

Welcome to the

Heifer International GET IT! Curriculum for Middle Schools!

Since 1944, Heifer International has helped more than 8.5 million impoverished families in more than 125 countries become self-reliant through the gift of livestock and training in environmentally sound agriculture. Heifer International's approach is multi-faceted; it believes that development doesn't just mean economic advancement or improvements in health but also includes fostering participation in self-government, education, training, and maintaining and renewing the environment.

This curriculum arose out of the understanding that an equally important goal is to teach students and teachers about sustainable solutions toward ending poverty across the world. This curriculum focuses on how, as a consumer, we need to become aware of how our everyday actions affect both the global environment and people across the world. We hope to inspire all students to take action and encourage them so that they truly can make a difference. In doing this, they become better global citizens.

What's the Connection?

Economic Links Between Latin America and the United States

GEOGRAPHY | ECONOMICS | HISTORY | SCIENCE | LANGUAGE ARTS¹

The students in your class play a powerful role in the global economy, whether they realize it or not. These materials are designed to teach students about their role as consumers and the power they have in making choices. By using these materials, students learn about the networks of economic interdependence on the earth's surface, focusing on economic links between Latin America and the U.S. They also learn about the interrelationship between human activities and the environment. The unit emphasizes skills of reading comprehension, writing for a particular audience, high-level thinking, and research strategies.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

The lessons meet multiple standards in the following disciplines:

ECONOMICS	GEOGRAPHY	HISTORY	LANGUAGE ARTS	SCIENCE
Scarcity	The Physical and Human Characteristics of Places	World History Standard Era 6, Standard 1C: Consequences of the Worldwide Exchange of Flora, Fauna, and Pathogens	Apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts.	Life Science: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Populations and ecosystems</i> ● <i>Diversity and adaptations of organisms</i>
Marginal Cost/Benefit				
Role of Incentives	The Patterns and Networks of Economic Interdependence on Earth's Surface	World History Standard Era 7, Standard 4D: Political, Economic, and Social Transformations in the Americas in the 19th Century	Adjust use of spoken, written, and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.	Science in Personal and Social Perspectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Personal health</i> ● <i>Populations, resources, and environments</i> ● <i>Risks and benefits</i>
Gain from Trade	How the Forces of Cooperation and Conflict Among People Influence the Division and Control of Earth's Surface	World History Standard Era 8, Standard 6B: How Increasing Economic Interdependence Has Transformed Human Society	Conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems.	
Role of Economic Institutions	How Human Actions Modify the Physical Environment	World History Standard Era 9, Standard 1: Global and Economic Trends in the High Period of Western Dominance and Standard 6: Promises and Paradoxes of the Second Half of the 20th Century	Use a variety of technological and informational resources to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.	
Role of Resources in Determining Income	The Changes that Occur in the Meaning, Use, Distribution, and Importance of Resources			
	How to Apply Geography to Interpret the Present and Plan for the Future			

OVERVIEW OF THE MATERIALS

Three everyday items that people in the United States buy from Latin America are featured in the materials:



Students apply fundamental skills in economics, geography, science, and language arts to learn how these products end up on their local store’s shelves. The students can apply these skills to any products that they buy. In the end, students become more knowledgeable and intelligent participants in the global economy.

A quick consumer pre-post-test is included. By using these tests, students can see the changes that take place as a result of understanding more about international trade and their own roles as consumers in the global economy.

FLEXIBLE USE OF LESSONS

These materials are designed so that you can choose to teach just one individual lesson or string several together for a larger classroom unit. If you choose to use the units as a whole, you will see that the curriculum is structured around an exciting student assignment:

You are a journalist writing a consumer article. Your article must feature information that a consumer would need to know in order to make a well-informed purchasing decision. Your article must be based on solid research and be written in a clear and concise style.

This journalism assignment is introduced in the initial lesson. The next three units help students gather data about the products to be featured in their articles: 1) the history of each industry; 2) the people responsible for production; and 3) the use of, or influence on, the natural resources related to production. If time is limited, we recommend that teachers emphasize the 2nd and 3rd units.

TEAM TEACHING

The unit can be taught by one teacher, or collaboratively by a language arts, social studies, and science teacher as follows:

LANGUAGE ARTS	Introduction and Assessment
SOCIAL STUDIES	The History of the Products We Buy People and the Products We Buy
SCIENCE	Resources and the Products We Buy

LEARNING STRATEGIES

LESSON	DESCRIPTION	MATERIALS NEEDED	STRATEGIES
INTRODUCTION			
Who? What? Where? When? Why? Reporting on Consumer Products from Latin America	Students learn about trade as a connection between the U.S. and Latin America and are introduced to their roles as consumer reporters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts • Cut flowers, coffee beans, bunch of bananas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-test • Mapping • Discussion • Brainstorming • Generating questions for investigation

LEARNING STRATEGIES

LESSON	DESCRIPTION	MATERIALS NEEDED	STRATEGIES
HISTORY OF THE PRODUCTS WE BUY			
The History of the Banana Trade	Students discover how bananas became a popular food in the United States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts • Drawing materials • Internet access (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Mapping • Designing a Marketing Campaign
The History of the Coffee Trade	Students learn about North-South relations and the vulnerability of nations that are over-reliant on one export.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts • Event Cards • Butcher paper (optional) • Tape • Blue and orange highlighters • Reference materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructing and analyzing a timeline • Analyzing economic data
The History of the Flower Trade	Students learn factors that influence what products are grown in a location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample of imported items • Large world map or map of South America • Handouts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map analysis • Role play • Reading • Drawing cartoons
Reporters at Work	Students identify information about the history of bananas, coffee and flowers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' lists of questions about their products, plus students' notes and handouts from previous lessons • Note cards • Access to Internet and other research materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note taking • Research
PEOPLE AND THE PRODUCTS WE BUY			
The Trail of International Trade	Students track the route of products from growers in Latin America to stores in the United States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of imported products • Wall map of the world • Small self-adhesive labels • Handout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating hypotheses • Creating flowcharts • Discussion
Connections: Both Sides of a Coffee Cup	Students learn about the economic challenges facing small coffee growers and are introduced to the concept of fair trade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts • Resource person representing a local outlet where fair trade coffee is sold • Internet access (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Discussion • Developing marketing plans • Outside resource person
Focus on Child Labor	Students explore the concept of stakeholders as they explore the problem of child labor in the banana industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming • Reading and discussion • Writing dialogues

Reporters at Work	Students identify information about the people involved in creating the products they are covering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts • Students' lists of questions about their products generated in the introductory lesson, plus students' notes and handouts from previous lessons • Note cards • Access to Internet and other research materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Note taking • Research
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RESOURCES AND THE PRODUCTS WE BUY

The Pesticide Dilemma	Students learn about the environmental problems caused by the use of agricultural chemicals, as well as reasons for their use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Discussion • Creating T-charts • Brainstorming
The Environmental Impact of Your Coffee	Students further explore use of resources as they learn about the issues around shade- and sun-grown coffee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts • Tape, paste or glue • Markers or crayons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating murals • Problem solving
What a Waste!	Students learn about waste issues and potential solutions in the banana industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts • Game cards • Bunch of bananas and "sample" of trash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game • Creating visual representation of an environmental "footprint"
Reporters at Work II	Students identify information about resource issues involved in creating the products they are covering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts • Students' lists of questions about their products generated in the introductory lesson, plus students' notes and handouts from previous lessons • Note cards • Access to Internet and other research materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Note taking • Research

ASSESSMENT

What Is Good Consumer Reporting?	Students learn about the characteristics of a good consumer article.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students complete their research and write their consumer articles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Analyzing consumer articles
Performance Assessment: On Assignment	Students complete their research and write their consumer articles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoring guide • Internet or library access from previous lessons • Note cards • Access to Internet and other research materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Writing • Post-test

¹ Standards taken from: *National Standards for Civics and Government*, Center for Civic Education; *Geography for Life*, National Council for Geographic Education; *National Standards for World History*; National Council of Teachers of English; *Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics*; National Science Education Standards.