



The Journey of Bananas from Farm to Fork

Grade Level: K-12 (can be adapted for specific ages)

This project aims to engage K-12 students in understanding the historical, cultural, environmental, and economic journey of bananas from farm to fork. Students will explore the lifecycle of bananas, their trade history, and their environmental impact, fostering critical thinking about global trade, sustainable agriculture, and the carbon footprint of everyday foods.

Driving Question:

How does the journey of bananas from farm to fork illustrate the connections between history, trade, environment, and sustainability, and what actions can we take to reduce its carbon footprint?

Project Overview:

Students will explore the origins, growth, transportation, and environmental impact of bananas, tracing their path from ancient tropical regions to modern supermarket shelves worldwide. Through this project, they will learn about the banana's historical journey, current farming practices, international trade, and the carbon footprint across its lifecycle stages.

Learning Objectives:

- **History and Culture:** Understand the origins and spread of bananas, tracing their path from Southeast Asia to becoming a global staple.
- **Science and Sustainability:** Explore the stages of banana farming, transportation, and storage, examining the environmental impact at each stage.
- **Economics:** Learn how banana trade affects economies, especially in tropical regions, and the role of consumer choices in sustainability.
- **Geography and Environment:** Map the journey of bananas, examining climate, soil, and ecosystem factors influencing their growth.

Key Inquiry Questions:

1. How did bananas spread from Southeast Asia to the rest of the world, and what role did ancient trade routes play in this?
2. What farming methods are used in banana cultivation, and how do they impact the environment?
3. How is the banana trade structured today, and what are its economic and social impacts?
4. What are the carbon emissions associated with the banana's journey from farm to fork, and how can they be reduced?



Supporting Video Material:

Banana's Part 1, 2 and 3

Examples of Possible Activities:

1. Research and Storytelling (History and Culture):

- Students create a timeline that traces the historical journey of bananas from their origins in Southeast Asia to becoming a popular global fruit.
- Students present their findings creatively, such as through a story, comic, or short film illustrating the role of bananas in various cultures.

2. Environmental Impact Analysis (Science and Sustainability):

- Students analyse the carbon footprint of each stage of the banana's lifecycle—from cultivation to transportation and storage—comparing emissions from different farming and shipping methods.
- In groups, students propose sustainable practices to minimize the carbon footprint of bananas, such as reducing waste or choosing eco-friendly transportation.

3. Global Trade Exploration (Economics and Geography):

- Students research global trade routes for bananas, identifying key exporting and importing countries. They create maps to show the journey of bananas from major producers to supermarkets worldwide.
- Students discuss how trade impacts tropical economies and the challenges involved, such as maintaining fair labour practices and ensuring environmental sustainability.

4. Climate and Cultivation (Geography and Environment):

- Students investigate how climate and soil quality affect banana growth and the unique environmental requirements for banana farming.
- They compare traditional and eco-friendly farming techniques, exploring how practices like organic farming can reduce environmental impact.

5. Consumer Choices and Carbon Footprint:

- Students explore consumer behaviours affecting banana sustainability, such as waste reduction, composting peels, and choosing fair-trade bananas.
- They create a "Sustainable Banana Guide" that provides tips for making eco-friendly choices when buying, storing, and consuming bananas.

Final Project Presentation:

Students will showcase their work by:

- A timeline of banana history, tracing its global journey.



- Maps and illustrations showing banana trade routes and the environmental impact of transportation.
- Creative storytelling or visual media depicting the journey from farm to fork.
- A “Sustainable Banana Guide” with practical tips on reducing the carbon footprint of bananas.

Assessment Criteria:

- **Research and Inquiry:** Depth of research on banana history, trade, and environmental impact.
- **Creativity and Communication:** Ability to present findings creatively through timelines, maps, and storytelling.
- **Critical Thinking:** Engagement in discussions, debates, and reflections on balancing economic benefits with sustainability in banana production.

Teacher’s Tips for Implementing the Project:

- **Use Local Context:** Encourage students to draw parallels between the banana trade and any local agricultural products to deepen understanding.
- **Integrate Subject Areas:** Use the project to connect history, science, geography, and economics.
- **Encourage Sustainable Choices:** Facilitate discussions on how consumer choices impact the carbon footprint and encourage students to consider small steps they can take toward sustainability.