



## Google Earth Classroom Activity : **Our Connection to Products from the Rainforest**



On the margins of the Amazon River Basin live 27 million people to whom the forest have been providing for thousands of years, among many things, the essential: food. Açaí, the Brazil Nut, Coffee, Wood and Cocoa are just a few examples of the many more products originate in the rainforest. Today, the Amazon feeds people all around the planet and its produce can be found in practically any supermarket. As demand for products from the rainforest increases, more pressure is exerted on these precious ecosystems. With 90 percent of the world's forests outside of protected areas, it is essential that we all work to protect the ecosystems and the wildlife and the cultures of the Amazon that depend on them. The first step to taking action is understanding our own consumer behavior and how we impact the environment.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Students will learn about the origins of different commonly used foods or household goods.
- Students will discuss the ways in which humans support sustainable food production and the ways that we harm food production.
- Students will use a Google My Map to understand geographic relationships and distance.
- Students will have a stronger understanding of their relationship to consumption of products from the rainforest.

**Audience:** 5th-6th grade

**Categories:** Geography, Science, Social Studies

**Voyager Story:** I am Food / Eu sou Alimento

**Tools Required:** Access to a Chrome Browser, Google Earth, Google My Maps, and Google Docs or writing materials.

**Additional:** A collection of rainforest items/food common to everyday life including but not limited to: balsa, bamboo, raffia, coconut, plantains, tangerine, sesame seeds, vanilla, chocolate, chewing gum, soda, and rubber balls. These items should be a mix of foods and products that are local, from the Brazilian rainforest, and other places around the world.

**Time to Complete:** 2hr

### **Recommended Websites for additional materials:**

[Rainforest Alliance](#) (Spanish)

[Associação das Comunidades Remanescentes de Quilombos do Município de Oriximiná](#)

[The Nature Conservancy](#)

[PBS: Journey into Amazonia](#) (English)



## Classroom Activity Guide:

**Chapter A: Identify countries of origin for products (30min)**

**Chapter B: Read 'I am Food' and draw connections to the classroom (30min)**

**Chapter C: Map the journeys of the products (20min)**

**Chapter D: Create an action plan (15min)**

**Chapter E: Present to the entire classroom (30min)**

**Chapter A: Identify countries of origin for products (30min)**

Challenge the students to identify the countries of origin for many products they currently use everyday.

1. Students are divided into small groups.
2. Each group has up to 12 items that are common to everyday life.
3. Students sort the items into three categories, those that originate "locally" or within a 10 mile radius from their home, the "rainforest," and those that originate from other countries, "imports".
4. Students search the internet for the countries that produce these items.
5. Once the country of origin is found, students will create a Google My Map and plot where the items originate.
  - a. Note, if the item originates from more than one country, have the students indicate that on the map. You can have the students change the color of the pins or polygons to help visualize where the items are from.

**Chapter B: Read 'I am Food' and draw connections to the classroom (30min)**

Students begin to understand where these items are from and how the amount of resources may impact the integrity of a landscape, the farmers, and the economy.

1. Have the students independently read the Google Earth Voyager story 'I am FOOD' and as a class watch the videos embedded in the story. Have the students spend a few minutes writing down their reactions and any follow up questions.
2. Lead an open discussion where the class discusses the Brazilian nut. Introduce the idea of the importance of conservation of these resources and how we still may be able to harvest products while keeping the rainforest safe.
  - a. Why are the quilombolas so important in the process of keeping the trees healthy?
  - b. What are other plants and animals that require human care?
  - c. What are other products that the Brazil nut is used in?
3. The Student team will choose 3 items from their previous list, one local, one from the rainforest, and one imported. Through more thorough internet research, students will discover where their items are from and how they are harvested or farmed, transported, and how they are priced when sold.
4. Each student will write a story of the journey one item must make to get to their home or school and some of the experiences they might have along the way from start to finish. Include all animals, people, climate, transportation, and other products the item may encounter. This should be role-modeled by the teacher so that each different type of transportation and their possible routes is talked about with children.



### **Chapter C: Map the journeys of the products (20min)**

Students take the product from their story and follow its journey on a map from point of origin to their home or school.

1. Using Google My Maps, the student teams will collaborate to trace the route that their products might take to get to their home or school.
2. Have students use the measuring tools to understand distances. Challenge the students to chart how it might have moved across land or over waterways to get to their home. These might be marked in different colors on the maps. Does this journey take more time? Is it a longer distance to go over water or land routes?
3. Once mapped, the students will discuss what observations can be made by the paths that the products travel and impact on the environment.
  - a. What ecosystems, communities, and economies might be impacted by the routes?
    - i. In the Voyager story there is a map of demographics that you can reference for the discussion.
  - b. How are we helping or harming the environment?

### **Chapter D: Create an action plan (15min)**

Challenge Students to recognize where the products that they have in their home originate from. How can they change their consumer behavior to help protect the rainforest?

1. Students spend 5-10m brainstorming ways to inform their family of what they learned in class.

### **Chapter E: Present to the entire classroom (30min)**

Student teams present their Google My Maps and what they learned from the activity, sharing the actions they plan to take at home and in the classroom.