



Resourcefulness and the Global Supply Chain

The impact of the coronavirus on the global supply chain has been significant. Around the globe, shortages of essential sanitary, protective, and medical equipment have made battling the virus that much more challenging. As American consumers, we have seen bare supermarket shelves, longer waits for delivered goods, and an unprecedented shortage of toilet paper!

The run on toilet paper has surprised many people, but the situation is more complex than it seems. Read the articles below about the toilet paper shortage.



Read this article from *USA Today*.
WEBSITE: bit.ly/3cuf2r3



Read this article from the *Washington Post*.
WEBSITE: wapo.st/2yXZvLJ

Reflect:

- What surprised you about the problem sourcing toilet paper and getting it to consumers?
- Was there something you hadn't considered about the toilet paper supply chain?

What is a Supply Chain?

Perhaps you frequent farmer's markets to stock up on produce. In that scenario, the supply chain is relatively simple. You buy directly from the farmer, who must source the labor, seeds, soil supplements, irrigation, etc. Another scenario involves you buying a candy bar at the local supermarket. How did that individually wrapped candy bar get to you as a consumer?

A supply chain diagram or explains the journey that products or goods must take from source to sale and includes all parts of production. All steps and transportation must be included, from the sourcing of raw materials to manufacturing, packaging, and finally distribution.

In this activity, we will consider the supply chain for a basic candy bar.

1. What materials are required to make the candy bar? (We'll help with this one!)
 - Cocoa butter
 - Peanuts
 - Sugar
 - Milk
 - Corn Syrup
 - Aluminum foil
 - Paper
2. Where can these raw materials be sourced? Do some research and find out where the raw material comes from. You may have to look deeper than you think!
3. What else must be considered once you have the raw materials?
 - What manufacturing steps must be taken?
 - What distribution issues must be considered?
 - Will the candy bar be direct to consumer or sold through a retail supplier?
4. Sketch your supply chain! What kind of diagram, map, or flow chart can you devise that is representative of the journey from source to sale?
5. Can you make another, more complex supply chain?

Go Further: How will the lessons learned from the coronavirus pandemic affect our supply chains moving forward? Listen to this *WBUR/NPR On Point* podcast (wbur.fm/3eKo84x) to learn more.

Citations: Supply candy bar chain activity adapted from <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/a-supply-chain/>

Students! Answering our questions? Using our strategies? Share them with us at discovery@worldstrides.com.