



ACTIVITY: MAKING ETHICAL CONSUMER CHOICES

SUITABLE FOR: 11 - 14 YEAR OLDS

TIME: AROUND 45 MINUTES

AIMS FOR STUDENTS

- Understand common emotions around money
- Understand some aspects of ethical consumerism
- Demonstrate ways in which they can support global communities through the choices they make
- Appreciate that their own spending and saving choices may make a difference to other people as well as themselves

RESOURCES

- Paper and pen
- Map of the world (if you have one)
- Access to the internet (smart phone or tablet) as online research will aid this project

RUNNING THE ACTIVITY

As a warm up activity, get the students thinking about money and what it means to them.

Ask them to think about how money makes you feel and write a few statements on a sheet of paper. You could share situations when money could make them happy or sad, e.g. 'I feel great when I've got some money to spend on myself', 'I feel annoyed when I see clothes I want to buy but I don't have any money'. Reflect on the situations and emotions and ask them to make a note of some of the words they come up with— happy, sad, annoyed, frustrated, jealous. Is this the same for everyone? Or is this different? We'll come back to this later in the activity.

Now discuss what you would do if they found some money – there is no right or wrong here but it's designed to elicit a moral discussion. Discussion could include things like where, how and how much – does this impact their choice? Also, what if it was them that had lost the money, how would they feel then?

Now ask the students to imagine that they have £50 each – apart from just spending it, what else could they do with it? Encourage the students to suggest the following ideas; spend, save, gamble and invest.

Asking the students to think about the spending option specifically, ask them to think about how our spending can make a difference to other people. Use the map of the world (if you have one, or use the internet) to reflect on global manufacturing.



You may need to prompt a little (or ask your students to go and do their own research) but some things you could think about include:

- Where do the goods we buy come from - where are they manufactured, grown or produced? What country?
- Why are wages so low in some parts of the world? Get them to think about countries which have a high level of manufacturing, do they know where these are?
- Fair Trade and business responsibility – check some of your store cupboards, how much is Fair Trade (things like coffee, chocolate and tea will often feature this standard)? Is it up to a business or a consumer to be ethical?
- Would you refuse or avoid to buy some products/brands because of where or how they are manufactured?

Encourage the students to look at some of the items they may have bought recently (things like clothes or electronics are a good example) – where were they made, what is the manufacturing cost (look up the average wage online for some guidance on this), how can they be more responsible in their choices?

Things to consider include:

- Buying locally
- Recycling or repurposing items
- Choosing ethical manufacturers and brands

Revisit the emotions discussed earlier, is there anything they would change or anything new they would add in? How do they feel about some of their purchases now? What can they do going forward to be more ethically-aware?