

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

K-12 Education

The Trading Game

Adapted by

Susan Anderson

K-12 Education Specialist - Life & Natural Science

Objective: To help students understand the basic principles of barter/trade, and the interdependence of nations based on imports and exports.

Introduction: Begin by having the students share some trading experience they may have had such as Pokemon cards, baseball cards, jewelry, etc. Discuss with the children some of the items they may have eaten or used that came from other countries such as bananas or chocolate. Talk about exports and imports and how they affect our interdependence with other nations. Explain that they will participate in an activity that will help them understand how important this trading is to our nation and other nations.

Input and Procedure: Divide the class into equal size groups; 4-6 students per group. Each group will choose an agriculturally based name. (Examples; “Nutorious,” “Pumpkin Patch,” or “Applerabia.”) Hand out one prepared bag to each participant.

Round One - No Trade

Each participant may look at the object in his/her bag but **MUST** not disclose his/her object’s identity with other countrymen. Each participant must then decide on a scale of 1-10 (one being least and ten being most) how much satisfaction he/she feels about his/her bagged item. Each group member shares that number with his/her countrymen. The group adds up these “satisfaction numbers” and arrives at a total “uttles” for its country. Record this “degree of satisfaction/uttles” number on the chart under **Round One**.

Round Two - Local Trade (Closed Trade)

The participants within each group may share their bagged items’ identities with each other. They can choose to trade with someone in their country but do not have to exchange. **One exchange or trade only!** Each participant again determines his/her degree of satisfaction for his/her item. That number is shared with the group to arrive at a group total of “uttles.” Record the country’s new “uttles” on the chart under **Round Two**.

Round Three - Open Trading Session (World Wide)

Now each country’s citizens may trade with anyone in the class. No trade barriers are in place. Each participant may trade **once or not at all**, as he/she desires. After the trade session ends, regroup into countries. Once again, each participant determines the degree of satisfaction he/she feels with his/her item. These numbers are totaled for the countries “uttles.” Post “uttles” under **Round Three** on the chart.

TRADING GAME SCORE CARD

“Uttles” = Degree of Satisfaction

| Country Name | Round One | Round Two | Round Three |
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CLOSURE:

Use the following questions to bring some closure to this activity;

Discussion Questions

1. What happened to the “uttles” (degree of satisfaction) in each round?
2. What are the benefits of trading locally and worldwide?
3. What are some barriers to trade?
4. What are some items in our community that are exported to other nations?
5. What are some items that we use everyday that are imported from other nations?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

- To give students an even more extensive understanding of exports and imports play the Trader’s Game. Through this activity they will experience a more in depth understanding of the negotiations and problem solving skills needed to accommodate trading with other countries.
- Use this activity to begin some in depth investigations into commodities from our region that are exported to other countries. Find resources through MN Ag in the Classroom, the ag websites, extension educators, commodity groups, and local producers to name a few. This provides students with some authentic map skills as they begin to locate countries that are part of our global interdependence.
- Make a food item such as cookies if you have access to kitchen facilities, or bring a variety of food items into the classroom. Have the students make lists of the ingredients and investigate where that particular ingredient may have come from.

- Look at the ingredients that go into the cookies, and talk about or research where the various ingredients came from.
- How did trading and exporting agricultural products help with the development of our country? What are some items that the early settlers might have bartered and traded?
 - What would it look like if we only had the products that are produced in our community? How would that change what we have to eat? What types of food would no longer be available to us?
 - What would happen if we did not have any commodities to export? How would that affect the economy of our country?
 - Agriculture helps us maintain a positive balance of trade. What does that mean? Why is that important to our economy?
 - Contact Farm Bureau and get the Farm Facts booklet to help investigate agriculture's importance to our nations imports and exports.
 - There is no other sector of the U. S. economy where the link between trade and prosperity is clearer than in agriculture. Much of the economic success of the entire agricultural sector depends on international trade. (For example, one of every five rows of corn grown in the United States goes overseas.) Many times when we disagree with the political views of a nation, our government has chosen to impose sanctions on that country. This often includes refusing to trade commodities that that country has counted on receiving from us in the past. This forces that country to look for other suppliers of that commodity, causes hardships for the citizens of that country, and affects available markets for U.S. agricultural products. This is an area that could be investigated through research in a social studies class. Various people in the community would certainly have various viewpoints on this issue.
 - Japan is our leading customer for agricultural exports. Why do you think Japan relies on American agriculture so heavily? (Size of the country, need for our products to accommodate their cultural dietary needs, their population in relation to land mass and agricultural land, etc.) Look at some of our other important customers. Can you discover reasons why they need our agricultural products?
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