

## **Cacao in Ghana**

*Lesson plan written by Erica Luetzow-Coward*

Keywords: Chocolate, Ghana, Cacao, Côte d'Ivoire, Cocoa production

**Overview** In this lesson, students will learn about an important crop in Ghana, cacao, and how it grows. In addition, students will be able to identify the economic, historical, and cultural importance of cacao in Ghana through images and a story.

### **Essential Questions**

- How can a plant migrate? How can a plant be important to a culture?
- How can agriculture affect history, economics, culture, social justice and vice versa?

**Intended Grade Level** 3rd-5th

**Intended Content Areas** Social Studies

### **Standard Alignment with NC Standards**

#### **Social Studies-**

- 3.E.1.1 Explain how entrepreneurship develops local communities.*
- 3.E.1.2 Explain how the natural resources of a region impact the production and consumption of goods in local communities.*
- 3.G.1.3 Explain how movement of goods, people, and ideas is impacted by the geography of a place or region.*
- 5.E.1.2 Compare economic decisions in terms of benefits and consequences.*
- 5.H.1.6 Explain the significance of national symbols and traditions from various perspectives.*
- 1.1.7 Construct claims in response to compelling and supporting questions.*
- 1.1.8 Accurately use information from sources when making claims.*
- 1.1.9 Make inferences from information in sources.*

#### **Science-**

- 3.L.2.2 Explain how environmental conditions determine how well plants survive and grow.*
- 3.L.2.3 Summarize the distinct stages of the life cycle of seed plants.*

#### **ELA-**

- RI.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.*

*RI.3.2 Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.*

*RI.3.3 Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.*

*W.3.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.*

*RI.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.*

*RI.4.3 Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.*

*W.4.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.*

*RI.5.2 Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.*

*RI.5.3 Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.*

*W.5.2 Write informative /explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.*

## **Materials**

- [Resource Slides for Classroom Use](#)
- [“History of Chocolate”](#)--Ted Ed Talk to give teacher context
- [Chocolate bar template](#)
- Paper, crayons

**Suggested Length of Time** 60 minutes

## **Procedures**

- Note: the term “cacao” often refers to the tree and fruit and “cocoa” to the products made from the cacao fruit. At times, these terms may be used interchangeably in this lesson.
- Introduce the lesson with the maps/images on the first two resource slides without mentioning chocolate or cacao to build interest.
- Tell students a little about the history of cacao:
  - The cacao tree is native to the Amazon rainforest. Europeans first experienced chocolate in Mesoamerica and brought the cacao plant back to Europe. Later, cacao trees were cultivated in parts of Africa and Asia.

- Cacao trees like constant warm temperatures, high humidity, and lots of rainfall. Because of this, they grow best near the equator.
  - 70% of the world's cocoa is produced in West Africa with Côte d'Ivoire producing the most followed by Ghana.
- Cacao has traditionally been important in Ghana as evidenced by the common saying, "Ghana is cocoa...cocoa is Ghana."
  - While cacao is vital to Ghana's economy, its importance can also be seen in culture with a hotel in Kumasi being called the Golden Bean (nickname for cacao) and incorporating cacao in its design/decor.
  - Tetteh Quarshie (1842-1892) was a Ghanaian blacksmith who is credited with having brought cocoa beans to Ghana. In 1870, Tetteh Quarshie went to the Spanish colony Fernando Po (now in Equatorial Guinea), and when he returned six years later, he hid several cocoa beans in his toolbox and planted them in Ghana.
- Describe how cacao has traditionally been cultivated:
  - Planted within the shade of banana/cassava to protect it from the sun. The banana/cassava can be harvested before the cacao tree is mature.
  - The yellow cacao pod is cut down.
  - Next, you split open the pod to scoop out the beans
  - After, you ferment and dry the beans carefully to avoid any rot.
  - Now, investigate products made from cacao with the infographic embedded in the resource slides.
- Child/slave labor is an important issue within the cacao industry. While some children might help out on family farms, many are exploited and paid very little or work in dangerous circumstances. Products marked with "fair trade" indicate that the chocolate was harvested without child or slave labor and that the farmer was paid a fair wage.
- Read Grandpa Cacao by Elizabeth Zunon or [watch this read aloud](#). Point out that the grandpa in the story is from Cote d'Ivoire, a West African country that borders Ghana to the west and much of the cocoa production is similar to what occurs in Ghana.
- The vast majority of Ghanaian cocoa is exported and still benefits large European companies. Some Ghanaian companies are beginning to make Ghanaian chocolate bars from Ghanaian cocoa. Why is this an important distinction worth making?
- '57 Chocolate in Accra makes [a series of chocolate bars with famous Black History figures on the wrappers](#).
  - Your mission: create the newest chocolate bar in their line in someone's honor. Consider giving students [this template](#) to use for their designs or allow them to draw their own.

- Students create the wrapper, flavor, symbol alluding to the person they are honoring and what the informational text on the back says about their person. Consider having students add an adinkra symbol too. Students can also add details such as nutritional information, ingredients, weight of product, etc.
- Teachers can set the parameters for this assignment: the famous person could be a character from a novel the students are reading, someone from local/state history, or the teacher could tie the chocolate wrapper into Latino Heritage Month/Black History Month/Women's History Month/Native American Heritage Month.
- Consider having students create a wrapper that can be put around a rectangular prism like a wooden block to create a "candy store." Students will have to measure their block to create a wrapper that will fit properly.

**Optional Extension Activities:**

- Students can research issues surrounding labor issues and the cacao industry and how governments, the cocoa industry, and the international community are responding.
- Host a "chocolate tasting event" with different percentages for chocolate, cacao powder etc or with chocolates from around the world.