we the economy
20 SHORT FILMS YOU CAN’T AFFORD TO MISS

lesson made by china in america
CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

This lesson fits in perfectly with units that address curriculum standards in social studies, civics, economics, thinking and reasoning, history, business, and government.

SAMPLE STANDARDS ALIGNMENTS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3 Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.B Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.
LESSON PREPARATION

• Prepare a monitor with Internet access to screen the short film, “Made By China in America” at www.wetheeconomy.com/films (TRT 8:25)
• Prepare copies of Student Handout: A Very Short History of the American Textile Industry
• Prepare a large “t-chart” on a whiteboard, blackboard, or chart paper that says “China” on one side and “America” on the other

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

Globalization, foreign direct investment (FDI), urbanization, bi-directional investment, global economy, purchasing power parity, trade, outsourcing, competition

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

• Students will learn about the recent trend of China’s foreign direct investment in the United States.
• Students will integrate information from a media source into their own thoughts and ideas.
• Students will analyze multiple perspectives on China’s growing economy and investment in the United States.
• Students will communicate their opinions to the class, using information collected from the film.
• Students will discuss, negotiate, and advocate for their positions and ideas.
• Students will learn how advancements in technology and mindsets have changed and shaped the global economy.

REQUIREMENTS

MATERIALS

• Whiteboard and markers, chalkboard and chalk, or chart paper and markers
• Monitor/projector, and computer with Internet access
• Student Handout: A Very Short History of the American Textile Industry

TIME:

• 1 class period

TECHNIQUES AND SKILLS

Vocabulary building, large group discussion, problem solving, critical and analytical thinking, utilizing information sources, communicating ideas, weighing pros and cons, research skills, listening skills, categorizing and organizing ideas, understanding conflicting perspectives, responsive and expository writing
PROCEDURES

1. Distribute Student Handout: A Very Short History of the American Textile Industry and allow 15 minutes for students to read the handout and answer the Questions for Further Thinking.

2. Allow 5-10 minutes for a large group discussion about the handout. Use some or all of the following questions as a guide:
   • What is globalization?
   • How has technology contributed to globalization?
   • What do you know about America and China’s economic relationship?
   • After reading the handout, can you guess what “bi-directional investment” means?
   • What is outsourcing? Have you or anyone in your family been impacted by outsourcing?

3. Ask students to direct their attention to the monitor/screen. Play the film “Made By China In America” (TRT 8:25).

4. When the film ends, divide the class in half. If students are not already sitting on two distinct sides of the room, instruct them to rearrange accordingly. Explain that each side will be opposing teams in a debate.

5. Assign one group to be pro-globalization, meaning, they believe the best thing for American business is to work with China and other countries to allow bi-directional investment in US manufacturing. Assign the other group to be anti-globalization, meaning, they believe that American business should be independent of any bi-directional investment with China or any other country. Depending on the size of the class, you may consider imposing guidelines for how many times students should participate in the debate. (For example, if you have a small class, you may consider making a rule that each student must participate at least twice to receive full class points for the day; likewise, if you have a large class, you may consider requiring that each student participate exactly once to receive full class points.)

6. Explain to the class that they will have 20-25 minutes to debate the following question: Should the United States continue to allow Chinese companies to directly invest (create and expand manufacturing) in the United States? Remind students to engage in the debate from the mindset of their assigned role rather than with their personal opinions.

7. Instruct students to rely upon the material in the film they have just watched, as well as any outside knowledge, to bring examples to the debate.
PROCEDURES CONTINUED

8. While students are discussing, make a T-chart for each side’s ideas on a white board, black board, or chart paper, and write ideas in the chart as students suggest them. If students have trouble engaging with the material, consider using the following guiding questions to prompt them during the debate:

- How does China benefit from direct investment in the United States?
- How does the United States benefit from China’s direct investment?
- What negative consequences can direct foreign investment cause for both countries?
- How has the bi-directional investment between China and the United States over the past few years differed from investment patterns of the past?
- How does China’s direct investment relate to United States employment patterns?
- How has technology made this type of globalization possible?
- What motivates Chinese investment in the United States?
- Why has China’s economy grown at a faster rate than ours in recent years?
- What effect will China’s direct investment have on the United States economy in future years? Will this effect be good or bad? For whom?
- Should we encourage more countries to follow China’s lead and directly invest in the United States? Why or why not?

9. For homework, instruct students to write a one-page essay reflecting and expanding on the class activity. Ask students to consider the following questions: What did both sides agree on? What did the sides disagree on? Why do you think these agreements and disagreements occurred? Ultimately, do you think China’s direct investment in the United States is good? Why or why not? Students should draw on information from the class activity as well as the film to complete this assignment. If students would like to watch the film at home, direct them to visit the website wetheconomy.com/films.
A Very Short History of the American Textile Industry

One of the first American industries was the textile industry. From the country's very beginnings, there were artisans creating quilts, clothing, and textiles. But it wasn't until the late 1700's and early 1800's, with the Industrial Revolution, that the textile industry became an economic force. This was due to huge advancements in manufacturing, with machines such as the spinning jenny, the cotton gin, the sewing machine, and the American power loom, shifting textiles from a home-based to a factory-based industry.

As textiles became efficiently mass-produced in factories, there were other developments that took place. People were needed for the workforce, and therefore towns and cities grew around the factories, creating communities that were economically dependent on the industry because almost everyone worked for the textile company.

Aside from some job losses due to the computerization of certain functions in the 1970's and 80's, the American textile industry continued to grow for the next century. In the 1990's however, American textiles saw a major decline. This was, in large part, due to globalization, and American companies found it hard to compete with foreign countries, where labor and overhead costs are lower. In order to reduce costs, many American companies began to outsource and offshore jobs to other countries. Entire towns in states like South Carolina and North Carolina, where the textile industry was huge, found themselves dealing with massive layoffs as factories closed and jobs were moved to other countries.

Now we are seeing another trend. Whereas 20 years ago, labor costs, regulatory costs, environmental compliance costs, utilities, and transportation costs were lower in other countries like China, today, with the exception of labor costs, prices are competitive, and sometimes cheaper, in the United States. Textile companies based in China are looking to move their operations to America to save on overhead. In an interesting turn, Chinese textile companies are rebuilding abandoned factories in states like South Carolina, and hiring Americans to populate their workforce. In addition to factories, these Chinese companies are opening administrative offices and headquarters nearby as well.

Questions for Further Thinking

1. List 5 reasons why moving foreign textile companies back to the US might be good for the US economy.
2. List 5 reasons why moving foreign textile companies back to the US might be good for the foreign companies.
3. Why might Americans be averse to foreign companies relocating to the US?
4. How would you define the phrase “Integrated World Economy”?
5. What comes to mind when you read the phrase “Made in the USA”? What comes to mind when you read the phrase “Made in China”?