these questions. You will also complete a map to show the supply chain, travel route, and steps in the production process.

Presenting your findings

When you're done, tape your charts and maps to one of the walls in the classroom. Take some time to look at the work that your classmates have done. As you look at the work, think about the following questions:

- What is the most surprising discovery you made in your research?
- What is the most surprising discovery you see in the work of your classmates?
- What does this tell you about the importance of interconnection today?

Lesson 8.2: Personal Supply Chain Worksheet

My Item:

Name:

	Source/location of this material or service	Materials needed	Energy needed and source of energy	Form of transportation needed, if any
Raw materials				
Production				
Transportation				

Lesson 8.2: Personal Supply Chain Worksheet

My Item:

Name:

Mark all of the places on the map where steps in the production of your item takes place. Mark the transportation routes as well.

