

5C – Why Countries Trade

MCCC SS060605

6th Grade Social Studies Network – 2015-6
Part C of Unit 5 – Economic Geography

GLCEs: 6G133 connections between places; 6G421 ways of moving people, goods, ideas; 6E311 imports and exports (note – this is listed as an economics standard, but it is fundamentally geographic!)

Premise: People trade in order to get things they cannot (or choose not to) produce for themselves.

- 1. Review Activity:** What is a BIGJob? A BIGJob (a Basic Income-Generating Job, also called economic base or basic activity or basic industry) is anything that people can grow, make, or otherwise produce in one place and sell to people in other places. To participate in the world trading economy, people must identify at least one BIGJob that is profitable in the place where they live.
6th 4Bx What Is a BIGJob
6th 5Bx Farm Production as a BIGJob – Matching BIGJobs and places
6th 4Bx What is a BIGJob presentation
- 2. Activity:** Oil trade – production, consumption, export, and import data for the world’s #1 commodity
6th 5C Oil in the World activity and Teacher Notes
6th 5Ct World Oil Production and Trade (activity and TN)
6th 5Cx Oil Drilling Math activity
- 3. Activity:** Import-export diagrams – looking at a country’s balance of trade
6th 5C Import Export Diagrams activity
<http://mentalfloss.com/article/56754/every-countrys-highest-valued-export>
- 4. Scaffolding Activity:** Where does my phone (backpack, shirt, shoes, etc.) come from?
Check the labels, and put a note or other symbol on a world map. Discuss the pattern.
For a math extension, calculate totals and percentages from each continent for the class as a whole, or for specific subgroups (e.g. boys/girls, discount stores/mall stores, clothing/other things).
- 5. Extension Activities:** What can we learn from an ancient shipwreck? What is in this container?
The cargo of an ancient trading ship is a great “peek” at the wealth and BIGJobs in different parts of the world at the time. A modern equivalent is a container ship of goods going from one continent to another. Another approach is to read excerpts from the diary of a Silk Road trader. We will provide data forms and response sheets that approach this important topic from several perspectives.
6th 5Cz Shipwreck Cargo Belitung 830CE
6th 5Ct Comparing Modes of Transportation
6th 5Cz Container Ships and Cargoes
6th 5Cp GeoPhotography - Transportation

Pages from MCCC

SuppMaterials.SS060605 has a good organizer, big-idea page, and useful word cards. The basic trade data activity on pages 10 and 11 is good for general background (and a Common Core math lesson).

The Levis Jeans activity can also be used in conjunction with the Scaffolding Activity above.

SS060605.Powerpoint has projectable versions of many of the images and worksheets in the supplement above – these do not focus on a single story, and therefore the presentation can be broken apart, and individual images used in other presentations. The world cartogram maps are visually striking, but remember that they rely greatly on the reader having an accurate mental map of the world as it is!

If your students do not have an accurate map yet, they will not learn much from these cartograms, unless you take the time to translate the image into verbal statements about specific regions or countries.

Takehome: People trade in order to get things they cannot (or choose not to) produce for themselves. Trade policy is a complicated issue, with economic, political, military, and ethical considerations. As with job creation, there is no shortage of simplistic “sound-bite” solutions to trade issues.