

The Everyday Objects Exercise

Facilitator Guide

The Everyday Objects exercise was developed by Gray Poehnell and Norm Amundson. It is available in their book *Hope-Filled Engagement* and is adapted below with permission from the authors. The exercise highlights the interconnectedness of the labour market by considering an everyday object. It is presented here as a group activity to explore this interconnectedness. Adapt as needed for 1:1 delivery.

Preparation

Plan for **30 minutes** for this activity with an individual or **45-60 minutes** for a group. Choose a common, familiar everyday object (for example: a coin, a fork, a toothpick, or a coffee mug).

Materials Needed

- A blackboard, whiteboard, or large flip chart on which to write
- A physical example of the everyday object of your choice
- Scrap paper and pens for participants

Getting Started (10 minutes)

Present the everyday object to the group. Ask:

- Have you ever thought about how many different jobs are associated with this object?
- Name a few jobs that you think might be involved in making this.
- What about jobs that are indirectly related? Maybe things involved in supporting it, like selling it online, or buying the raw materials needed to make it?

Invite them to guess at the total number of jobs associated with the object.

Consider Industries (10 minutes)

After identifying some indirectly related jobs, transition to considering sectors. Identify a job title that came up that was indirectly related. Name the industry you would typically associate that job title with.

Introduce the list of industries as recognized under the [North American Industry Classification System](#). They are:

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| ✓ Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting | ✓ Wholesale trade | ✓ Educational services |
| ✓ Manufacturing | ✓ Finance and insurance | ✓ Construction |
| ✓ Information and cultural industries | ✓ Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services | ✓ Transportation and warehousing |
| ✓ Management of companies and enterprises | ✓ Accommodation and food services | ✓ Professional, scientific, and technical services |
| ✓ Arts, entertainment, and recreation | ✓ Utilities | ✓ Health care and social assistance |
| ✓ Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction | ✓ Retail trade | ✓ Public administration |
| | ✓ Real estate and rental and leasing | ✓ Other services (except public administration) |

Ask the group to look at the list and identify the **industries** they think might have examples of jobs related to the everyday object.

Invite participants to **provide an example of one job title** that would fit within that sector and how it relates to supporting the everyday object.

Take note on your whiteboard, blackboard, or flip chart of all individual industries that the participants identified.

Identify Job Possibilities (10 minutes)

Break your group into teams of 2-4 people. Assign each group one of the industries that was identified. Ask them to do the following:

“In the next eight minutes, list out all the different job titles in this industry that would directly or indirectly support this everyday object.”

As groups work, walk through the space and check in with each of them. Support their exploration by providing an example or helping broadly define the industry if they are struggling.

Share Findings (5 minutes)

Reassemble the group.

Ask each team to share the number of individual jobs they came up with.

On your whiteboard, blackboard, or flipchart, add the number of job titles next to the industry names that were being explored.

Connect the Dots (10 minutes)

Once you have the total jobs for each industry, invite the group to discuss further by asking probing questions. For example:

- "When you were first asked to identify jobs related to [everyday object], what types of jobs came to mind first?"
- "What was the most interesting or unexpected job title that your group came up with?"
- "Were there any industries that you did not initially think would be connected to this object? What changed your perspective?"
- "What does this exercise tell us about how different industries and occupations depend on one another?"
- "How might this activity change the way you think about career opportunities in the labour market?"
- "Thinking about your own career interests, are there industries or occupations you might not have considered before that now seem worth exploring?"

Conclude by highlighting that even simple, everyday objects are supported by a complex network of industries and occupations. Understanding these connections can help individuals broaden their view of the labour market and discover career possibilities they may not have otherwise considered.