

The Geography of My Stuff

Lesson 5: The kids who make our stuff

TEACHER NOTES

STARTER

How old is 'old enough to work'?

A table of legal working ages is examined; investigating the ages at which people living in different nations are deemed old enough to begin work (these could be presented as a quiz / guessing).

MAIN

Why don't teenagers in the UK have to work?

The activity starts with a look at a timeline showing major landmark legislation banning children from working and increases in the age of compulsory education.

Why is so much stuff made overseas?

Next, students need to identify the main reasons why overseas labour is cheaper, using the downloaded Word document. This will highlight the dreadful conditions that many teenagers work in overseas. The main factors are:

- A lack of trade unions (organisations that fight for more pay)
- Less health & safety rules (which cost employers money to implement)
- A lack of medical insurance and sick pay in many cases
- Poorer pay for women and girls (no equal pay laws)
- No holiday pay / less days off (less money lost for employers)

No wonder overseas locations are attractive to manufacturers! A free-to-view film produced by National Geographic can be viewed that shows some of the things made in China and conditions at work

Design a poster

To end the main activity, students should design a poster that campaigns for an end to child labour in poorer countries. Fair Trade and NSPCC web sites can be visited for additional information.

PLENARY

Things are getting better

The lesson ends with an optimistic look at recent improvements in India, where the government recently acted to further restrict the use of child labour. New legislation outlaws the use of children as serving staff in restaurants and for private households (see [Guardian newspaper link](#)).