**STATION 1: READ IT! ORGANIC MOLECULES**

Organic molecules are the molecules which exist in all living things. They are life’s building blocks. All living things are formed from these organic molecules. Organic molecules are all carbon based, meaning they all contain carbon. Carbon has three properties that make it a special element. The first property of carbon is that it can join together, or bond, with up to four other elements. This means that carbon can form up to four bonds. The second property of carbon is that it can form bonds of different strength. Carbon can form single bonds, double bonds, or triple bonds with other elements. The last property of carbon is that it can form many different shapes. Carbon can bond with other elements to form rings, chains, or branched chains.

Many building blocks (subunits) joined together make up organic molecules. The new large molecule that is formed is called a macromolecule. There are four examples of macromolecules: carbohydrates, proteins, lipids, and nucleic acids. For example, the building block of carbohydrates is sugar, the building block of lipids is three fatty acids and a glycerol, the building block of protein is amino acids, and the building block of nucleic acids is the nucleotide. When these building blocks (monomers) are joined together, they form a large molecule (polymer), just as bricks joined together form a wall. For example, sugars join together form a carbohydrate. The process of joining monomers together to make a polymer is called polymerization.

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