

## WHAT IS COMMERCE?



Commerce is a division of trade or production that deals with the exchange of goods and services from producer to final consumer. It refers to the exchange or buying and selling of commodities, especially the exchange of merchandise, on a large scale, between different places or communities; extended trade or traffic.

Any time you buy something, a car, jeans, even a pack of gum, you are engaging in commerce. Commerce is an important part of our society. It allows us to access goods and services. However, the way we engage in commerce can also contribute to pollution, global warming and ultimately climate change.

## WHAT IS PROGRESS?

Progress is moving or going forward; a proceeding onward; an advance. We have seen progress in medicine, technology and human rights that have greatly benefited us as a society. However, sometimes the demands of progress move things along so quickly it is hard to keep track of the effect our advancements are having on the environment.

In Palais Oops!, when the puppets “Commerce” and “Progress” meet up, they both refuse to pause, compromise or slow down. They move so quickly their strings get all tied in a knot. Atlas has to employ very strong strings known as “principles” to get them back in line.

This activity will help your students visualize the effect we have on the environment through the things we buy. It will illustrate how commerce came about, how commerce has changed, and how commerce effects the environment. This activity involves role-playing. You might want to talk through the sequence of events first.

Have two students act out the following scenario: One person wants to buy some bread. One person wants to sell some wheat. How would that work 200 years ago?

Now lets see how it would work now. Start with the same student who wanted to buy bread. Students can join in to play the following roles (feel free to add or subtract from the list where necessary):

- Farmer
- Farm hands
- Scientists (for spraying the food so less bugs eat it)
- Truck driver 1
- Bakers
- Packagers
- Truck Driver 2

### ACTIVITY HOW DOES COMMERCE AFFECT THE ENVIRONMENT? (GRADES 2-8)

Airplane pilots  
Store owner  
Consumer

Who else might be involved?

Advertisers

Plastic bag manufacturers

Construction to build the factories and bakeries

Roads to get the bread from one town to another

Gas stations to keep the trucks running

And on, and on...there is so end to the connection between industries and the effect on the environment. Also, consider how much energy and water is used to produce these things. How is this scenario different and similar when it comes to clothes?

When it comes to meat products? How does the list of people involved get longer when you buy products from far away or overseas?

Discuss how all these steps impact the environment. Then talk about what simple things can we do to lessen the impact on the environment. Things like:

Buy Locally produced food

Buy organic food without pesticides

Ride our bike to the store

Buy larger sizes and freeze it

Buy products with least packaging

Source: Resources to Explore and other Sources for this Kit.

#### Specific Learning

Outcomes:

2-0-3A, 2-0-4G, 2-4-11,  
2-4-12, 3-0-1A, 3-0-1C,  
3-0-3A, 3-0-3B, 3-0-3D,  
3-0-4G, 4-0-1A, 4-0-1C,  
4-0-3D, 4-0-7D, 5-0-1C,  
5-0-7E, 5-0-7F, 5-1-15,  
6-0-1C, 6-0-7H, 6-0-8D,  
6-0-8G, 7-0-1C, 7-0-8G,  
7-0-9E, 7-0-9F, 7-1-06,  
8-0-1C, 8-0-8G, 8-0-9E,  
8-0-9F, 1-KE-027, 6-KG-  
047, 7-KL-019, 7-KC-  
004, 7-KL-026, 7-KL-  
029, 7-KE-052, 7-KE-  
054, 7-VL-009, 7-VE-  
017

#### General Learning

Outcomes: A1, A2, B1,  
B3, B5, C2, C3, C4, C5  
C6, C7, D1, D2, D3, D5,  
E2, E3, 1-S-300, 1-S-  
403 2-S-403, 3-S-403, 4-  
S-403, 5-S-403, 6-S-  
403, 7-S-403, 8-S-403