

- ▶ the fair trade movement
- ▶ fair trade vs. free trade

8.1 About business Fair trade or free trade?

Discussion



1 Answer these questions.

- 1 What sort of products are traded under the label 'fair trade'?
- 2 When you buy a cup of coffee, what is 'a fair price'?
- 3 If you spent your holidays working on a coffee farm, how would you define 'a fair wage' and 'fair working conditions'?
- 4 If you owned a café, how would you define 'a fair profit' on a cup of coffee?

Predicting

2 Read the title of the article opposite and predict which of these points will be expressed by the writer. Then read the article and check your predictions.

- 1 Fair trade products make rich consumers feel guilty.
- 2 Free trade would help the poorest farmers more than fair trade.
- 3 Fair trade products are low quality.
- 4 Fair trade farmers are encouraged to modernize their production methods.
- 5 Big coffee chains force farmers to reduce their prices.

Reading for detail

3 Read the article again and answer the questions.

- 1 What must be paid to get fair trade certification?
- 2 Why might western consumers be attracted to fair trade goods?
- 3 Which consequence of fair trade has led Mexican producers to expand production?
- 4 Why do richer producers benefit most from fair trade?
- 5 Which processes of agricultural development has fair trade discouraged?
- 6 How have consumer attitudes to coffee changed?
- 7 Which producers have improved income without help from fair trade?

4 Find phrases in the article that imply these strong opinions.

- 1 Fair trade supporters know very little about economics. (paragraph 1)
- 2 Fixing fair trade prices unfairly deprives the poorest farmers of a way to make a living. (paragraph 2)
- 3 Fair trade supporters are naive to think they can solve all the problems of the developing world. (paragraph 3)
- 4 Fair trade supporters are out of touch with the realities of modern agriculture. (paragraph 4)
- 5 Fair trade prevents producers from increasing efficiency and revenue. (paragraph 4)
- 6 Coffee chains, unlike fair trade campaigners, benefit poor producers. (paragraph 6)

Listening

5 Listen to a radio phone-in about the article. What two benefits of fair trade does the speaker argue for?

Discussion

6 In small groups, discuss how far you think each of the statements below is true.

- Free trade rewards efficiency; fair trade rewards bad habits.
- Fair trade is the best protection some workers have against exploitation.
- Fair trade is just a fashion among rich western consumers.
- Free trade only looks to the short-term; fair trade looks at the bigger picture.

Internet research

Search for the keywords *fair trade vs free trade*. What values do the two movements share?