

PROJECT-BASED LESSON

CONSUMER IMPACT: HOW OUR \$ CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Summary

Students will learn about fair trade and the impact that fair trade certified products have on communities which, in turn, helps keep girls in school. To learn more about fair trade and how it can impact families in developing countries, go to www.fairtradeusa.org and preview the site before working with students.

Objective

Students will study the positive impact that their consumer decisions can make on developing nations and how they, with everyday choices, can help girls stay in school.

Subjects

Language Arts, Writing, Social Studies (Economics)

Common Core State Standards

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.4/11-12.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.7/11-12.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.8/11-12.8: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.9/11-12.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.2/11-12.2: Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.4/11-12.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.7/11-12.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Time Needed

Three to five class periods; 50 minutes each

Skill Building

- Analyzing and comparing information
- Preparing and displaying information in a way that is appropriate for the audience
- Providing support and reasoning for conclusions

Resources and Materials

- Teacher-selected film chapters from *Girl Rising*
- Teacher Guides for selected chapters, which include a list of Resources, a mini-lesson for introducing the film chapters, and a Film Viewing Guide
- KWPL Chart (found in the Resources section)
- Fair Trade print-outs from www.fairtradeusa.org (optional)
- See Additional Resources Guide (found in the Resources section) for additional resources, including relevant videos.

Essential Questions

1. As consumers, how do our choices impact others?
2. How do socially responsible companies impact families in poor countries?
3. How do socially responsible, fair trade products help keep girls in school?
4. As consumers, how can we support efforts that improve the lives of others?

Sample Content Questions

1. What does a fair trade designation mean to consumers?
2. What does it mean for a company to be socially responsible?

Building a Foundation and Making Connections

View the selected film chapter(s) from *Girl Rising* and use the Introductory Lessons and Film Viewing Guides, relevant Country and Issue Fact Sheets, and Resources to engage students so that they begin to develop an understanding of the numerous issues that influence a girl's ability to access an education.

Ensure that students are familiar with the fair trade label. Bring in a fair trade-designated product to show them; print the fair trade label at www.fairtradeusa.org.

Introducing the Lesson

As a class, on a large sheet of paper begin a K-W-P-L Chart centering on the question, "What does a fair trade label mean, and how do these products make a difference?" Complete the Know, Want to Know, and Predict columns.

Tell students that they will be focusing on this guiding question as they research a fair trade certified product. Students will research a product and the company that manufactures it, learning how the product and company impact poverty and help - directly or indirectly - to keep girls in school.

Product suggestions:

- Body care products (lotion, soap, shampoo)
- Crafts
- Clothing
- Handbags
- Coffee
- Chocolate
- Sugar
- Tea

Suggested questions to help students focus their research:

1. How does a product earn a fair trade designation?
2. Why was the fair trade designation created?
3. Who awards the fair trade designation?
4. What are the mission statements of the companies that you are researching? Is their mission statement reflected in how they act as a corporation?
5. What is the public opinion of the companies being researched? Do consumers believe the companies to be socially responsible?
6. Is the company helping to decrease poverty? If so, how? How is the company contributing to ending the cycle of poverty?
7. Is it a company's responsibility to worry about poverty in a country in which they are doing business? Why?
8. What is the company's position on labor laws?
9. How do these factors combine to impact girls and their families? What role do they play in a girl's ability to be in school?

As students learn more about fair trade products, revisit the K-W-P-L Chart, filling in the Learned column as the project develops.

Ideas for Encouraging All Learners

English Language Learners

- There are fair trade websites available in numerous languages; encourage students to bring their native language and background into their presentation.

Support Services

- Encourage students to present data in a format that is supportive of their skills.
- Encourage the use of graphs to compare data.
- Modify the lesson by encouraging students to focus on learning about fair trade.

Gifted and Talented Students

- Encourage students to continue to explore the economics behind fair trade initiatives and their impact on the environment versus traditional corporations. How does the environmental impact of companies affect the people living in that region, and consequently keep girls in or out of school?
- Ask students to research the long-term effects of fair trade on countries' ability to help more of their population live above the poverty line.

Final Project

There are many options for how students might share their research and discoveries. The goal of this lesson is to encourage students to begin thinking of themselves as consumers in a global marketplace, and to recognize that their purchase decisions impact the lives of others. Final project options may include a written report; recording a “news-style” video; conducting a mock interview; creating a newsletter, press release, or informational brochure; posting a blog or informational Facebook page; or creating a digital presentation.