



Go Bananas- Banana Webs

Grade 1 & Up

Introduction

This is a great introductory activity where, by creating two webs tracing the path of two bananas from field to plate, kids will explore the differences between conventional and organic/fair trade bananas.

25 + min

8 or more

Goals

To examine where food comes from and the path that it takes from field to plate.
To explore what food choices we have.

Materials

- 2 large balls of yarn, preferably of different colours
- Actors card cut out from page 3
- Scissors

Run the Activity

1. Print out the activity (p.1-3). Cut out the actors/locations on page 3.
2. Gather the group into a circle and distribute the cut-out actor cards to students. Students must pay attention and remember which card(s) they hold.
3. Give the ball of yarn to the student who has the **small producer** card. The yarn will represent the starting point of the story.
4. Start the game (you may also want to time how long it takes)! Start reading the Conventional Banana script (p.2), shouting/emphasizing words that are bolded (actors). Every time a word is shouted, the person holding the yarn must toss it to someone else while holding onto their part of the yarn. This will create the web. The yarn can be tossed to someone more than once.
5. Debrief (see questions below). Repeat, distributing the Fair Trade Organic cards and reading the script.

Fair Trade Organic Banana Web Debrief

1. Take a look at this web. How different is it from the first one? Does it look more sustainable?
2. Let's recap. Measure the yarn used. Compare with what happened with the last web. How many times was the ball of yarn dropped? How many steps were there (8)? Did some steps repeat from the first web? How long was the banana journey (a few days)?
3. Did the farmer make more money?

Take Action

1. **Reduce your foodmiles and promote fair trade:**
 - Buy directly from farmers by shopping at farmers' markets
 - Buy fair trade products when you can, especially when buying luxury items (chocolate, coffee, etc.)
 - Ask your grocer to promote local products.
2. **Inspire others to take action:**
 - Share this activity with others.
 - Organize a film night - Check out our *Favorite Food Film List*: <http://usc-canada.org/resources/creative-campaigning/>

Debrief

Conventional Banana Web Debrief

1. Take a look at the entangled web of yarn. What does this say about our food system? Is it sustainable?
2. Let's recap what happened. Measure the yarn used. How many times was the ball of yarn dropped (poor banana)? How many steps were there (16)? Did some steps repeat (transportation)? How long was the banana journey (a few weeks)?
3. Who do you think makes the most money in this system? Who has the most power? Was anyone pulling on the web more than others?

Visual Resources

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqJlIWSXgyl>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZpUwCfINh8>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orDjyNBmkj4>
- **Cost of a Banana Diagram:** http://farm1.static.flickr.com/83/213512500_f38f9ee201.jpg
- **Fair Trade Banana Postcard:** http://www.fairtradere-source.org/uploads/2008/03/postcard_banana.jpg

Banana Webs: Instructions

- Start by reading the Conventional Banana Web.
- Once the Conventional Banana Web is done, read the Fair Trade Organic Web.

1. Conventional Banana Web

1. A **small producer in Honduras** grows bananas on a plantation.
2. When they are still green, before they are ripe, the small producers picks his bananas and sells them to the **plantation** owner at the price of *1 cent* per banana.
3. The owner of the plantation has the bananas packed and transported, and the shipment is taken onto an **airplane** at the local airport.
4. The merchandise arrives at an **airport** in North America.
5. The goods are delivered by truck to a **warehouse** where bananas are inspected and then chilled.
6. When the price of bananas is low on the market, a **negotiator** buys bananas, and the goods are shipped to him.
7. The negotiator sells his bananas to an **importer**.
8. The bananas are sent to the importer through a **delivery company**.
9. The importer sells the bananas to a **large distribution centre**.
10. A **transport company** delivers the bananas to the distribution centre.
11. At the distribution centre, **packers** pack and unpack the bananas a few times as they prepare orders and move them from one fridge to the next.
12. A **supermarket company** buys the bananas from the large distribution centre for a few of its stores.
13. The **large distribution centre** ships the bananas to another different distribution centre, closer to the supermarket stores that ordered them.
14. Once they arrive at the new location, the **distribution centre employees** store them in rooms where they are gassed to artificially ripen the bananas.
15. *A few weeks after they've been picked*, a **truck** finally delivers the bananas to your supermarket in _____ (name of your city).
16. You, the **consumer**, are hungry. Your parents drive you to the **supermarket**, you see a banana and you buy it for *50 cents*.

Conventional Banana: 16 steps*

** Keep in mind that this story was highly simplified. The actual path of a conventional banana is much more complex.*

Fair Trade Organic Web

1. A **small producer in Honduras** grows bananas on his farm.
2. When the bananas are almost ripe, he picks them and sells them to his **cooperative** at the price of *25 cents* per banana.
3. The cooperative sells the bananas to an **importer**.
4. The importer sells his bananas to a **small grocery store distributor** in North America.
5. The importer has the bananas packed and transported, and the shipment is taken onto an **airplane*** at the local airport. **Note: Sometimes, bananas are also shipped by boat which, on average, uses 1 000 times less energy than when they are transported by plane.*
6. A transport company delivers the goods to a **small distribution centre** where the bananas are inspected and then chilled.
7. *A few days after they've been picked*, a **truck** finally delivers the bananas to your **local grocery store** in _____ (name of your city).
8. You, the **consumer**, are hungry. You bike to your local grocery store, you see a banana and you buy it for *1 dollar*.

Fair Trade/Organic Banana: 8 steps*

** This story was only slightly simplified.*

Fair Trade in a Nutshell

Fair trade seeks to ensure that the farmers get a better wage for their products by reducing the amounts of middlemen. Fair trade also promotes fair and safe labour, more environmentally-sound practices, access to credit and long-term contracts for producers.

Fair trade products you can find: Chocolate, bananas, coffee, cocoa, sugar, tea, honey, cotton, flowers, soccer balls and handicrafts.

How to tell if a product is Fair Trade Certified:

Look for the logos below on products wherever you shop.



BANANA WEB STORIES: Instructions

- Cut along the dotted lines of each actor card and see page 1 for how to run the game.

ACTORS (Conventional banana)

- Small producer in Honduras
- Plantation Owner
- Airplane
- Airport
- Warehouse
- Negotiator
- Importer
- Delivery Company
- Large Distribution Centre
- Packers
- Supermarket Company
- Distribution Center Employees
- Truck
- Supermarket
- Consumer

ACTORS (Fair trade organic banana)

- Small producer in Honduras
- Cooperative
- Importer
- Small Grocery Store Distributor
- Airplane
- Small Distribution Centre
- Truck
- Local Grocery Store
- Consumer

