



Tea Industry

The Journey from the plantations in Sri Lanka to the cup in England
A TWINS PROJECT PLAN

General Overview

This advanced-level TWINS project aims to go beyond general cultural exchange by exploring and analysing an industry and product that is important to both cultures. Analysing the interdependent nature of this industry will enable students to develop critical thinking skills by analysing their values, understand the global context of their lives and to explore an industry closely linked to both countries.

Key Areas Covered

This project can span across many school subjects as well as providing students the opportunity to explore various global dimension themes:

- Local Industry
- Interdependence
- Workers Rights
- Exporting and Importing
- National Identity
- Environment
- Fair Trade
- Sustainability
- Interdependence

Method

- The TWINS Coordinators of both schools agree to share this project and set a deadline for its completion
- The teachers agree on the focus of this project and the level of critical analysis before sharing a list of questions that students must research. This project may need to be adapted to suit both levels of students (i.e. more critical thinking and analysis may be done from the UK based school).
- Students work as a class or in small groups to research the project
- Once the relevant questions have been researched by students (using internet, library, visits to factories or estates...) a class is held to analyse and discuss the findings – focusing on the interdependence between England and Sri Lanka
- Based on the outcomes of these discussions, students prepare a project that shows the journey of tea production, from the tea plantations in Sri Lanka to the cup in England.
- Once completed the projects are exchanged and then further analysed and compared

The Final Product

On completion, this project can include:

- Illustrations, photos or magazine cut outs of the different aspects of the tea industry
- Findings and photographs from a field trip to a tea factory or plantation (suitable for Sri Lankan students)
- A description of different teas that are available for sale
- Step by step instructions of the process the tea leaf goes through from being planted, picked and then ready for consumption
- Information about the significance of tea (culturally, traditionally, professionally, economically, environmentally, politically, health wise, etc.)
- Information on its significance in every day life (how many cups are consumed, how tea is prepared, when it is consumed, what it is consumed with, where its stored, where its bought, etc)
- An analysis and reflection which can focus on the following areas: interdependence, workers rights, exporting, national identity, environment, fair trade, sustainability

Critical Thinking

Student's critical reflection could include:

- What is the interdependent relationship that exists with this industry?
- What impact does this industry have on the environment?
- How does this industry influence the economy?
- Does tea have a role in politics?
- What are the advantages and limitations to workers? (workers rights etc)
- What are the rules and regulations of the industry and what role do they play?
- What is the importance of fair trade? Define "ethical" tea. How can 'ethical' tea impact on the environment, sustainability, local communities, etc?
- What might influence the price of tea, the wage of local tea workers and the local economy?
- Is this industry sustainable? How does it affect communities?
- What are the new trends in tea? (for example: Bubble teas, RTD or bottled tea, Premium loose-leaf teas, higher-quality tea bags, functional teas, Organic and fair trade, Silky Nylon Bags, Artisan Teas). What is available and desired by consumers in England?
- How can the industry source its tea supply in a sustainable manner? (i.e. Certification of tea estates? What would such a certification have to involve?)
- What are the current challenges faced by the industry? (human rights, environmental changes, rising production costs, skilled worker deficits, global markets, etc)
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of Associations, community based organization, cooperatives, etc.