

Cocoa and chocolate in British and world history

Introduction

This series of activities and resources explores the global history of cocoa and chocolate. It draws out the role of Britain and its empire in this process while showing that there is a wider context that needs to be understood – trade as a global process in which Britain plays a role. The work spans the core National Curriculum history study units: 'ideas, political power, industry and empire: Britain, 1745–1901'; and 'challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world: 1901 to the present day'. The activities will enable students specifically to 'make connections' and understand 'continuity and change', while making wider links with other National Curriculum aims.

Why cocoa?

Beyond the broad appeal of chocolate, its place as an 'everyday' item in society and assumptions about its production can be challenged in a fruitful way that should inspire pupils' curiosity, while enabling them to make links with current debates about trade and fair trade, perhaps in geography.

Activities

- 1 Show students the [Cocoa through History webpage](#) or YouTube [video](#) (depending on your preference), which depicts the historical development and global movement of cocoa. Before students add a legend to the timeline (Activity 2), you could ask them about where they think cocoa comes from, how long we have had chocolate bars, etc.

If you choose to show students the video it misses out an interactive slide that contains the opportunity for a case study. The details of that slide are:

Case study: cocoa in West Africa. Cocoa cultivation was introduced to the British colonies in West Africa in the 1870s. After five years, the cocoa plants were ready to harvest. Within a few decades, the Gold Coast (now Ghana) became the leading world producer of cocoa. Cocoa was also cultivated in Nigeria, which was also a British colony.

- You could use one or more videos or other resources from the links (see the next section below) to investigate contemporary cocoa production in West Africa, perhaps comparing with production in the colonial period, for example:

How is the cocoa processed and taken from the farm to the port? What happens to the cocoa after it leaves the port and in the UK? What changes are noticeable between historic and contemporary sources?

- 2 Students **complete a timeline** showing the movement and development of cocoa and chocolate throughout the world and in Britain – ask them to read and discuss the timeline before completing. They can use an [interactive web version](#), moving boxes to complete gaps in the timeline; alternatively (or in addition) print out copies from the PDF – in this version students study the timeline and complete a key to link events with major historical processes such as decolonisation.

- 3 Students then **play dominoes** with the timeline – a task designed to expand on these events (see below). You could either cut the boxes up into pairs with one grey and one white box together, or cut all the boxes individually and ask students to complete the chain.
- 4 After this task there is the option to revisit students' responses to the initial questions about the origin and history of chocolate, for example:
 - Are they surprised by the historical process that has turned cocoa into a readily available product in our shops?
 - How long have people consumed cocoa? How long has it been in Europe? How long has it been available to most people in the UK?
 - Why is most cocoa grown in one part of the world and processed in another?
- 5 **Source-based exercise.** With their knowledge of cocoa production, students can interrogate these posters advertising chocolate and cocoa. This exercise creates the environment for a fruitful discussion about the role of the British Empire in cocoa production, representations of the world and the role of what has been described as 'peacetime propaganda'. You could ask students to:
 - examine the poster for the Dutch chocolate company De Jong's (Poster 1). What is going on in the picture? Where does the scene take place? The picture depicts a famous expedition, ask students if they have heard the story of Sir Henry Morton Stanley and Dr Livingstone. If they have not, you could encourage them to do some research on it. Does this advertisement make them want to buy De Jong's chocolate? Why would it make people want to buy chocolate?
 - look at the advertisement for 'Empire Cocoa' (Poster 2). From what they have learnt about cocoa production, ask students: what they think about the places that are included on the poster, and why the places that grew cocoa are not on the poster, what the significance of the phrase at the top of the poster is, and would this poster make them want to buy 'Empire Chocolate'.
 - study the posters from the 'Empire Marketing Board' (Posters 3 and 4). What do the posters depict? How are they different from the 'Empire Cocoa' and 'De Jong's' posters? Why do you think the posters are different? Research the 'Empire Marketing Board'. What was its purpose?
- 6 Additional tasks. You might:
 - ask students to design a poster or graphic that reflects the history of cocoa, its origins and the processes that have shaped its development as a global commodity; for example uk.pinterest.com has a large collection of cocoa images
 - extend the investigation by linking with work in geography or citizenship about contemporary globalisation, free trade and fair trade to explore ideas about change and continuity, and pupils' current and future roles as members of a global society

- invite pupils to research the global history and geography of other agricultural resources such as coffee, tea, rubber and sugar, or of minerals such as diamonds or coltan, to explore the impact that their production has on the economy and environment.

Links

Cocoa in West Africa, to support Activity 1 or 6:

- **Pathe news clip:** short 1949 news film about cocoa transport and export in Nigeria, and the role of co-operative groups. <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/nigerian-cocoa-aka-nigerian-cocoa-trade>
- **Pa pa paa (Comic Relief):** resources to teach about Fairtrade and chocolate, including a film and photo sequence explaining the cocoa journey from bean to bar, and webcasts made by the children of cocoa farmers. A school subscription is needed to access some resources. <http://www.papapaa.org>
- **How did trade get global?, Royal Geographical Society:** a lesson exploring how and why trade has become global through time, and the principles of fair trade. <http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/Schools/Teaching+resources/Key+Stage+1-2+resources/Global+trade/How+did+trade+get+global.htm>
- **The Chocolate Trade Game, Christian Aid:** activities that investigate the cocoa bean's journey from tree to chocolate bar, the difficulties workers in the chocolate trade face and the positive part that trade can play. <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/schools/chocolate-trade-game>

The Empire Marketing Board, to support Activity 5:

- <http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/production-company/empire-marketing-board>
- <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/513720/>
- <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/history/world-history/selling-empire-the-empire-marketing-board>

The Global Learning Programme, to support Activity 6:

- Comprehensive resource guide on trade and fair trade produced for Fairtrade Fortnight. <http://glp.globaldimension.org.uk/glp/page/11178>. If you aren't registered yet, [sign up here](#) for free.
- GLP transitions projects from schools working with the Geographical Association, a number of which focus on globalisation and fair trade. <https://www.geography.org.uk/Case-studies>

Glossary

Colonisation	When a powerful country gains control over another country, settles people there and uses its resources.
Colony	A country controlled by another (the colonial power), and settled by people from that country.
Decolonisation	The change that happens when a country becomes independent from the colonial power, so is no longer a colony.
Globalisation	The process by which the world is becoming increasingly interconnected through trade, technology and cultural exchanges.
Industrialisation	The widespread development of industry in a country.
Innovation	How ideas or inventions are turned into new goods or services.
Plantation	A large farm, often in the tropics, where a crop such as cocoa, bananas, etc. is grown for export to other countries.

Cocoa history dominoes exercise

To complete the chain, pair each question (grey boxes) with its solution (white boxes).

START	Where was chocolate first grown and consumed?	In Central America, by the Olmec, Mayan, and Aztec civilisations	What happened in the late 1400s and early 1900s?
Europeans landed in Central America. At first they didn't notice cocoa until Hernan Cortes drank it.	What did Hernan Cortes do in Central America?	He conquered the Aztec civilisation and colonised Central America. Within a few years, cocoa began to be exported to Spain.	Who drank cocoa after it was first brought to Spain?
Upper classes and the Royal Family The Spanish set up plantations in Central America to grow cocoa.	Where was cocoa exported to next?	Other European countries, including: Britain; France and Italy	In Europe cocoa was becoming more popular. What did this popularity cause?
People developed new techniques for making cocoa and chocolate.	In 1790 a cocoa factory was opened in Barcelona in Spain. What is the process called?	Industrialisation	The new factories needed more cocoa, so what happened to the cocoa production?
More production led to cocoa planting being introduced to different parts of the world.	At the end of the 19th century, what was happening in Africa?	European powers were competing for control of different parts of Africa.	What was this process called?
The Scramble for Africa	What is the process of gaining control over other countries called?	Colonialism	Where in the British Empire did colonialism lead to cocoa being grown?
In West Africa, in countries such as Ghana and Nigeria. Cocoa was shipped from Ghana to the Cadbury factory in Birmingham.	What is the process of goods moving and around the world called?	Globalisation Cocoa was grown and then transported to Europe to be processed before being sold.	Prices for cocoa can rise and fall. In the 1930s, what did the colonial government in Ghana establish to try to control them?
The Cocoa Marketing Board	After the Second World War places like Ghana became independent. What was this process called?	Decolonisation	After its independence Ghana still grows cocoa, but where is it turned into chocolate?
Mainly in Western countries such as the USA and the UK	END		

Acknowledgements and sources

GLP © Crown Copyright and the Development Education Centre South Yorkshire (DECSY). Cocoa activity by Thomas Jackson. All rights reserved. All images used under creative commons or free use access (see below for details). All images are owned by their respective copyright holders.

Sources for images on the timeline and movie:

Files on Cocoa Timeline:

Unknown author [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AFotg_cocoa_d088_baskets_of_cocoa_on_plantain_leaves.png

Wenceslaus Hollar [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c7/Wenceslas_Hollar_-_A_Flute_%28State_2%29.jpg

By No machine-readable author provided. Yaddah assumed (based on copyright claims). [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/45/Flag_of_the_Gold_Coast.svg

Files on Cocoa Hype movie and site:

By Ktrinko (Own work) [CC0], via Wikimedia Commons:

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3d/Eckert4.jpg>

By Aztec, 1440–1521 (Brooklyn Museum) [No restrictions], via Wikimedia Commons:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/37/Aztec_Man_Carrying_a_Cacao_Pod%2C_1440-1521.jpg

By Anonymous [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/ff/Mujer_vertiendo_chocolate_-_Codex_Tudela.jpg

By User: Aka (File: Chocolate.jpg) [CC BY–SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons:

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9f/Chocolate%28bgFFF%29.jpg>

By No machine-readable author provided. Yaddah assumed (based on copyright claims). [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/45/Flag_of_the_Gold_Coast.svg

[Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_Nigeria.svg

By Benchill [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/42/Flag_of_British_Colonial_Nigeria.svg

[Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_Ghana.svg

Source-based exercise

The images downloaded as part of the source exercise are downloaded for that purpose only and cannot be re-used in any other form. Reproduced with kind permission of the National Archives <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>