



UNIT 1: OUR CHOICES MATTER

CLASS 3a

Problems with our Food System: Hunger

Adapted from Finding Solutions to Hunger: Kids Can Make a Difference by Stephanie Kempf

MATERIALS NEEDED

Today's newspaper and one of these videos:

"Hunger in a World of Plenty," Oxfam,
1-800-597-FAST,
www.oxfamamerica.org

"Famine and Chronic Persistent Hunger: A Life and Death Distinction," The Hunger Project, 212-251-9100,
www.thp.org/deved/main.htm

"Missing Out," "Fistful of Rice," or "For a Few Pennies More," UNICEF,
212-986-2020,
www.unicef.org/videoaudio

CLASSROOM NARRATIVE

WARM-UP: How do you think the world would react if 30,000 children died today in some sort of disaster? What would we see on TV or in the newspapers? And what might people do to help?

VIDEO: Show one of the suggested videos.

DIALOGUE: How did the images in the video make you feel? Did anything in the video surprise you? What are the most important things you learned? What are your reactions to this enormous problem?

If 30,000 children die every day from causes related to hunger, how many children die every minute? (Hold one minute of silence to reflect on that.) How many classes the size of ours equal 30,000 children? How many of our schools?

Are most people aware that so many children die every day from hunger? Page through the day's newspaper looking for the headline and article that let the world know that 30,000 children died of hunger today. Why isn't this front-page news every day?

ASSIGNMENT: The first step in helping end hunger is talking about hunger. Educate your community by writing letters to newspaper editors and local government officials about the hunger problem.

NAME:

DATE:

Hunger

WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Be brief. Write short, clear, sentences in two to three paragraphs. Be inspiring or witty. Try to think of unique arguments or solutions to a problem. Follow the guidelines provided by the publication.

1. Begin with the date at the top and "Dear Editor,"
2. In the first paragraph, make your point. Describe specifically what you are asking people to do.
3. If you are referring to another article or letter to the editor, list its headline and the date it was published.
4. End with your first and last name, address, phone number, and e-mail address.
5. Always proofread for errors.
6. Type your letter and sign it before sending.

Every day, 30,000 children die from hunger, but most people aren't aware of this. In 2000, 858 million people had too little food to eat. In 2000, there were 6 billion people who lived in the world, so 14 out of every 100 people in the world in 2000 did not have enough food to eat.

The first step in helping to end hunger is talking about it. Educate your community by writing a letter to your local newspaper editors about what you've learned about the hunger problem. Use this handout to help you format your letter.

Date:

Dear Editor,

Sincerely,

Contact Information:



UNIT 1: OUR CHOICES MATTER

CLASS 3b

Problems with our Food System: Child Laborers

Please Note: Due to references to child slavery and trafficking, this lesson is recommended for older students.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Several copies of today's newspaper

CLASSROOM NARRATIVE

WARM-UP: Do you think slavery still exists in the world today. More than 200 million children are child laborers, and many of them are trapped as child slaves.

These children are between the ages 5 and 14. They are forced to work. They were taken away from their families and are living in a new, strange place. Initially the children were told they would be paid and be able to return to visit their families, but they are often not paid or allowed to leave the farms where they work. They are forced to awaken before sunrise and work long days under the hot sun. If the children stop to take a rest they get yelled at or beaten. The children work on cocoa farms and other forms of agriculture. The place where the children sleep is crowded and uncomfortable, but they are tired so they sleep despite the filth and start again the next day before the sun rises.

DIALOGUE: Can you imagine working under these conditions? Are you surprised to learn that child slave labor is used to produce chocolate? Why do you think most people do not know about child labor? Why is it not front page news?

ACTIVITY: The first step in helping end child slave labor is talking about the issue so that more people will become aware of this tremendous problem. Educate your community by writing letters to newspaper editors and local government officials about the problem of child slave labor.

BACKGROUND

Students learn how widespread the problem of child slave labor is in the production of chocolate and discover that one of the reasons it persists is lack of public awareness and media attention. Today, more than 200 million children are child laborers, and 70 percent of them work in agriculture. Of these, 8.4 million are trapped in slavery, debt peonage, prostitution, and other illicit activities. And 1.2 million of these children have been trafficked.

Ivory Coast, as the world's largest cocoa producer, accounts for more than 40% of the world's supply, producing 1.32 million tons in the business year 2002-03. The majority of its cocoa is imported into the U.S. and Europe by multinational companies such as Cargill, Nestle, and Archer Daniels Midland, and processed into chocolate and other cocoa products retailed by well-known firms such as Hershey's and M&M/Mars.

The State Department's Human Rights Report on Ivory Coast for 2001 estimated there were 15,000 child laborers between the ages of nine and 12 who had been sold into forced labor to coffee, cocoa, and cotton farms.

In 2000 and 2001, media reports exposed child trafficking and enslavement on cocoa farms in Ivory Coast. To avoid legislative action, large chocolate industry companies negotiated for an agreement allowing them to create a voluntary “Cocoa Protocol in September 2001, with the goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labor by 2005.” However, they failed to meet the goals of the protocol, and to date have made little, if any, progress.

Equal Exchange and several other Fair Trade cocoa buyers buy 100% Fair Trade certified cocoa. Equal Exchange partners with farmer cooperatives in the Dominican Republic and Peru, outside of areas tainted with child slave labor accusations. Fair Trade works to ensure that no child slavery was used to produce the cocoa, and that the adult workers were paid a fair price.

References:

International Labor Organization, www.ilo.org, 2005

International Labor Rights Fund, www.laborrights.org, 2005

