



CLIMATE, FAIRTRADE AND YOU

CHOOSE THE WORLD
YOU WANT



SECONDARY ASSEMBLY THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THEOBROMA CACAO

If your chocolate could talk... where has it been? Who has it met? And whose life did it touch? This fun role play will get learners thinking about the life of a product and the effect it can have on those involved with its production. Can your choices change this?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Learners understand that we are connected to those who grow our food
- Learners consider the supply chain of a product

YOU WILL NEED:

Two learners to play Theobroma and Matt, the TV presenter.

If your assembly is virtual, you could have the characters in the role-play in separate places, talking to each other through the camera, or have two children in school playing the characters.

TEACHER'S SCRIPT

During Fairtrade Fortnight, we are going to think about the world that we want, and how our choices can help to shape this.

Many of the products we enjoy travel many miles to get to us. A bar of chocolate may be a simple treat to us, but for hundreds of thousands of farmers, cocoa is their livelihood, and their fate is tied to the rise and fall of the price paid for their products.

Life is tough for producers of coffee, bananas, cocoa and many, many more products that we buy and enjoy. Small changes in prices for products can have huge effects on their abilities to meet their needs. They may have to choose between providing nutritious food for their families, getting medicines when they are ill, and paying for ways to protect their homes and farms from the changes we see happening in our climate.

We all know how important it is to care for our environment. Everything on the planet depends on nature for its needs. For air that we breathe, water we drink, the food that comes from the plants that grow in the soil we need to care for, trees to provide shade, and the weather to grow food and keep warm

*Theobroma Cacao is the Latin name for the trees from which we get cocoa. It means 'food of the gods'. **Cacao** is the name of the pods and **cocoa** is the name of those beans after being harvested from the pods, but the two words are commonly used for both.*



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ROLE PLAY SCRIPT

Matt	Welcome to tonight's show. I'm Matt Chunk. I would like to welcome our special studio guest, Mr Theobroma Cacao.
Theo	Thank you, Matt. It is a pleasure to be here in the studio. Please call me Theo.
Matt	So, Theo, I understand you have travelled a long way to be with us here in the studio tonight?
Theo	That's right, Matt. I've come from Sierra Leone in West Africa. But the cacao family originally came from South America. But, of course, we have spread all over the tropics. We love warm weather, you know. So we are now all over South America and West Africa in particular.
Matt	That is very interesting, Theo. So you are well travelled?
Theo	Oh yes.
Matt	Can you tell us a bit about your early life?
Theo	Well, I started out on a farm in a little place called Gorahun. It is so beautiful there. It is right on the edge of the Gola Rainforest. It isn't just cacao like me that grows there, but all around in the farm and mango trees, and papaya trees, that gave me shade. It is thirsty work growing up in the forest but the rains came every year and we live to a fair old age there in the forest.
Matt	That sounds like a beautiful, happy place.
Theo	Ah, beautiful, yes. But, not always happy. Unfortunately, the farmers who cared for us were often sad, and sometimes hungry. They would talk about low prices a lot. Over the years we saw so much of the cacao go, and the mango, papaya and everything else. Sometimes all the trees would go and there would be crops planted instead, or holes dug in the ground and people looking for something called 'minerals' in the holes. It made life so much harder for those of us that remained. The holes and the crops did nothing to slow the rain and it would run so fast towards us. And the big trees that gave us shade would sometimes go. It became hard work for us to stand tall and produce our cacao.
Matt	Oh no. That sounds hard.
Theo	Yes. And then some of the farmers just left. They used to talk about the city. One day, they just went. They didn't want us anymore. It just got too hard.
Matt	Did that happen to you?
Theo	Not to me, no. Our farmers stayed and cared for us. But, it was hard. Sometimes they tried different things to earn more. For a while sprayed us with stinky stuff, to make us strong. But it made our friends, the birds and the little critters, sick. So, they stopped.
Matt	Did things get better?
Theo	I can't say they did, then.
Matt	Oh no.
Theo	Life for them was so hard. And, one year, the rain just.... didn't come.



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Matt	Not at all?
Theo	No, well, not for months but by that time it was too late. All us cacao were sick. We tried really hard but we just didn't have the energy to make our pods that year.
Matt	What happened?
Theo	The farmers were really worried. They sold some tools, took their daughters out of school. The man farmer went to the city and left the rest of the family to look after us.
Matt	Did the rain come the next rainy season?
Theo	<p>It did, but it was really hot the next dry season. And, some of us caught a disease called black pod. We were really sick. Our pods were useless that year. The farmers were so worried. They would come and look at us all the time, hoping that it was getting no worse, doing what they could to stop the spread.</p> <p>But this wasn't just this one year. The next year was very hot, and the rain was late. And, the next year. We realised that the seasons we once knew have changed. It makes it hard for us to produce, and that makes life very difficult for the farmers who care for us. They have been with us many years, but I worry that they may also want to go to the city.</p>
Matt	This is a very troubling story. Please tell me, does this story get better?
Theo	Well, it can get better. For that to happen the farmers need to be able to care for us, plan for the changes in the weather and for the future, and still be able to meet their everyday needs.
Matt	How does that happen?
Theo	That comes down to when they sell the cocoa we produce.
Matt	How so?
Theo	<p>When the farmers can sell their cocoa, for a price that covers their costs and gives them a little more, it enables them to build for the future. They can afford to use the best farming practices to protect us from the weather and diseases, and protect themselves from unexpected events.</p> <p>If they have this, little by little, year by year they can adapt to the challenges they are facing and weather the storm.</p>
Matt	Yes, I see. How can I make this happen?
Theo	You can choose. Your choices make all the difference. Consumers have a choice every time they are buying a chocolate bar. You can choose chocolate made from cocoa that has been sold for a very low price <i>OR</i> you can choose chocolate made from cocoa that has been sold for a price high enough to meet the needs of the farmers. You can make a choice that means that farmers are better able to meet the needs of their families and protect their farms from the changing weather. You can choose the world you want.



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SUMMARY

The life and times of Theobroma Cacao is a fun role play, but the experience of cocoa farmers around the world is accurate. Right now, many farmers around the world are feeling the effects of extreme weather, and they are unable to afford to make changes to protect themselves from the changing weather.

It is another reason why farmers need to be paid fairly for their hard work. We might not always think about it, but the effect of our choices can be felt very far away and it is up to us to find out where our food comes from.

This is [or *'next week is etc.'*] Fairtrade Fortnight.