

Trace the Origin

KIDS HANDS-ON

RUN AT 11:25

35 MIN

The point

Every human-made thing can be walked backwards to a natural beginning — a tree, a dune, a rock, ancient buried life. **Nothing comes from nothing.**

Materials

- The laminated **trace-the-origin card set** — matched pairs: paper ↔ living tree • glass bottle ↔ sand dune • steel nail ↔ iron-ore rock • plastic toy ↔ ancient buried organisms (oil)

Steps

- 1 Deal each child **one human-made object card**; keep it face-up in front of them.
- 2 Spread all the **raw-material cards face-up** in the middle of the table.
- 3 Each child **predicts out loud first**: “I think my thing was made from...”
- 4 **Hunt**: each child picks up the raw-material card they believe is their object’s source.
- 5 **Reveal pair by pair**: the group walks each object back to its origin, step by step — tree to pulp to paper; sand melted to glass; ore melted to steel; buried life to oil to plastic.
- 6 Close the loop: “*Did anyone’s object come from nothing?*” Never.

Say: “Paper was a tree. Glass was sand. The nail was a rock full of iron. The plastic toy was tiny living things buried for a very, very long time. People shaped every one of them — and people made NONE of them from nothing.”

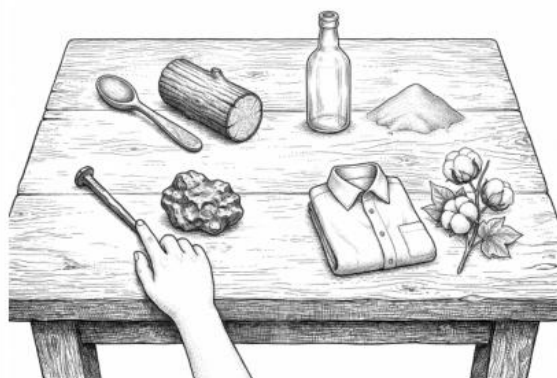


Fig. 1 — a matched pair on the table: the made thing, and the natural thing it once was

The matched card set is printed and ready: **game-components/trace-the-origin-cards.pdf** — cut on the dashed lines, keep each made-thing card with its raw-material partner.

TEACHER PREP — BEFORE THE DAY

Print and **laminates** the card set the week before. Shuffle the raw-material cards; stack the object cards to deal. Pair keys on the card backs settle disputes.

What to watch for

- Predictions that reach for the right box but the wrong item — sorting is working
- The plastic→oil gasp — the strangest true story on the table
- “What about my shoe?” — the habit escaping the game

EXPECTED RESULT

Every object lands on a natural source; none is left over — **every human-made thing began as a raw material from the other two boxes.** Plastic’s origin is a story: tiny sea creatures, buried and squeezed into oil.