

Trade Away!

Recommended Citation

"Trade Away!", pegasus, January 01, 1997, <https://nautilus.org/pegasus/trade-away/>

Welcome

Teacher Orientation : Activity Guides

Expedition 4: Trade Away!

Students analyze the top imports and exports between the United States and Japan and draw conclusions about the relationship of specific products to job opportunities and wages.

Rationale

In today's global economy, every country engages in the import and export of goods and services. When we analyze the products making up our imports and exports, we develop an understanding of the flow of resources and technology across borders and around the world. Every country offers unique raw materials, industries and workforces that now compete on a global stage. In this activity, students investigate the top imports and exports in our trade relationship with Japan and hypothesize about the implications for jobs and wages.

Materials

- ["Trade Away!" worksheet](#)

Procedure

1. To begin the activity, give students 1-2 minutes to quickly inventory their clothing and personal belongings to determine what items were manufactured in other countries. Generate a class list of items and facilitate a discussion.

- Which countries or regions of the world are most represented? Why?
- Why do nations engage in international trade? How do you, the customer, benefit?
- What is the implication for our own economy when we import products? When we export products?

2. Divide the class into small groups of 2 to 4 students. Provide adequate time for the groups to access Virtual Expeditions and complete the worksheet. If necessary, ask the groups key questions to support their research process.

3. Debrief the activity by facilitating a class discussion.

- What did you learn about the types of products exported to Japan and imported from Japan? What was surprising to you? Why?
- What products appear to require the most skilled labor to produce? What are the implications for our job market?
- Based on the products listed, what economy (US or Japan) do you think is better positioned for future growth? Why?
- How does Japan benefit from trade with the US? How does the US benefit from its trade with Japan?
- If the economy of Japan enters a recession, what might be the effect on the US economy? Why?

Extensions

- *Import/Export Business.* Choose a product or service to import into the community or export from the community. Why did you choose this product or service? What need is it fulfilling? Develop a plan for starting your import/export business.
- *Economic Plan.* You're part of a task force organized by the President of the United States to offer recommendations on the future direction of our economy. Pick three industries that you think should receive tax breaks and other economic incentives. Why did you select these industries? How will the nation, and individual workers, benefit?
- *What's the Deal?* Invite a local business person whose job involves making international trade arrangements to be a guest speaker.
- *Global Economy.* Reflect on the question "What does it mean to live in a global economy?" and write an editorial.

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