



The Geography of My Stuff

Lesson 1: Where does my stuff come from?

TEACHER NOTES

STARTER:

What's in my bag?

Through briefly looking and listing the place of origin of some of the contents of their bags or pockets, students will start to conceptualise the idea of a 'personal network' of connected places. Where are the objects that students carry around with them made? Once everyone has a clear understanding of the meaning of the words producer and consumer (download available), the lesson can proceed).

MAIN ACTIVITY:

What's on the menu and where did it come from?

- The lesson begins by thinking about what 'food miles' are. It's not just individual items of food (the first type of 'stuff' to look at) that come from far away places; all the different ingredients of soup, pizza or even bread will come from many different places.
- As well as food, manufactured items (a second type of 'stuff') use parts from many different places (we call these 'assembly industries').
- Art, music and film (a third type of 'stuff' that we consume) also have different 'ingredients' or national influences that we can learn to spot.

For the main activity, students examine an example of each of the three types of 'stuff' and see where the ingredients come from. They can work in groups and share findings as a presentation (a PowerPoint has been provided which they can adapt and add to):

- The Dell Laptop computer (use download Word document)
- The latest Pizza Hut menu (or similar – follow links suggested)
- A piece of music or film containing diverse national / cultural influences (e.g. Bollywood cinema, Disney Asia or Hip-Hop music)

PLENARY:

The lesson returns to the issue of 'food miles' (see downloadable Fiji water case study). Some people like to avoid buying food that has been transported long distances on account of its carbon footprint. Students should think about why this is a difficult practice to maintain when (i) buying ready meals or processed foods such as fruit and nut chocolate and (ii) eating out in restaurants (answer is you have no control over the ingredients in a meal if you don't assemble them yourself).