

SCoPE Site Lesson Plan

Title: Lesson 9 – NAFTA and Trade with Canada (SS060409)

Abstract

The students begin this lesson with a discussion about trade between the United States and Canada. They learn about the North American Free Trade Agreement through research and discussion. This agreement was signed in 1994 between Canada, the United States, and Mexico to encourage trade among the three nations. An important part of the agreement is the lowering of tariffs on goods shipped from one country to another. The students analyze the preamble to the NAFTA agreement, and then work in small groups to explain each of its conditions. They prepare and present a skit that demonstrates some of the main points of NAFTA to their classmates. A final discussion about the pros and cons of such an agreement and trade in general concludes the lesson.

Subject Area: Social Studies

Grade Level and Course Title: Sixth Grade/The Western World

Unit of Study: Canada

Benchmarks

- Describe the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement or the open-border policy on businesses in Canada and the United States. (IV.2.MS.3)
- Describe the major economic and political connections between the United States and Canada and explain their causes and consequences. (II.3.MS.4)

Key Concept

economic interdependence

Instructional Resources

Equipment/Manipulative

Dictionaries and thesauri

Large wall map of the world and of Canada

Student Resource

A classroom set of world atlases, such as:

Atlas of World Geography. Chicago: Rand McNally, 2000; or

Hudson, J. and E. Espanshade, Eds. *Goodes World Atlas*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 2000; or

The Nystrom World Atlas. Chicago: Nystrom, 1999.

A copy of the preamble to NAFTA for each student. It can be downloaded from: World Wide School. *NAFTA Preamble*. 15 September 2005
<<http://www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/hst/northamerican/Nafta/chap1.html>>.

Johnson, Cecil. *Tomatoes aside, NAFTA is a peachy deal*. Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Service. 3 May 1999. 15 September 2005 <<http://web5.infotrac.galegroup.com/k12/infomark>>. (This Web site is restricted to registered users. The website requires that a "cookie be set on your computer to establish a link and use the information. It was a legitimate request and "cookies" are a means for computers to recognize each other and communicate. However, it is up to the computer user to make the decision regarding setting "cookies.")

Joseph, Joel D. *The haves and the have-nots: NAFTA makes the U.S. look more like Mexico*. Knight-Ridder/ Tribune News Service. 28 May 1999. 15 September 2005 <<http://web5.infotrac.galegroup.com/k12/infomark>>.

The World Book Almanac and Book of Facts 2004. Mahwah, New Jersey: World Almanac, 2003.

Teacher Resource

Canada, A Trading Nation. Twain Media, Inc./Carson-Dellosa Publishing, Co., Inc., 1993. 48-50.

Canada-United States Relations Web Site. *Trade and the Economy*. 13 Dec. 2004. 15 September 2005 <<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/can-am/menu-en.asp?mid=1&cat=2>>.

Sequence of Activities

1. To begin the lesson, ask students to speculate regarding which country is the largest trading partner with the United States. They may use almanacs, the Internet, and their textbooks as they ponder this question. Once they determine that it is Canada, discuss the amount of trade between the U.S. and Canada as a class. Students will discover that approximately \$1.2 billion in trade crosses the Canada-U.S. border every single day. The United States sells almost three times as many goods to Canada with 30 million people than to Japan with a population of over 125 million. The students continue to research the issue of trade and define the role of NAFTA.
2. Provide each student with a copy of the preamble to NAFTA using the resources listed in the Student Resource section. There are sixteen introductory statements or resolutions in this document. Assign the student a statement to interpret and rewrite. They may use a dictionary and thesaurus to help them determine the words and their meaning. This may be done individually or in teams depending on class size. Each statement is read in the order it appears in the preamble and then the interpretation is provided. Once all have been presented, the students summarize the purpose of the document in a whole class discussion. They continue to discuss how NAFTA promotes trade between the three member nations by gradually reducing tariffs and other trade barriers on products and services passing between the countries.

3. Divide students into small cooperative groups of four or five people. Instruct the groups to write and act out skits that demonstrate the main concepts of NAFTA. Some suggested roles that individuals might explore to study the impact of NAFTA include:
 - A wheat farmer in Saskatchewan and his family
 - A senator and her staff from Washington
 - An auto manufacturer in the Detroit
 - An auto parts manufacturer in Toronto
 - A newspaper editor and her staff in Traverse City

4. The lesson ends with a discussion of the pros and cons of free trade. Some ideas to explore with the students include:
 - How does import and export relate to supply and demand?
 - Should you only buy products from your own country? Why? Is this always possible?
 - Are there any countries from which you would not buy products? Which ones? Why?
 - Should the government control trade through taxes or other means?
 - How else can trade be regulated? What are the consequences?
 - Has NAFTA has any impact on local industries that have been reported in the newspaper or on local television?

Assessment

The students' final assessment in this lesson is the presentation of concepts about NAFTA through the skits that they write and present to their classmates. Following the skits, ask each student to write three main points (big ideas) that were presented in the skit that reflect NAFTA policies.

Application Beyond School

The students continue to read about trade within the United States and with other countries. They also look for other ways that taxes are imposed on them and their families. They discuss fees such as sales tax and income tax with their parents and friends and look at how these monies are spent.

Connections

English Language Arts

Dramatic writing skills learned in English Language Arts classes are used when writing the skits about NAFTA.

The students also use public speaking skills when presenting the skits to their classmates.