

## LESSON 9: ONE PLANET, TWO WORLDS\*

Students learn why countries are grouped into "DEVELOPING" NATIONS and "INDUSTRIAL" NATIONS. The classroom is turned into a miniature version of the world to demonstrate the fact that while most of the world's people live in "developing" nations, most of the world's wealth is delivered to industrial nations. Students examine how this unequal distribution of the world's wealth causes hunger and poverty. (Present this activity in a classroom with lots of space or in the gym or lunchroom.)

**IMPORTANT:** The words "developing" and "industrial" have become universal descriptions of two different types of countries; however, the word "developing" often carries a negative connotation. It implies that a country has not yet "developed" according to our western industrial standard --- that its people have not yet reached the "standard of living" enjoyed by many people in industrial nations and are therefore, "backward". Should a country's level of industrialization be the standard by which it is judged or grouped? Once students have completed the activity in this lesson which explains why countries are categorized this way, bring this discussion of labels into the classroom. Do students think these descriptions (and all they imply) are fair? (We have used the words "developing" and "industrial" in this guide because we believe students should be aware of how these words are being used today in the media - other descriptions such as **rich world - poor world**, or **first world - third world** seem to carry even more negative and misleading connotations.) What do students think? What other words do they prefer to describe different countries?

### MATERIALS:

- 100 small food items or other objects to represent "wealth". If using food, try a combination of favorite foods such as cookies, crackers and pretzels and nuts.
- 5 clear bags
- 5 small signs: **ASIA, AFRICA, U.S. & CANADA, EUROPE & RUSSIA, LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN**
- 2 larger signs: **DEVELOPING NATIONS, INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS**

### PROCEDURE:

1. Designate five areas of the classroom - one for **ASIA**, one for **AFRICA**, one for the **U.S. & CANADA**, one for **EUROPE & RUSSIA**, and one for **LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN**. Use the table below to assign the appropriate number of students to sit in each area. Give each group their sign to hold.

(These figures are based on a class of 30. The percentage next to the number of students represents the portion of the world's population

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\* This activity is from *Children Hungering for Justice* produced by the Office on Global Education in cooperation with the Center for Teaching International Relations, University Denver.

that can be found in that area. Use these figures to tailor this activity to the number of students in your class. Let students do the calculating.)

	<u>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF FOOD ITEMS</u>
ASIA	17 (58%)	18
AFRICA	4 (11%)	3
U.S./CANADA	1 (5%)	29
LATIN AMERICA/ Caribbean	3 (8%)	5
EUROPE/RUSSIA	5 (17%)	45

(Figures based on world population and GNP. Data is from World Military and Social Expenditures 1989; 13th edition, by Ruth Lever Sivard. Washington, D.C.: World Priorities.)

2. Count out loud the appropriate number of food items for each group and place them in a clear bag. Announce the total for each group. Give each bag to the corresponding group.
3. Explain to students that you have distributed the food according to the distribution pattern of wealth in the world. The number of students in each group represents the relative population of each region. The number of food items represents the wealth of that region.
4. Tell them that the world is divided into two groups - INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS and DEVELOPING NATIONS according to the way wealth is distributed.
5. INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS are ones where most people's basic needs are met (food, shelter, clean water, and medical care). These are the countries with the industrialized economies. They have developed elaborate infrastructures --- roads, bridges, dams, communication systems, and social institutions such as schools and hospitals. Slightly less than 1/4 of the world's people live in industrialized nations. Ask students to guess which countries belong in this category. They are the U.S. & Canada, Europe, Russia, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Have student representing **the U.S. & Canada** and **Europe & Russia** join together. Give them the INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS sign.

**Ask these students why the word "industrialized" is used to describe these countries.**

6. More than 3/4 of the world's people live in countries where the basic necessities of life are not always easy to get. These people struggle everyday to survive. These are the DEVELOPING NATIONS. They include AFRICA, ASIA, LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN. Ask these students to join together. Give them the DEVELOPING NATIONS sign.

DEVELOPING NATIONS are mainly agrarian societies (most of their people work the land.) Their economies rely on a few export crops (called cash crops) --- coffee, tea, bananas, tobacco, cotton, sugarcane, etc. The workers who produce these crops are paid very low wages, much lower

than what workers in industrialized nations are paid. The infrastructures of most developing countries are incomplete. Most people living in developing countries have the least access to food and clean water. They have the poorest health and lowest levels of education. **Ask students why this is so.** Many developing countries are former colonies.

Developing nations also have the most impoverished resource base. **Ask students why natural resources such as forests, clean water, land, etc., become depleted and degraded in regions where people are poor and hungry.**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which group has most of the world's people?
2. Which group has most of the world's wealth?
3. How might this unequal distribution cause poverty and hunger?
4. Why do some countries have so much while others have so little? How would it feel to have such limited access to the basic necessities of life?
5. Are there hungry people within the industrialized nations who do not share in the wealth? How is this possible?
6. How did the distribution of wealth become so unequal?
7. Who decides how the wealth is distributed?
8. Should wealth be distributed equally?
9. How does the unequal distribution of wealth affect the powerful groups within countries?
10. Is wealth distributed equally within your community? How do you know? What problems might be eliminated if the wealth were more evenly distributed?

Ask each group to find a way to distribute its food equally among its members. (Students from the DEVELOPING NATIONS group might ask that some of the wealth from the INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS be shared with them. Allow the students to work this out.) Have a member of each group explain how they decided to share the wealth equally.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

1. Play and discuss the song *We Are the Champions of the World* by Queen.
2. Brainstorm ways in which industrial countries use up most of the world's resources --- energy, water, trees, plants, land, minerals, etc. Most people in "developing" nations don't have automobiles, electricity, and the kinds of household appliances used in many homes in industrial countries such as washing machines, dish-washers, microwave ovens, television, VCRs, computers, etc. Natural resources are wasted and the environment is damaged in developing countries as well, but this is most often the result of severe poverty and large-scale development projects which use raw materials from developing countries to produce products that bring more wealth to industrial

nations. The results of this kind of development - cash crops, clothing, rugs, machinery, etc. are delivered to people in industrial nations. In this way the wealth, resources and labor of developing countries are used to enrich industrial countries.

3. Have students find examples of **ONE PLANET, TWO WORLDS** in their own communities. Encourage them to use their examples or some of the examples on the following page to create comic strips, poems and posters to display around school. Keep asking "why?" these two worlds exist.
4. Listen to and discuss the song *Because All Men Are Brothers* by Peter, Paul & Mary.

## SOME EXAMPLES OF ONE PLANET, TWO WORLDS:\*

- A. In California 6th graders work on computers in air-conditioned classrooms while kids in Mozambique use sticks and bark to learn to write in open-air classes. One of four South African children does not go to school at all.
- B. A designer handbag in Paris costs \$1,500 - more than the annual per capita income in more than forty countries.
- C. Rival British and American shipping companies vie to build the world's largest and most luxurious cruise liners while hundreds of thousands of homeless live atop massive garbage dumps in Mexico City and Manila.
- D. There are 371 billionaires in the world and more than 1 billion people who survive on the equivalent of \$1 a day.
- E. Industrial countries average one doctor per 400 people, while developing countries average one doctor per 7,000. Some African states have only one doctor for every 36,000.
- F. Every **minute** 27 children die for want of essential food and inexpensive vaccines. Every **minute** the world's military machine takes another \$1,900,000 from the public treasury.
- G. In Indonesia girls who make NIKE shoes are paid wages that start at \$1.35 per day. In 1992 the **entire payroll** for the Indonesian factories that made NIKES was less than Michael Jordan's reported \$20 million fee for promoting NIKES. It costs \$5.60 to produce one pair of NIKES in Indonesia. In the U.S. one pair of NIKES sells for between \$45 and \$80. (A study by the International Labor Organization found that 88% of girls and young women earning minimum wage in Indonesia were undernourished.)

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\* Sources: A,B,C & E - *The Los Angeles Times*, June 14, 1994  
 D - *Forbes Magazine*, July -1995  
 F - *World Military & Social Expenditures*, 1989.  
 G - *The New York Times*, February 13, 1994.