

CGR4M0 Grade 12 Environmental and Resource Management
Consumerism and the Environment – The Lifecycle of Your



The path that any physical product takes through its existence may be represented by the graphic below that represents a *linear system*. Most of the products that we use follow a linear system from the raw materials that are used to make them all the way to the point that we are done with them.



According to the video “The Story of Stuff” from <http://www.storyofstuff.org/movies-all/story-of-stuff/> we can’t have linear systems on a finite planet. Open a Word page and go to the video. Now, as the video runs, answer these questions:

- 1) What are “synergistic” health impacts?
- 2) What food is (surprisingly) at the top of the food chain as far as toxins are concerned?
- 3) How do toxic “byproducts” leave factories?
- 4) What are “externalized production costs?”
- 5) What is the “golden arrow” on the system?
- 6) Summarize what did Victor Lebeau said.
- 7) What is the difference between *planned obsolescence* and *perceived obsolescence*?
- 8) What product does the video use to explain perceived obsolescence? How is it used?
- 9) What are our 2 main leisure activities? How do they contribute to the system?
- 10) Why is the average person more aware of “disposal” part of the system than the first three?
- 11) What is the most toxic substance known to scientists? What is the number one source is this substance?
- 12) What is the core of the problem when we are discussing recycling?
- 13) What part of the system is left out when it transforms from a linear system to a cyclical system?
- 14) Now that you have seen the video, try to explain the quote “we can’t have linear systems on a finite planet.”

Design a flow chart that shows the life of one of these products:

- automobile
- office desk
- toaster
- lawnmower
- pair of shoes
- cell phone

Use the model from the video (below) as a template and trace your product from the materials that go into it to how and when it is disposed of.