

TRUE PRICE

by the Institute for Humane Education

PURPOSE:

Help students explore the positive and negative impacts of our product choices on themselves, other people, animals, and the earth.

GRADES: 4 and up

TIME: (2) 45-minute class sessions

MATERIALS NEEDED:

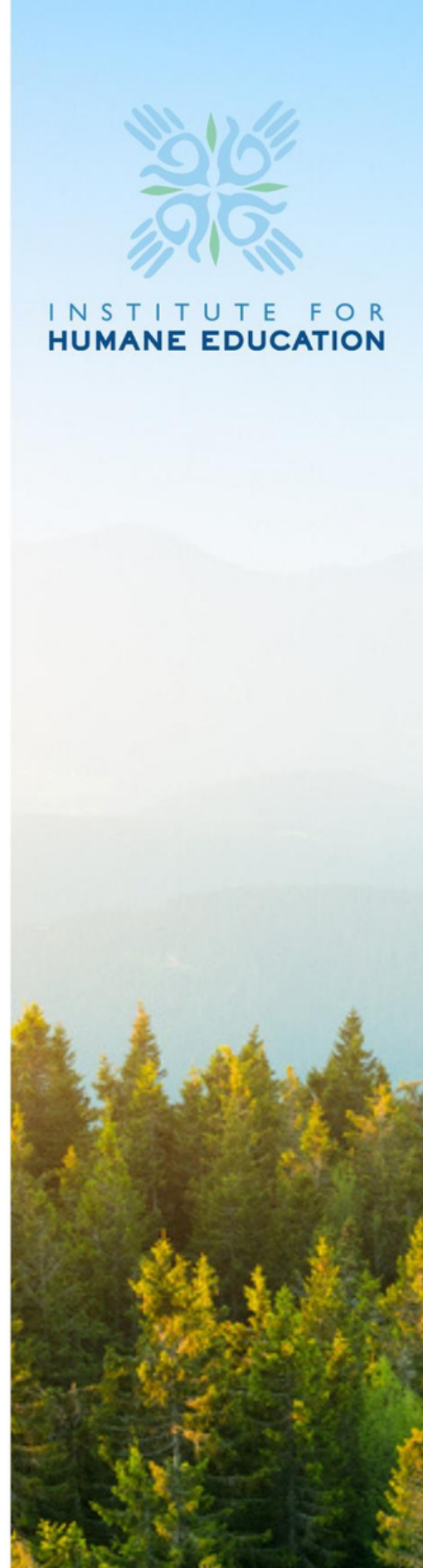
- Pictures of the following: cheeseburger, bottled water, cellphone, tee shirt, chocolate bar
- Access to the internet for research
- Handouts (see below)



Images: Canva.com



INSTITUTE FOR
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True Price Part I (approximately 45 minutes)

NOTE: *When working with younger students (grades 3-5), you may want to do True Price as a whole class and research/discuss the parts of the product life cycle. When working with students in grades 6 and up we suggest having students work in pairs or small groups.*

1. Project the pictures on a smartboard.

Ask the students to choose one of the following common items: cheeseburger, bottled water, cellphone, tee shirt, chocolate bar – or to choose another specific item that they use or eat regularly to research. It is helpful to be specific about the object you choose – select a specific food item instead of "food" in general or "sneakers" or "hiking boots" instead of "shoes."

2. Ask students to research the product life cycle of the item they chose.

Students can work as a class or in small groups. Ask students to research and write what they learn about each of the following stages of the product life cycle for their chosen item:

- extraction of raw materials
- manufacturing and production
- packaging and distribution
- purchase and acquisition
- use and maintenance
- waste and disposal

3. When students have completed their item's product lifecycle, encourage them to talk about the impacts on people, animals, and the environment at each stage of the product life cycle.

Links to support research:

Story of Stuff (Plastics) - <https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/plastic/>

5 Gyres (Plastics) - <https://www.5gyres.org/faq>

Food Print (Chocolate bar) - <https://foodprint.org/blog/chocolate-facts/>

Cleveland Clinic (Cheeseburgers) - <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/heres-how-fast-food-can-affect-your-body/>

Story of Electronics - <https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-electronics/>

Story of Water - <https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/the-story-of-water/>

Story of Micro-fibers - <https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-microfibers/>

True Price Part I (continued)

4. Ask students to answer the following questions on Handout 1:

1. What are the source materials (plants, animals, fungi, minerals, rocks, synthetics) this item is made of? Where do these materials come from?
2. How and where is the item manufactured? Who makes it? Under what conditions?
3. How is this item wrapped? How is it packaged for transport? Where does it go before it gets to a store or distributor?
4. How/where do you purchase the item? How does the item actually get to you?
5. How/when do you use/eat the item?
6. What happens after you are done eating/using the item? What happens to the packaging? If the packaging is recycled, where does it go, and how much is recycled?

NOTE: *In some cases, students may not be able to find the information for that specific brand of the item. Answers do not have to be definitive. For example, students might list the most likely two or three areas of the world where cocoa beans were grown for a chocolate bar.*

True Price Part 2 (approximately 45 minutes)

5. In Part 2 of the True Price activity, students work together to complete Handout 2 which lists a second set of questions:

- A. What are the effects, both positive and negative, of this product on you, other people, animals, and the environment?
- B. What societal systems support, promote, and perpetuate the use of this item? (e.g. economic, production, transportation, political, energy, healthcare, agriculture, education, advertising/media, mining, etc.)
- C. What would be alternative products that do more good and less harm to you, other people, animals, and the environment? If no humane and sustainable alternatives exist, what systems would need to change, and in what ways, to make such products the norm?
- D. What personal choices can you make now to support existing products that do more good and less harm?

NOTE: *You are looking for students to put some effort into this. They can base their answers on their earlier work, and they may also need to do some additional research.*

True Price Handout I

Research and describe each stage of the product life cycle to the extent possible: extraction of raw materials, manufacturing and production, packaging and distribution, purchase and acquisition, use and maintenance, waste and disposal.

Product Lifecycle Diagram



Image: [Researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net)

Name(s): _____

Item selected: _____

True Price Handout I (continued)

1. What are the main source materials (plants, animals, fungi, minerals, rocks, synthetics) used to make this item? Where do these materials come from?

2. How and where is the item manufactured? Who makes it? Under what conditions?

3. How is this item wrapped? How is it packaged for transport? Where does it go before it gets to a store or distributor?

4. How/where do you purchase the item? How does the item actually get to you?

5. How/when do you use/eat the item?

6. What happens after you are done eating/using the item? What happens to the packaging? If the packaging is recycled, where does it go, and how much is recycled?

True Price Handout 2

Answer the questions below. Use the information you learned from Part 1. You may need to do some additional research.

A. What are the effects, both positive and negative, of this product on you, other people, animals, and the environment?

<u>Positive Effects</u>	<u>Negative Effects</u>

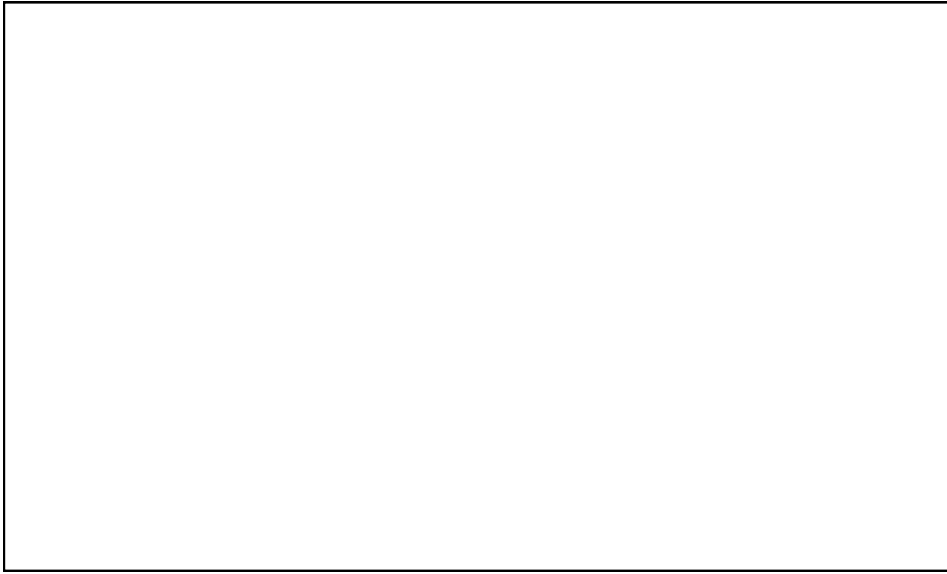
B. What societal systems support, promote, and perpetuate the use of this item? (e.g. economic, production, transportation, political, energy, healthcare, agriculture, education, advertising/media, mining, etc.)

Name(s): _____

Item selected: _____

True Price Handout 2 (continued)

C. What would be alternative products that do more good and less harm to you, other people, animals, and the environment? If no humane and sustainable alternatives exist, what systems would need to change, and in what ways, to make such products the norm?



D. What personal choices can you make now to support existing products that do more good and less harm?

