



Source Search (3-5)

Suggested Grade Level: 3-5

Time: 45 minutes

Subject: Social Studies, Economics, Geography, People, Places, and Environments, English Language Arts, Speaking and Listening, Agriculture, Farm to Table

Overview: Where does it come from? In this lesson, students will learn that agriculture provides nearly all of the products we rely on in any given day by participating in a relay where they match an everyday item with its “source.” Source Search stimulates students to connect the products they use every day (such as food, clothes, transportation, technology, and furniture) to agriculture. Students will participate in a relay in which they match an everyday item to its “source.”

Key Concepts for 3-5:

- The items we use every day either began as a resource of the natural world or were produced on a farm.
- The raw materials produced on farms are used for food, clothing, and many other items we use every day.
- Factories and stores are not the original sources of any items. Factories build, process, and/or manufacture items, and stores are distribution centers.

Objectives:

1. Define the four sources of products: farms, stores, factories, and natural resources.
2. Categorize everyday items into four groups according to their source or origin.
3. Identify many items used in daily life that come from agriculture.

Background Information:

If you were to take a moment to look around and identify the items you rely on every day, they would likely include food, clothing, modes of transportation such as cars or bikes, building materials such as steel or wood, various technological devices such as cell phones or computers, and several tools and machines. Where did these items and the raw materials used to make them originate? This lesson helps students answer that question.

Many people might recognize that farms provide us with whole, raw foods like fruits, vegetables, milk, meat, and eggs. They might even recognize that foods such as bread, pasta, cheese, frozen chicken nuggets, and canned foods also come from farms but are

first prepared and packaged at food processing facilities. However, in reality, agriculture also provides us with a wide variety of raw materials used to make clothes, books, cosmetics, medicine, sports equipment, and much more.

Everything we make and use in society can originally be found somewhere in our environment, or it is produced on farms by using natural resources such as land and water. Resources such as metal and glass are made from minerals that are extracted from the earth through the process of mining. Most plastics are a byproduct of oil, which is extracted from beneath the Earth's surface. Other items we rely on from day-to-day are products of agriculture. Farms exist in numerous sizes and various locations and include many different products ranging from food and clothing to fuel and building supplies.

While many day-to-day items were built, processed, or manufactured at a factory and eventually sold at a store, it is important for students to understand that they each began as a resource of the natural world and/or a product of agriculture.

Kansas Connections:

Agriculture is the backbone of Kansas. Kansas farmers provide everyday items like food, fiber, and fuel to people across the United States and the world.

Crops

Visitors to Kansas often say our fields seem to stretch forever. Did you know Kansas has more acres of cropland than any other state in the nation? These acres help grow many of the crops that become the food we eat and the products we use every day. One of the most important crops grown here is wheat. Kansas ranks first in the country for winter wheat, the kind of wheat most often used to make bread. In 2024, Kansas farmers harvested more than 300 million bushels of wheat! Kansas also ranks first in sorghum, also called milo. Sorghum is often used to make animal feed, but it can also be turned into ethanol (a type of fuel) and even gluten-free food. Corn and soybeans are also grown in Kansas. Corn is used in many ways: cornmeal, corn syrup, cornstarch, animal feed, ethanol, and many more. You might find corn in the ingredient list of your breakfast cereal! Kansas ranks seventh in corn production nationwide. Soybeans come in at number eleven and are used to make cooking oil, livestock feed, fuel, and other everyday products. Did you know that Kansas' state flower is the sunflower? Kansas ranks eighth in sunflower production. There are two main types: oil-type sunflowers, which are pressed to make cooking oil, and non-oil or confectionery sunflowers, which are used for birdseed and snacks. Not all crops are grown for food – some are grown for fiber, which is used to make yarn and fabric. One of the most common fiber crops in Kansas is cotton. Kansas ranks fourteenth in cotton production, harvesting around 200,000 bales each year. Each bale weighs about 240 pounds and can make up to 215 pairs of jeans. If Kansas used all its cotton just for denim, we could make roughly 43 million pairs of jeans a year. That's enough for every Kansan to own more than a dozen new pairs every year!

Livestock

Livestock, or farm animals, are another important part of Kansas agriculture. Many Kansas farmers and ranchers own cattle. Kansas ranks third in the nation for number of cattle, with nearly 6 million head. That's just under seven percent of all cattle in the United States! Some cows are raised for beef. Kansas ranks third in red meat production, processing more than five billion pounds of beef each year. Beef provides high-quality protein and important nutrients, and Kansas farmers take pride in producing safe, nutritious, and high-quality beef for people across the nation and around the world. Some Kansas cows are raised for milk. Kansas ranks 16th nationwide for dairy cattle, with about 180,000 head. Milk comes from healthy, well-fed cows on dairy farms and is used to make foods like cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt, and ice cream. Dairy is an important part of our diet because it provides calcium, vitamins, and minerals that help us grow strong bones and teeth.

Kansas also ranks 11th in hog and pig production, with just over two million head. That's about three percent of the nation's total. Pigs provide pork, bacon, sausage, and ham (United). Food processing is a big industry in Kansas. According to Kansas Commerce, food manufacturing contributes about \$5.2 billion and makes up 21 percent of the state's manufacturing industry. Processed meats include ham, bacon, pastrami, sausage, lunch meats, and hot dogs (Kansas Commerce). We also use livestock for more than just food. Leather comes from the hides of cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs and can be used to make shoes, boots, purses, belts, and even footballs. Cattle also provide byproducts used to make everyday items like cosmetics, detergents, pet food, crayons, soap, paint, antifreeze, floor wax, perfume, plastics, and candles.

Business

Kansas agriculture plays a big role in supporting industries across our state, our country, and even the world. Kansas trades agricultural products with other countries. Sending products to another country is called exporting. Receiving products from another country is called importing. According to the Kansas Department of Agriculture, in 2024, Kansas exported more than \$4.75 billion in agricultural products! That year, Kansas sent products to 94 foreign markets around the world. Our biggest trading partners were Mexico, Japan, China, Canada, and South Korea. Kansas agriculture depends on exports (Kansas Agriculture)!

Did you know Kansas farmers, drivers, inspectors, and factory workers all play a role in producing pet food? The Midwest serves as an agricultural and manufacturing hub for this industry. Kansas farmers supply the meat, vegetables, and grains that pets need to thrive, while workers across the state help ensure those ingredients are safely processed and delivered to homes nationwide.

Kansas is also rich in natural resources. Natural resources are products that come from the earth, like wind, water, minerals, and more. According to [Kansas.gov](https://www.kansas.gov), more than 41% of Kansas' electricity comes from wind turbines. That means almost half of our

power comes from the wind! Kansas is also one of the top ten ethanol-producing states in the nation. Water is another important natural resource. There are two main types of water resources in Kansas: aquifers and reservoirs. Aquifers are underground layers of rock, sand, or gravel that hold water like a sponge. The largest aquifer in Kansas is the High Plains Aquifer. A reservoir is a manmade lake. The largest reservoir in Kansas is Milford Lake. Water from aquifers and reservoirs is used for drinking, bathing, cooking, and farming. Reservoirs are also used for fun activities like boating and fishing. Oil and natural gas are also mined in Kansas, along with zinc, lead, coal, salt, gypsum, sand, and stone (Kansas.gov).

Kansas has tree farms! According to the Kansas Forest Service, "Many people are surprised to learn that Kansas timber harvests contribute to the state's economy. Though it is a small component of the overall economy (less than 1% of total manufacturing receipts), it is certainly important," (Kansas Forestry). Most Kansas trees are converted into furniture, gun stocks, veneer, wooden pallets, dunnage, and other wood-derived products. Hammons Black Walnuts, a company that purchases, shells, and sells black walnuts in the U.S. (including at seven Kansas locations), indicates walnut shells are ground into powder and used to make products like abrasive cleaners, water filtration systems, cosmetics, soap, dental cleaners, skin exfoliants, and denture polishers. It is also used in making filler for dynamite, as an adhesive for plywood and particleboard, and on the seals of oil well drilling rigs (Hammons).

Materials:

Engagement:

- Morning Activities Images (provided)

Activity:

**All items are included in the Source Search Kit*

<https://agclassroomstore.com/source-search>, which is available for purchase from agclassroomstore.com.

- Glue
- Colored index cards or card stock in 2 different colors (for mounting product pictures)
- Updated Source Search Picture Cards (provided)
- Source Search Item Reference List
<https://agclassroomstore.com/content/SourceSearchItems.pdf>
- Four boxes labeled "Stores," "Factories," "Farms," and "Natural Resources"

Instructional Format:

1. Review Background Information and Kansas Connections
2. Conduct engagement exercise
3. Prepare the activity.
4. Complete the activity.
5. Conduct assessment exercise.

Engagement:

1. Ask the students, "What did you do to get ready for school this morning?"
2. Project the Morning Activities Images onto a large screen.
3. Point to the picture of the child eating breakfast. Ask the students what items the child used while eating breakfast. (*cereal, milk, bowl, spoon, etc.*) Ask the students what items were used to complete the other activities shown in the pictures.
4. Explain to the students that they use many different items and eat different types of food each day. Inform the students that they will be participating in an activity to learn about many of the items they use every day.

Procedures:

Prepare:

1. Print and cut out the attached Source Search Picture Cards showing everyday items. Alternatively, print the resources from the lesson plan, laminate, cut, and get the baskets themselves in preparation to teach this lesson, as outlined in Materials. If you prefer to involve your students in the preparation stage (and have time), have them gather their own pictures of everyday items. Gather a variety of magazines or slick ads from the Sunday newspaper and instruct your students to cut out pictures that represent items they use regularly (food, cars, soap, clothes, computers, etc.) Avoiding duplication, select 36.
2. Randomly divide the 36 pictures into two groups. Use two colors of index cards (or card stock) and glue the pictures onto the cards. Laminate the pictures for future use.
3. Obtain four containers (boxes, plastic tubs, paper box lids, or paper grocery bags) and label each with one of the following: "*Stores*," "*Factories*," "*Farms*," and "*Natural Resources*."
4. Identify a suitable location for a relay race, such as an area outside, a wide hallway, or the gymnasium.

Activity:

1. Divide the class into two teams. Divide the laminated pictures by color. You should have 18 pictures in each pile. If you are using red and blue index cards, you will have a red and blue team.
2. Take the students to the location of the relay race and place each team in a single-file line. Be sure to have all the pictures face down in front of the first person in each line. Locate the tubs 20-50 feet away from the lines.
3. Give students the following instructions: "This is the source relay. Your job is to place each card in the tub that represents the *original* source of the everyday item pictured. When you are in the front of the line, pick up a card, look at the picture, then run to and place the picture in the correct tub based on the product's "source"—either "*Stores*," "*Factories*," "*Natural Resources*," or "*Farms*." Keep in mind that you are looking at the product, not the packaging.

The next person in line goes when the person in front of them returns and crosses over the start line or hand-tags them. The returning player should go to the end of the line."

4. Ask students if they have any questions and clarify as needed. Begin the relay race and continue until all of the pictures have been sorted. The first team to finish the sort wins temporarily, but the ultimate winner will be determined by accuracy.
 5. After the relay is over and the pictures are sorted, return to the classroom or have the students gather around you in a suitable location to go through the cards and discuss the correct answers. As you hold up each picture, the students can show whether they agree or disagree with the sort using the "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" signal, or another response as chosen. Use the attached Source Search Items Reference List for the correct answers and explanations for each card. You can also refer to the Source Search e-Learning Lesson video <https://youtu.be/V6oEE9uU79g> for a recorded explanation. If you choose to keep score to identify a winner, tally the number of cards in the correct boxes for each team.
- **Farms:** Explain that if the item contains ingredients or raw products from a farm, the item is in the correct box. Examples include food items such as cereal, cookies, and milk, or clothing items made from natural fibers such as cotton (jeans) or wool (coat). Some items from a farm that are not eaten or worn include paint (this contains linseed or soybean oil) or fuel such as ethanol. *Note: After most relays, the "Farms" container will typically have only a few items in it.*
 - **Natural Resources:** Explain that items in this tub should be products we get from the ocean, from plants or animals that occur naturally without human management, or from mining. Examples of items that should be in this box are cars, salt, water, plastic (plastic starts as oil, which is mined), synthetic fabrics (polyester, petroleum or oil products), computers, cell phones, and any metallic items. Fish or shrimp can be caught in the wild, but can also be farmed. Wood products may be in this box, but many wood products come from timber grown on farms. Let the class decide how to divide these. Remind your students that this is the "source" search. What is the "real" source of the things we use every day? Nearly all are grown or mined – farmed or extracted from the natural world. *Note: This tub is also likely to only have a few items inside.*
 - **Factories:** Explain that a factory is a place where raw ingredients are changed into the useful items we need or want: wood into furniture, ore into steel for cars, wheat into bread, and potatoes into chips. A factory assembles items for later sale in a distribution center or store. With this information, ask students, "Can factories be the original source of any items?" (No) Proceed by sorting every card in the "Factories" box into either the "Farms" or "Natural Resources" container. After doing this, your students should understand that all products were originally grown or mined.

- **Stores:** Move to the box labeled "Stores." After receiving the explanation about factories, check for understanding by asking, "Are stores the original source of any items?" Students should realize that, like the "Factories" container, nothing should be in the "Stores" container. Stores are where we purchase items, not their original source. Clarify that factories and stores rely on raw ingredients from the farm and the natural world. Every picture or product should now be in either the "Farms" or "Natural Resources" container.
6. Explain to the students that farms need water, soil, the sun, and air to grow and raise plants and animals. To illustrate, place the "Farms" box inside the "Natural Resources" box.

Extension

1. Ask your students to create a concept web with one of the pictures used in the "Source Search" activity. Each picture should be placed in the center of a large piece of paper, and the web should be drawn to identify associations or links to careers, natural resources, or other products.
2. Play the My American Farm interactive games Where in the World? <http://www.myamericanfarm.org/games/where-in-the-world> and Ag Across America <http://www.myamericanfarm.org/games/ag-across-america>.
3. Read Issue 1 of Ag Today titled *Agriculture is Everywhere!* <https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/829/> This reader can be accessed digitally. It describes the connections humans make daily with agriculture, from business and science to the practices of growing and selling row crops and animals to be used for food, fiber, and fuel.
4. Discuss the importance of conserving and managing natural resources.

Vocabulary:

- **Agriculture:** the science or practice of farming, including cultivation of the soil for the growing of crops and the rearing of animals to provide food, wool, and other products
- **Mineral:** an inorganic substance needed by the human body for good health
- **Natural resources:** materials or substances such as minerals, forests, water, and fertile land that occur in nature and can be used for economic gain
- **Source:** a place, person, or thing from which something originates

Career Information: Warehouse/Facility Manager

A Warehouse Manager helps keep products organized so they can be shipped where they need to go. They make sure things like seeds, feed, and tools are stored safely and are easy to find. Their job keeps everything moving smoothly. Warehouse managers should be responsible and organized.

Assessment:

After conducting this activity, consider repeating the relay a second time using only two containers, "*Farms*" and "*Natural Resources*," to assess student understanding.

Review and summarize the following key concepts:

- The items we use every day either began as a resource of the natural world or were produced on a farm.
- The raw materials produced on farms are used for food, clothing, and many other items we use every day.
- Factories and stores are not the original sources of any items. Factories build, process, and/or manufacture items, and stores are distribution centers.

Kansas Standards:

History, Government, and Social Studies

Standard 1: Choices have consequences.

1.1 The student will recognize and evaluate significant choices and consequences that have impacted our lives and futures.

1.2 The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about choices and consequences.

1.3 The student will investigate and connect examples of choices and consequences with contemporary issues.

Standard 3: Societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups.

3.1 The student will recognize and evaluate how societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups.

3.2 The student will analyze context and draw conclusions about how societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups.

3.3 The student will investigate and connect how societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups with contemporary issues.

Next Generation Science Standards

4th Grade

Earth and Human Activity

4-ESS3-1. Obtain and combine information to describe that energy and fuels are derived from natural resources and that their uses affect the environment.

5th Grade

Earth and Human Activity

5-ESS3-1. Obtain and combine information about ways individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth's resources and environment.

English Language Arts

3rd Grade

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL.3.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on third grade topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.3.2 Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively and orally.

Language in Speaking and Listening

SL.3.8 Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal

relationships.

4th Grade

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL.4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on fourth grade topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Language in Speaking and Listening

SL.4.8 Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being and that are basic to a particular topic.

5th Grade

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL.5.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on fifth grade topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Language in Speaking and Listening

SL.5.8 Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition and other logical relationships.

National Agricultural Literacy Standards:

Agriculture and the Environment

- Recognize the natural resources used in agricultural practices to produce food, feed, clothing, landscaping plants, and fuel (e.g., soil, water, air, plants, animals, and minerals) (T1.3-5 e.)

Plants and Animals for Food, Fiber, and Energy

- Distinguish between renewable and non-renewable resources used in the production of food, feed, fuel, fiber (fabric or clothing) and shelter (T2.3-5 b.)

Food, Health, and Lifestyle

- Diagram the path of production for a processed product, from farm to table (T3.3-5 b.)
- Distinguish between processed and unprocessed food (T3.3-5 c.)
- Identify careers in food, nutrition, and health (T3.3-5 f.)

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

- Provide examples of science being applied in farming for food, clothing, and shelter products (T4.3-5 d.)

Culture, Society, Economy, and Geography

- Discover that there are many jobs in agriculture (T5.3-5 b.)
- Explain the value of agriculture and how it is important in daily life (T5.3-5 d.)
- Provide examples of agricultural products available, but not produced in their local area and state (T5.3-5 e.)
- Understand the agricultural history of an individual's specific community and/or state (T5.3-5 f.)

Supporting Resources:

AgBadging Field Guide <https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/1236/>

Ag-Bites Activity <https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/1140/>

Ag Today Reader <https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/829/>

All in Just One Cookie book by Susan E. Goodman

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/171/>



Careers in Agriculture series by Utah Ag in the Classroom

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/166/>

Cotton Now & Then book by Karen B. Willing

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/157/>

Farm book by Elisha Cooper <https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/907/>

Farm Pop-Ups Activity <https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/132/>

Fascinating Farms Around the World Website

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/354/>

Flowchart Sample Pack by Lynn Wallin

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/1402/>

Food and Farm Facts Booklet <https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/22/>

Food and Farm Facts eLearning Module

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/1353/>

From Start to Finish book series by Lerner Publishing Group

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/340/>

Growing Today for Tomorrow video by BASF Crop Protection

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/411/>

Heartland book by Diane Seibert

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/7/>

Homes book by Margaret C. Hall

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/345/>

How Did That Get in My Lunchbox book by Chris Butterworth

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/194/>

How It's Made Documentary Series

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/389/>

How to Make a Cherry Pie and See the U.S.A book by Marjorie Priceman

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/924/>

How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World book by Marjorie Priceman

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/343/>

Livestock Flowchart <https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/131/>



My American Farm Website <https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/434/>

Ox-Cart Man book by Donald Hall

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/5/>

Renewable vs Nonrenewable vs Inexhaustible Resources eMagazine

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/1028/>

Right This Very Minute book by Lisl H. Detlefsen

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/946/>

Source Search Kit <https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/901/>

Thank a Farmer book by Maria Gianferrari

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/1273/>

The Cow in Patrick O'Shanahan's Kitchen book by Diana Prichard

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/195/>

To Market, To Market book by Nikki McClure

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/76/>

Two Truths and a Lie Activity

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/1001/>

What is Agriculture by Debra Spielmaker

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/304/>

Where Did My Clothes Come From by Chris Butterworth

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/387/>

Where the Food Comes From TV Series

<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/companion-resources/1390/>

Author: Debra Spielmaker | National Center for Agricultural Literacy (NCAL)
Activity adapted from Project Season, by Deborah Parrella. Edited by Marissa Cook,
Kansas State University Secondary Education, KFAC intern.

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Basketball



Car



Cereal



Cheese



Fleece Sweatshirt



Hot Dogs



Ice Cream



Juice



Milk



Mayonnaise



Pizza



Salad



Salt



Shoes



Shrimp



Stairs



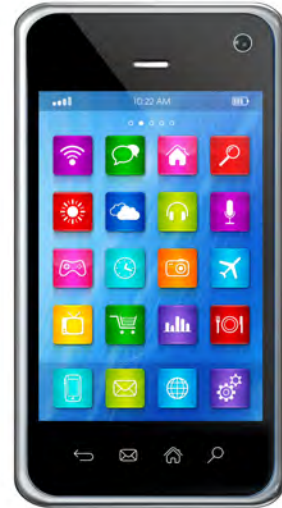
Water



Water Bottle



Berries



Phone



Cookies



Eggs



French Fries



Fruit



Hamburger



Leather Handbag



Jeans



Peanut Butter



Pet Food



Popcorn



Pet Food



Soda



Storage Container



Toilet Paper



Wheat Bread



Wool Coat