Puzzle 12: Walking Under (Word) Ladders

Everyone knows that walking under ladders is bad luck, so I'm not going to make you do that. Instead, I'm going to make you prove your mettle by working with a ladder of a different kind: a *word* ladder.

A word ladder is the transformation of one word into another by changing a single letter at a time so that a valid word is created at each intermediate step. For example, to change the word "LEAD" into "GOLD" one could construct the following word ladder:

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LEAD
MEAD
MEAT
MOAT
MOLT
MOLD
GOLD
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Your challenge for this puzzle is to collect actual, physical objects that can be used to represent every step in a word ladder of your choosing. You may link together any two words that you want with your ladder, but you must follow these rules:

1. Every word in your ladder (including the start and end words) must be represented by a different physical object (not just a drawing of the object or a piece of paper with the name of the object spelled on it... the actual object).
2. While you are striving to create a ladder as long as possible, your construction may not have any extraneous words. For example, you should not bring the following items to include in your ladder: DICE → MICE → RICE. The MICE would be extraneous since DICE could be transformed to RICE without the MICE in between. In this case, the MICE would be ignored in your final score. Likewise, if you were to bring me a ladder that included: BOAT → BOLT → COLT → COAT, the middle two words would be discarded since BOAT can tranform directly into COAT.
3. Your word ladder must not contain any words/objects that have been used by teams that have already turned in their constructions. If there is a conflict with previously submitted ladders, I will tell you which words/objects need to be discarded.

The final guideline above encourages you to construct and submit your word ladder as quickly as possible, but that is balanced by the fact that you are trying to construct the longest word ladder you can. Once all teams have turned in their ladders (which must be done by the end of the puzzlehunt, 2:00 a.m. -- and you may only turn in one valid ladder during the whole puzzlehunt), the longest ladder will score 100 Points for that team, and shorter ladders will score a number of Points equal to the percentage of length to that longest (e.g. if your team's ladder is 45% the length of the longest one turned in, your team will earn 45 Points). You must bring your objects to Eric when you turn in your ladder (and be ready to justify how they represent the words in your ladder!); it is only then that Eric will tell you if any of your words are repetitions of previously submitted ladders.

There are no Symbol Codes to gather for this puzzle.