



GOLD COSTS MORE THAN MONEY

Theme: The use of forced child and adult labour in gold mines

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: The young man on the train (narrative), student worksheet, autonomous learning resources, audio recording, transcript, information about human trafficking and modern slavery, slides, real-life interview with a businessowner, Teacher's Guide

Content Learning Objectives

Students will learn about the use of forced labour i.e. slavery, in gold mining. Students will consider the role of the consumer and the influence consumer choices can have. Students will be encouraged to reflect upon their own behaviour as consumers and their awareness of the 'backstory' or supply chain of products.

ELT Learning Aims

Vocabulary: to abuse, to beat, to deceive, to exploit, to force (someone to do something), to suffocate, debt, injury, lungs, mine, poison/poisonous, source, supply chain, vulnerable

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 i.e. slavery, in gold mining. It includes a gentle but confronting narrative, a surreal short film by young filmmakers and an audio recording of an engaged couple's argument. The teaching material also addresses how we, as consumers of products that include gold, such as smart electronics and gold jewellery, can use our buying power to send a message to manufacturers in order to effect change.

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 focus in this lesson is about something that may seem remote, i.e. exploitation in the supply chain of minerals, specifically gold, the crime being addressed is violent, exploitative and deeply disturbing. Please note that The NO Project has absolutely no interest in evoking guilt, blame or shame - even though these are often initial reactions people express when they learn about the horrific backstory to the beautiful gold items that they own. Such emotions are draining and do not support a proactive, engaged, creative response to ethical purchasing.

PROCEDURE

Step 1: Introducing the theme

This first stage can be carried out in pairs, small groups or as a whole group - depending on class size. The goal is to motivate the learners and to spark their curiosity, emotional engagement and imagination.

Show slide #1: Gold jewellery (the brooch)

NOTE: This image of the bleeding gold brooch is from the short video that is included in a later stage of the lesson. Clearly, it is surreal, in that an object cannot bleed. As such, this item will be used in the film to symbolize or represent violation. Without revealing the theme, you could draw attention to the surreal aspect of the image.

- Ask the students to look at the image. Explain that it relates to the theme of the lesson. Students may want to know the word 'brooch'. Use the image to illustrate the meaning.
- Encourage the students to suggest what the lesson may be about and to share their ideas.
- Ask the students to guess the title of the lesson (but don't tell them yet).

Step 2: Pre-reading task

- Tell the students they will soon read a short story. Engage their curiosity and develop their prediction skills by introducing slides #2 & #3. If you are unable to use the slides, the sentences are short and can be written on the board.

- Encourage students to come up with creative ideas. At this point there are no 'right answers' so accept all their suggestions without judgment. According to class size, use pairs, groups or the class as a whole.

Show slide #2: The young man on the train

- Allow time for students to come up with ideas. Guide them with 'wh' questions, e.g. Who is he? Why is he in the title of the story? What's happening?

Show slide #3: Six sentences

- Show the students the six statements. Explain that these are all included in the story. What do they think it is about?

- Ask students to come up with 2 or 3 questions based on each statement, e.g. Why is he crying? What's the book about? Who wants to be remembered? Why?

I happened to notice he was crying

It's this book. It's really upsetting.

40 million

my dad was a jeweller

**my college education
I want to be remembered**

Step 3: Reading

NOTE: This story of a chance encounter between two strangers on a train one summer's evening is confronting. The subject that the two people discuss is intimate, disturbing and real. It is likely that the information in this narrative will be new to your students - or even to you. As consumers/customers we go about our daily life and we rarely ask, 'I wonder where this product came from? Is there slavery in the backstory of this item?' The intention throughout this lesson is not to create guilt, blame or shame, but rather to inform and empower people to make well-informed ethical choices as consumers. This takes time, is not always possible - but as we say, we can take 'baby steps'. Consumer knowledge and consumer buying power can send a powerful message to companies who may be turning a blind eye to slavery in the supply chain of their products. And behind those 'blind eyes' might lie greed and corruption.

- Provide the narrative and time for the students to read the story.
- Encourage the students to share their personal reaction with others.
- In pairs/groups - answer the questions they had based on the 6 statements.

NOTE: If you are not able to use the slides for the follow-up stage either write the statements on the board or read them out loud to the class.

- Ask the students to share their personal thoughts about the follow-up questions below.

What was the misunderstanding about the past and the present?

Why is the young man upset?

Why does he talk about Ibrahim's age?

Show slide #4: Follow-up questions

Show slide #5: Number of people in slavery today

Show slide #6: Blood & Earth book cover

- Ask the students to reflect upon the number of people in slavery today.
- See the lesson plan folder, we have provided a handout that provides further general information about human trafficking and modern slavery.
- Encourage personal discussion based on the following questions:
Did you know about the backstory of slavery in some gold?
How do you feel knowing there might be 'slave-mined' gold and other minerals in your mobile phone?
Do you think this subject should be taught in schools?

Step 4: Video: pre-viewing task (speaking)

NOTE: The short film **Gold Costs More Than Money** is an example of how people are inspired to use their passion, skills and expertise to support the goals of The NO Project. Some years ago a leading film professor at Boston University heard about The NO Project and the use of the arts to raise awareness of human trafficking and modern slavery. Since then, two groups of final year film school students have produced short films that have established the **Now You Know** series. The students and professor donated their time and skills to produce this film.

- Tell the students that they will soon watch a short film (2.45 mins).

Show slide #7: GOLD COSTS MORE THAN _____

- Ask students to predict what they think the title of the film is. Ask them to discuss and explain their different suggestions.

Step 5: Video viewing

The short film is called GOLD COSTS MORE THAN MONEY (approx. 2 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INf7pQEX-r8&t=34s>

- Play the video all the way through until the end.

- Ask the students to confirm the title, **Gold Costs More Than Money**.

Show slide #8: GOLD COSTS MORE THAN MONEY

- Encourage the students to think about the title. What else does gold 'cost'? This refers back to the opening narrative of the lesson. It costs the workers their health, their future and sometimes their lives.

Show slide #9: Follow-up discussion points

- Explain that this film was made to make customers think about the backstory to the gold in their electronics and in their jewellery.

- Before watching the film a second time, ask the students to discuss the points on the slide. Alternatively, write the points on the board. The suggestions below are not the only possible 'correct answers'. People interpret the film in many ways.

The wedding. Was it effective?

The filmmakers wanted an event that many people can relate to.

One part was black & white. Why?

Different 'surreal' moment. Another reality. The unseen backstory.

What is the message of the blood?

The abuse and violence of slavery in the supply chain.

Who notices the blood on the gold?

Children. The agents of change in the future.

A mobile phone starts bleeding. Why?

Gold is in smart electronic devices – including mobile phones.

- Encourage students to share their different opinions. What do they like/dislike? Why? What would they change?
- Ask the students to notice the music/soundtrack and the use of colour when they watch it the second time.
- Play the film again. This allows the students to analyze the intention and message of each section more carefully.

If necessary pause the film at the slides containing written information.

NOTE: This same text will be included in the handout to follow, so students can check on any unfamiliar vocabulary in their own time, if needed.

- Tell the students the story of who made the film and why. Emphasize that nobody received any payment for this film – the actors, production crew and sound studio all donated their time and resources. This idea may be new to some students who tend to think such projects are money/profit driven.

Step 6: Discussion: personal reaction to slavery in gold

- Allow time for the students to reflect on their own behaviour as consumers.
- Do they often think about the backstory or supply chain of things they spend money on?
- Are they willing to pay more for ethically sourced jewellery and electronics?
- What kind of campaign do they think is powerful?
- Should this information be taught to high school students?

Step 7: Reading: short texts about gold and minerals & The Good News!

NOTE: This handout with short reading texts provides key information about the abusive exploitation of workers in mineral mines. But there is good news, too!

Fairphone is a remarkable company which manufactures ethically sourced mobile phones. Fairgold is a global initiative committed to the production of ethically sourced gold and silver. Increasingly jewellery stores offer ethically sourced gems and precious metals. There is an authentic interview with one of the world's leading jewellers of ethically sourced products as part of this lesson plan.

This information can also be used as a resource for the writing task at the end of the lesson to be carried out in the student's own time.

- Allow time for the students to read through the short, diverse texts.
- Ask the students to choose three points that they feel strongly about. The goal of this task is for students to reflect upon and express their **personal** response.

- Tell the students that they can find links to several short documentaries which show the reality of mines in different countries. (see Beyond the Class at the end of this Teacher's Guide)

Step 8: 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 2c 3a 4g 5h 6i 7f 8e 9d

TASK 2: 1 beat 2 supply 3 trafficking 4 poisonous 5 vulnerable 6 suffocate

Step 9: Listening: The Wedding Rings

NOTE: This audio recording is a conversation between Danny and Yasmin who are talking about the wedding rings that they are soon going to choose. Yasmin has become aware of possible slavery in the supply chain of gold and, given that her ring is a symbol of love, she does not want to wear a ring with the 'pain and suffering of someone else' for the rest of her life. Danny, who knows nothing about the subject, is initially indifferent and rather apathetic. He resists but then changes his mind. Initially, there is some tension and disagreement between the couple, but this is resolved and the outcome is positive.

- Tell the students they are going to hear a conversation between Danny and Yasmin, two people who are engaged.

Show slide #10: The Wedding Rings

- Inform the students that there is a problem between the couple.
- Elicit ideas as to what the disagreement might be about. Try not to focus on 'right' answers. Given the theme of this teaching unit, it is likely that some students will come up with the idea of ethically sourced gold rings. At this point, accept the students' different ideas and suggestions.
- Explain that the recording is not short because the couple need to discuss some serious points.
- Tell the students that if they wish, they can take notes as they listen. Suggest they have two columns: what Danny says/what Yasmin says.

Follow-up questions to check understanding

Who cares more about the hidden cost of gold? Danny or Yasmin? How do you know?

- In groups ask the students to go through their notes, share their ideas and address the key points raised by Yasmin and by Danny.

- Tell the students that they can download the recording and script at home and listen to the dialogue in their own time.

A creative, purposeful follow-up activity

In some classes, students love to read out the dialogue and act it out. If this is appropriate to your class and the students really want to do it – it could be a fun activity. We suggest you allow the students the opportunity to paraphrase and to use the language with agency and spontaneous creativity.

If the ‘wedding ring’ context is not appropriate, then this can be easily changed. Students can imagine that they are buying a special gift made of gold for a family member or a dear friend. This adapted context still raises the issue of what store the ‘characters’ will go to.

Step 10: SPEAKING - A role play which leads to a writing outcome

- Refer back to the situation in the dialogue that Yasmin describes i.e. the time she talked to the owner of a jewellery store.
- Ensure that all students have understood what Yasmin did, why she did it, and what the outcome was.
- Set the scene for the role play which takes place in a high-end store.
- Ask the students to work in pairs/small groups (there can be two friends talking to the owner or two owners in the store).
- Monitor and guide students: How will the customers introduce themselves to the owner? What do they want to talk about with the owner?
- Allow time for the students to prepare their scenario to show to the rest of the class. (Of course, never force a student to ‘perform’ if they feel uncomfortable).
- If you would like to move beyond more rehearsed scenes, you can add an element of spontaneity after all the scenes have been performed, by mixing up different ‘customers’ with different ‘store owners’. This way, the students are confronted with unexpected, unrehearsed language, which is more like the ‘real world’ beyond the class.

Writing outcome from the role play

Formal email / letter writing

Students write to the owner of a jewellery store to

- inform the store owner what they have learned about the source of gold
- request that the store offers ethically sourced jewellery and explain why
- tell the owner about FAIRGOLD in other countries

Beyond the class/ Personal Projects

Look at the links below, watch the short videos and listen to the radio interview with Kevin Bales, the author who wrote *Blood and Earth: Modern Slavery, Ecocide and the Secret to Saving the World*. What resources and skills can you use to spread the word about the backstory to gold and other minerals? Be sure to download and listen to one of the world's leading jewellers who only uses ethically sourced precious metals and gems in her designs. <https://www.thenoproject.org/lesson-plans/>

Autonomous Learning & further resources

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7iv1fef6qo>

Journeyman pictures: Exposing The Inhumane Conditions Of Burkina Faso's Gold Mines. Warning - this short film also includes a report of a 17-year-old miner who is in the gold mine when it collapses. Sadly, the boy is suffocated to death.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1L_pxYZVwE

Journeyman pictures: Children Of The Dirty Gold: An investigation into the use of child labour in dangerous Philippine underwater gold mines.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2016/01/20/463600820/todays-slaves-often-work-for-enterprises-that-destroy-the-environment>

Listen to an interview with Kevin Bales.

www.fairgold.org

More and more jewellers are using ethically sourced metals and gems. Visit this site to learn more. Consumer choice has an impact.

<https://www.fairphone.com/en/>

Find out about Fairphone ethically sourced mobile phones.

To read true narratives by adults and children who are survivors of forced labour and exploitation, visit this excellent site from Nottingham University, UK

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

Taking Action: Going Public

Now that you know about the backstory to gold and other minerals, how will you inform others? Visit www.thenoproject.org to learn more about forms of modern slavery and to see the ways people are taking action.

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/apr/20/the-human-cost-of-smartphone-minerals>

Read this short letter to the Guardian. This is one way that a person has taken action to make consumers think about the backstory of an everyday item that we use - a mobile phone. The author of the letter was inspired to write this letter after attending one of The NO Project seminars for educators.

Credits & acknowledgements

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Music: www.elijahbossenbroeck.com

Blood and Earth: Modern Slavery, Ecocide and the Secret to Saving the World,
Kevin Bales, 2016

Hothouse Productions, College of Communication, Boston University
Pear Audio Post Production, Greece

<https://www.annaloucah.com/>

www.fairgold.org

<https://www.fairphone.com/en/>

<https://www.journeyman.tv/>

<https://www.npr.org>

www.antislavery.ac.uk

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