

RESOURCE LIBRARY
ACTIVITY : 30 MINS

The Trading Game

Students simulate the trading of goods between countries. Then they reflect on the challenges of trade between countries.

GRADES

6 - 8

SUBJECTS

Geography, Human Geography, Social Studies, Economics

CONTENTS

1 PDF, 1 Link, 1 Video

OVERVIEW

Students simulate the trading of goods between countries. Then they reflect on the challenges of trade between countries.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/the-trading-game/>

Program

ILLICIT
THE DARK TRADE

DIRECTIONS

1. Divide the class into small groups and set up the game.

Tell students that they will participate in a hypothetical trading game. Divide the class into five groups and assign each group one of the following countries: United Kingdom, China,

Colombia, Saudi Arabia, and Ghana. List the following exports and their values on the board for reference during trading:

- Gold—5 points per unit
- Oil—4 points per unit
- Lumber—3 points per unit
- Electronics—2 points per unit
- Coffee—1 point per unit

Provide each group with a random set of approximately ten trading cards from the handout.

2. Introduce the objectives of the game.

Tell students that the objective is for each student to get the most points by trading their country's goods for products from another country. Each team will start with a set of trading cards that represents their country's worth. The game allows for "free trade," meaning any country can trade with another country, and any item and/or amount of product can be traded for another. Explain to students that they can creatively market their products or combine products to end up with something more desirable.

3. Conduct the first round of trading.

Allow for ten minutes of open trading. Then announce the following:

- **WORLD SITUATION:** The world is running out of oil, making oil extremely rare and much more expensive.
- **OUTCOME:** The worth of oil increases by two points.

Update the point system on the board to reflect the increase in points per unit for oil.

4. Conduct the second round of trading.

Allow for two additional minutes to trade. Announce that trading time is over and have groups tally points.

5. Adjust the results to reflect a new situation.

Offer the following world situation and outcome to see how it impacts the final results:

- **WORLD SITUATION:** Ghana learns to make counterfeit electronics, making its electronics cheaper.
- **OUTCOME:** Ghana takes one electronic unit from each country.

Re-tally the points and figure out who got the most points.

6. Have students reflect on what they learned.

Discuss the following questions:

- *Did any countries end the game richer or poorer than they started? Which ones?*
- *What was it like to be a rich country? A poor country?*
- *Was it easy or difficult to trade? Why?*
- *Did any countries feel especially powerful or powerless?*
- *Which items were most popular? Which were least popular? Why?*

Extending the Learning

If possible, have students go to the Illicit website or watch the National Geographic film *Illicit: The Dark Trade*. An excerpt of the film is provided in this activity. Go to the [PBS](#) website to find out where you can get the full DVD.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Geography

- [Human Geography](#)

Social Studies

- Economics

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- simulate trade between countries
- adjust to new world situations as they arise
- reflect on what they learned about trade between countries

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Simulations and games

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Student Outcomes
 - Life and Career Skills
 - Flexibility and Adaptability
- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Applying
 - Understanding

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- Standard 11:

The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL CONTENT STANDARDS IN ECONOMICS

- Standard 2: Marginal Cost/Benefit:

Effective decision making requires comparing the additional costs of alternatives with the additional benefits. Most choices involve doing a little more or a little less of something: few choices are "all or nothing" decisions.

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Scissors

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Internet Access: Optional
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per classroom, Projector, Speakers
- Plug-Ins: Flash

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

GROUPING

- Large-group instruction

OTHER NOTES

Before starting this activity, create 5 different sets of 10 trading cards by printing out and cutting apart handouts.

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

Resources are unevenly distributed across the surface of the Earth, and no one country has all the resources it needs. Therefore, each country must trade with others, resulting in a world of global economic interdependence—an exchange between producers, who produce or manufacture goods, and consumers, who purchase or use the goods. Certain conditions encourage or discourage trade among countries.

Prior Knowledge

Recommended Prior Activities

- None

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
export	<i>verb</i>	to transport goods to another place for trade.
import	<i>verb</i>	to bring in a good or service from another area for trade.
interdependence	<i>noun</i>	people relying on each other for goods, services, and ideas.
trade	<i>noun</i>	buying, selling, or exchanging of goods and services.

FUNDER



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