Almost everything we buy comes in a package. Whether the packaging is made of cardboard, glass, plastic, or some other material, the waste often crowds landfills and pollutes rivers, streams, and oceans. Some waste is burned, which pollutes the air. Read about some different kinds of packaging waste. Then use the worksheet to design earth-friendly packaging for a product you use.

**Fact:** U.S. citizens throw away more than 30 million tons of plastic each year. A large amount of plastic waste comes from packaging for food and other products. Less than ten percent of that plastic is recycled.

### Green Design Challenge

**Design Earth-Friendly Packaging**

### Food Packaging
Take a trip to a grocery store or look around your kitchen to see many different ways foods are packaged. You’ll see produce and meat in plastic bags or trays. The shelves are stacked with cardboard boxes for cereal and pasta and aluminum cans for vegetables. Many foods, such as single-serve lunchbox snacks, have multiple layers of packaging. Fast-food restaurants also use a lot of packaging for their food. How can we reduce the waste from food packaging?

### Toy and Electronics Packaging
Did you receive a new toy or electronic device for your birthday? Chances are it had a lot of packaging. It might have come in a large cardboard box, with more cardboard inside for different parts. It might have used plastic bags to hold small parts and plastic ties to hold the product in place. Most of that cardboard and plastic will end up in a landfill. Do you think all of the packaging was needed? Could the product have been packaged with less material?
Green Design Challenge

Design Earth-Friendly Packaging

Step 1: Think of a product you use that has a lot of packaging, such as a prepared food or a toy.

Step 2: Brainstorm a new way to package that product with less or different packaging. Think about using recycled materials, such as paper, cardboard, or glass. Avoid plastic, which does not break down in the earth.

Step 3: Use the space below to draw your new, earth-friendly packaging. Can you think of another use for your packaging materials after this one?

Share your work online. Tag us @EMKInstitute and use the hashtags #Civicsathome #EarthDay2020