



# COCOA TRUTH

---

**Theme:** The use of forced labour and trafficked children in the cocoa industry

**Time:** Two 55-minute lessons, depending on the level of your students

**Learners:** Older teens, young adults and adults, B1+ (upper intermediate to advanced)

**Materials:** Peter's story, information about slavery in the cocoa industry, real-life interview with the Director of a shelter for trafficked children, student worksheet, autonomous learning resources, slides, audio recording of Peter's narrative, Teacher's Guide

## Content Learning Objectives

Students will learn about the use of forced child labour i.e. modern slavery in the cocoa/ chocolate industry.

Students will consider the power of consumer choice, specifically as consumers of chocolate-based products.

Students will be encouraged to reflect upon their own behaviour as consumers and their awareness of the 'backstory' or supply chain of everyday products.

## ELT Learning Aims

**Vocabulary:** to abuse, to beat, to exploit, to suffer, forced labour, human trafficking, consumer, plantation, shelter (n), source, supply chain, ethically sourced

### SKILLS

**Reading:** comprehension of a narrative and specific details

**Listening:** comprehension of specific information

**Speaking:** expressing opinions, justifying a point of view

**Writing:** formal letter-writing - expressing an opinion and requesting action

## About this Lesson

This lesson examines the use of forced labour, including forced child labour, in the cocoa industry. The content specifically focuses on the exploitation of children in the Ivory Coast. The lesson also addresses how we, as consumers of cocoa-based products, in particular chocolate, can use our buying power to influence chocolate companies.

## From The NO Project

As teachers, we can never know what memories, thoughts or emotions such content may trigger in our students, and this certainly includes adult learners. We ask you to be aware of this and to respond sensitively and responsibly. Although the lesson is about something that may seem far away and remote, and about an 'innocent', everyday product i.e. chocolate, the crime being addressed is violent, exploitative and targets young people.

# PROCEDURE

## Step 1: Peter's Story - Pre-reading tasks

The title of this lesson is **Cocoa Truth**, however in order to create curiosity and genuine interest in Peter's Story, we suggest that you do not mention the lesson title yet. This will be addressed soon. The main goal at this point is to build interest around Peter's personal story. We have provided an audio recording of Peter's Story if you would like to focus on development of the listening skill rather than reading. Students can then use the reading task as they listen a second time or read in their own time beyond the class.

- Tell the students they are going to read/hear a story about a person called Peter.

**Show slide #1: Peter's Story**

**Show slide #2: Six statements**

- Use the slide or write these 6 short statements on the board.

- Give the students time to read and think about the 6 short statements.

**my world turned upside down**

**magnificent wedding cake**

**my heart froze**

**this was a lie**

**things had to change**

**you cannot own another human being**

To generate intrigue, we suggest you do not reveal anything about Peter yet - not even his age.

- In pairs/groups, ask the students to guess what the story will be about. Encourage the students to create a spontaneous narrative that includes the 6 statements.

- Assist by guiding the students with 'Wh' questions e.g. Who is Peter? What happened? Where? When? Why? Who was involved?

The students will probably come up with a range of unexpected narratives that have nothing to do with the theme today. This is absolutely fine. The stories may be dramatic, serious, or entertaining. There are no right or wrong answers.

- Allow the students time and the opportunity to invent a creative narrative freely based on the statements.

- Ask students to share their narratives with other groups/the rest of the class.

## Step 2: Introducing the theme of the lesson

**Show Slide #3: COCOA TRUTH**

- Ask the students what they think COCOA TRUTH means. At this point, accept all their

suggestions. Let them generate ideas freely. The students may be puzzled or surprised by this unexpected title.

There is no 'right' answer.

- Tell the students that Peter's story has a connection to the title, COCOA TRUTH.
- In pairs/groups students share ideas and discuss how they want to re-think or adjust their ideas about Peter's story.
- Ask students to come up with 4-5 questions. e.g. Who is Peter? How old is he? What happened? Why did things have to change?
- Bring the focus together and elicit pre-reading/listening questions.

### **Step 3: Reading/Listening to Peter's story**

- Allow the students time to read Peter's story.
- Students discuss the questions after reading the story.
- Go through the pre-reading questions that the students generated.
- Deal with any unfamiliar vocabulary that is hindering comprehension.
- If the students want to hear the recording again but time is limited, they can download the audio file and written narrative in their own time beyond the class.
- Look at the slide with the 6 statements and re-assess what these points referred to. Each sentence has been selected to reflect a key point in the narrative.

#### **my world turned upside down**

Peter's shock 1) at learning about the crime, and 2) at realizing he was making a lot of money from slave-made products.

#### **magnificent wedding cake**

The cake reflects the success of Peter's catering business. However, there is a strong possibility this wedding cake, a symbol of love and shared happiness, was made with cocoa that includes trafficking and slavery.

#### **my heart froze**

Peter's initial physical reaction to finding out the truth (this is based on a true story).

#### **this was a lie**

Human traffickers lie to the families and to the victims during the recruitment process. The parents, often in other countries, believe that their son/daughter will receive an education in the Ivory Coast. This is false; it is a strategy to lure victims.

#### **things had to change**

This shows Peter's decision to 'clean up' his company, and focus on ethically sourced products.

#### **you cannot own another human being**

Slavery includes the concept of owning another human. Peter's personal ethics are reflected in his business ethics.

## Step 4: Speaking: expressing personal reactions to cocoa slavery

The goal of this section to provide powerful visual information related to the use of forced labour on cocoa plantations.

- Tell the students that you will come back to Peter's story in a few minutes, but first you would like to show them some pictures/slides.
- Go through the slides at a pace that allows time for the students to take in each image, to react and to express their thoughts/feelings.
- Encourage students to think about the message the artists want to communicate. Do they think it is effective? Why/Why not?
- Point out the age of the artist who created Cocoa Girl. This art was her spontaneous, personal response after attending The NO Project multi-media seminar.

**Show slide #4: Cocoa Hand**

**Show slide #5: Chocolate Girl**

**Show slide #6: Cocoa Wire**

**Show slide #7: When you eat chocolate**

**Show slide #8: Child workers on the cocoa plantation**

- Students in pairs/groups or whole class, discuss and share their personal responses to the images and the crime.
- Now return to Peter's story. Tell the students that when Peter learned about the backstory to cocoa and other products, people had different reactions to his decision.
- Ask students what people might have said.

**Show slide #9: Reactions to Peter**

If you are not able to use the slide – write these 4 statements on the board.

**Peter is a loser! His profits will go down.**

**The children on the cocoa plantations are not his problem.**

**Customers don't care – they just want chocolate.**

**It's not his job to save the world.**

- Encourage students to discuss these statements. You may find that, given what the students have just learned, they will support Peter despite the negative feedback he received, and the possible risk to his business.

## Step 5: Short reading texts - trafficked children on cocoa plantations

- Provide the handout Cocoa Truth, information about forced child workers  
These important short texts from different sources provide hard-hitting information about the reality of child slavery that still exists on cocoa plantations.
- Ask students to read and then share their personal reactions.

## Step 6: Language review - optional (can be used for homework)

Student handout with new vocabulary. Depending on time available and the level of your students, this can be an in-class activity or done at home.

### KEY

**TASK 1** 1b 2d 3a 4c 5f 6g 7e 8h

**TASK 2** 1 consumers 2 forced 3 flesh 4 sourced 5 supply 6 suffered

## Step 7: Video viewing (authentic video 3 minutes)

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqG4N27UHNk>

### Tony's Chokolonly - the story of an unusual chocolate bar

- Students will watch a 3-minute video with English subtitles. The video is by Tony's Chokolonly, a chocolate company that uses slave-free cocoa. Students can use this site as a further resource for autonomous learning.
- Encourage students to discuss their reaction to Tony's Chokolonly.

### Discussion task to follow video

In groups, students decide how they would communicate the crime of slavery in the cocoa industry. What age group would they target? Why?

Do they think this video is powerful? Why? Why not?

How would they send the message - face to face or through social media?

## Step 8: Reading: Real-life interview with Kira, Director of a shelter for trafficked children

This real-life interview helps to understand the reality of child workers in the cocoa industry. This backstory is in our daily cocoa-based products.

Before reading, focus on the personal aspect of chocolate.

- In pairs/groups ask the students to talk about their favourite kind of chocolate, when they last ate chocolate, if they like dark, milk or white chocolate.
- Tell students they will read an interview with Kira, who looks after children who have managed to escape from cocoa farms, or who have been rescued.
- Ask them to come up with questions to find out what they would like to know. Write 4-5 key questions on the board.
- Hand out the interview and allow time for students to read and react.
- Address the questions they had and any unfamiliar language that may have come up.

## Step 9: Speaking: Expressing personal thoughts & feelings

- Ask students to re-read the very last statement by Kira.  
'Learn more and think about what you buy and eat. Your chocolate came from somewhere - maybe slavery is in the backstory! Talk about it to your friends and family. Ask them what they know about children in the manufacturing of chocolate. Educate them.'

### Show slide #10: Other Cocoa-based products

- Point out that other products contain cocoa-based products & cocoa butter.  
- Encourage the students to express their personal thoughts as consumers of chocolate products. How is their buying power related to the crime? What impact can they have? How?

### Show slide #11: LOGOS indicating ethical sourcing

- Tell the students that these logos are some of the main logos they will find on products from companies that promise to source items ethically. But items can be ethical without these featuring the logos.

NOTE: Organic does not equal ethical. Workers on farms can still be exploited even if the products are grown organically.

Refer to **Beyond the class/autonomous learning resources** at the end of this Teacher's Guide for a site regarding ethically sourced products

### Show slide #12: Delicious chocolate products

- How do they feel about this delicious food now?

### Show slide #13: Who are you?

- Ask students share their personal thoughts

## Step 10: Writing: Formal letter writing - to whom and why?

- Explain that the letter can be a group project. All group members collaborate and contribute to the letter.
- Encourage students to think extensively about who to contact and why. Clarity of their request is essential.
- Give a clear deadline for when the letter must be ready to show you or the class.

Suggested people the students can write to:

1. CEOs of leading chocolate companies in their country
2. owners or managers of local restaurants, cafés and hotels that offer customers chocolate-based products, such as cookies, chocolate cake, hot chocolate drinks
3. the manager of their own office café, school canteen or university cafeteria - to request that ethically sourced chocolate products be available

## Beyond the class / Personal Projects

According to students' own personal skills, interests and resources they can take action in different ways:

- write letters or emails to leading manufacturers of chocolate based products
- create art or videos to educate others about the supply chain of chocolate
- initiate and implement change in a café at school, office or other place of work or in the local neighbourhood. This takes time, courage, and persistence but change is happening. You can find FAIRTRADE products everywhere!

NOTE: High school students in Madrid did this with fair trade coffee. This process took several months, but now students and teachers can buy ethically sourced coffee in their school café.

## Autonomous Learning & further resources

Check out The NO Project site for immediate information about cocoa slavery

<https://www.thenoproject.org/slavery/cocoa-slavery/>

An excellent article about cocoa slavery, Cocoa's Child Laborers, was published by the Washington Post June 5th, 2019. The content is raw, heartbreaking and the photos speak a thousand words.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/business/hershey-nestle-mars-chocolate-child-labor-west-africa/?utm\\_term=.7c1a4871e382](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/business/hershey-nestle-mars-chocolate-child-labor-west-africa/?utm_term=.7c1a4871e382)

Many chocolate companies are making powerful steps to provide slave-free chocolate. Find out about one company Tony's Choclonely.

<https://tonyschocolonely.com/us/en/our-story>

Go to this site to find out which companies are providing ethically sourced products.

<https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/food-drink/shopping-guide/chocolate>

The excellent, award-winning documentary, Slavery: A Global Investigation, produced by True Vision Productions was filmed nearly 20 years ago. Sadly, it is very relevant today.

<https://vimeo.com/39383629>

Powerful, real-life narratives from survivors of trafficking and modern slavery, including children in forced labour. Visit this link to read true stories from survivors.

<http://antislavery.ac.uk>

We understand that change does not happen instantly. It is a gradual process that needs research. But in the meantime, what small actions can you take in your own home, business, office, work place, school or college?

## Taking Action: Going Public

Educate others and deliver a presentation to peers about the use of forced labour in cocoa/chocolate. Use visual images, with credit included, from The NO Project site.

[www.thenoproject.org](http://www.thenoproject.org)



**NO  
SLAVERY**

EDUCATION FOR  
SOCIAL JUSTICE



University of  
Nottingham  
Rights Lab

## **Credits & acknowledgements**

Contributing authors: The NO Project with S. Chelmis & Electra M

Consultant: Pangga, Business Owner, Aotearoa - New Zealand

Artists: Ariadne: Greece, Ivo: Bulgaria

Photography: Aggelina: Greece

Audio actor: Ian

Music: [www.elijahbossenbroek.com](http://www.elijahbossenbroek.com)

Slavery: A Global Investigation, True Vision Productions

<http://antislavery.ac.uk/>

[www.creer-africa.org](http://www.creer-africa.org)

[www.ethicalconsumer.org](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org)

[www.tonyschocolonely.com/us/en](http://www.tonyschocolonely.com/us/en)

[www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com) [www.globallaveryindex.org/2018/findings/importing-risk/cocoa/](http://www.globallaveryindex.org/2018/findings/importing-risk/cocoa/)

This lesson plan was made possible through the support of the AHRC Antislavery Usable Past Project,  
University of Nottingham.