

# Everything Has a Life Cycle

*Reprinted with permission of Sylvia Klave, Transitional Kindergarten teacher, Perry Creek Elementary/Clark Early Childhood Center, Sioux City, IA. (Adapted by Susan Salterberg, UNI Center for Energy and Environmental Education)*

## STANDARDS:

### Iowa Core:

**SS.K–2.G.4--Essential Concept and/or Skill:** *Understand how geographic processes and human actions modify the environment and how the environment affects humans.*

- Understand ways in which people depend on the physical environment.
- Understand humans impact the environment in positive and negative ways.
- Understand the environment impacts humans in positive and negative ways.
- Understand areas of a community have changed over time.

### ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems

- Things that people do to live comfortably can affect the world around them. But they can make choices that reduce their impacts on the land, water, air, and other living things.  
(**K-ESS3-3: Performance expectation:** *Earth and Human Activity*--Communicate solutions that will reduce the impact of humans on the land, water, air, and/or other living things in the local environment.)

## LESSON PLAN

### Learning objectives

I can:

- Begin to understand the concept that “everything has a life cycle.”
- Participate in songs and dramas about products’ life cycles.
- Research lives of products and discuss them with my class (with guidance and support from adults)
- Demonstrate my understanding by “teaching” my parents what I have learned.

### Procedure

Ask students to predict how our use of paper hamburger wrappers affects nature? Predict how our use of crayons impacts nature.

Then, show the students a hamburger wrapper from a local fast food restaurant. Watch 24-second youtube video, “McDonald’s Super-Fast Burger Wrapping.”

Ask how many have had a kid’s meal with a wrapped-up hamburger or cheeseburger. Ask where they think the paper comes from. Ask what happens to the paper after eating the hamburger. We are going to act out the “life cycle” of that wrapping paper.

Define “life cycle” - life cycle means the stages a product goes through during its life. Most often, the process is slow and takes many steps.

Have students stand in a circle. Pass out props. Teach 1<sup>st</sup> verse of song – they will catch on with the rest.

Sing (loosely based on the melody of “Farmer in the Dell”) and dramatize Life Cycle of a Fast Food Paper Wrapper.

## Life Cycle of a Fast Food Paper Wrapper

*Lyrics by Sylvia Klave, loosely based on the tune, “Farmer in the Dell”*

(Prop: plastic hatchet)

I’m chopping down a tree,

I’m chopping down a tree,

I’m chopping down a tree

To wrap my hamburger.

(Prop: big wooden spoon)

It’s turning into pulp,

It’s turning into pulp,

It’s turning into pulp

To wrap my hamburger.

(Prop: paper press from papermaking kit)

I’m making the paper,

I’m making the paper,

I’m making the paper

To wrap my hamburger.

(Prop: papers from fast food restaurant placed on truck)

I’m loading up the truck,

I’m loading up the truck,

I’m loading up the truck

To wrap my hamburger.

(Prop: loaded truck)

I’m driving to the fast food store,

I’m driving to the fast food store,

I’m driving to the fast food store

To wrap my hamburger.

(Prop: wrap paper around hamburger from housekeeping area)

I’m wrapping up the bun,

I’m wrapping up the bun,

I’m wrapping up the bun

For my hamburger.

(Prop: unwrap burger and scrunch paper; pretend to throw away)

I’m scrunching up my trash,

I’m scrunching up my trash,

I’m scrunching up my trash

From my hamburger.

(Prop: garbage bag)

I’m emptying the trash,

I’m emptying the trash,

I’m emptying the trash

From that hamburger.

(Prop: picture of garbage truck with scrunched paper on it)

I’ll drive the garbage truck,

I’ll drive the garbage truck,

I’ll drive the garbage truck

To the landfill place.

(Prop: throw paper on floor where it just sits)

It sits and sits and sits,

It sits and sits and sits,

It sits and sits and sits

Until it falls apart.

(Prop: picture of tree or toy tree)

A tree grows on the landfill,

A tree grows on the landfill,

A tree to get chopped down

To wrap another hamburger.

Discuss what happens during the life cycle of a hamburger wrapper. What parts of nature are we using to make the paper?

Identify one or two other products to research as a class and find out about their life cycles. Decide how to dramatize the life cycles. (Exploration of crayons, toy cars, a pencil and a cotton t-shirt are a few of the possibilities.)

What happens during the life cycle of a crayon? What parts of nature are we using to make the crayon? Discuss ways to reduce our impact on the environment. Then, students draw a picture or a mural depicting various ways to reduce impact. (Use crayons until there is hardly anything left, recycle the remaining parts, take care of them so you don't lose them, etc.)

In summary, ask again how our use of products, such as paper hamburger wrappers and crayons, affects nature? What can we do to reduce that impact?

How will we tell our parents what we learned?

**Other resources:** The Life Cycle of a Pencil by Chloe' and Zoha, Reading Rainbow: How Trash is Recycled, Reading Rainbow: How DO You Create Toy Cars?