Trade-Offs Across Oceans

Weigh the gains and costs of trade across three regions.

7.E.1 "Evaluate the benefits and opportunity costs of voluntary trade and specialization on the standards of living in Africa, Asia, and the Southwest Pacific."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one benefit and circle one opportunity cost or risk in each paragraph. Use your marks to compare how trade may change living standards.

What Does Trade Make Possible?

1. At a port in Ghana, workers load cocoa beans onto a ship bound for Japan. Farmers in Ghana grow cocoa because its warm, wet climate suits the crop, and buyers abroad pay for it. This specialization gives some families income to buy food, school supplies, and medicine, which can improve living standards. But land used for cocoa cannot grow as much food for local sale. If cocoa prices fall, farmers who rely on one crop may earn less. Trade is voluntary when both buyer and seller choose the exchange.

2. In Vietnam, some farms specialize in rice, which traders can sell overseas. Suppose a trader in Fiji chooses to buy Vietnamese rice because it costs less than growing the same amount on scarce farmland. The purchase can leave more land for other crops and make meals more affordable. Vietnamese farmers earn money from the sale. Yet rice fields use land and water that could support other crops, and Fiji may depend on ships arriving on time. If freight prices rise, imported rice may cost more. Each choice gives up the next best use of resources.

3. Near Fiji, fishers may sell tuna to buyers in Japan, where shoppers want seafood. Selling abroad can bring wages and tax revenue that help pay for services, while Japanese shoppers gain another food choice. If more boats focus on export catches, however, fewer fish may reach local markets, and heavy fishing can reduce future catches. Fiji's fishers must weigh today's earnings against local meals and fish stocks tomorrow. Across these places, specialization can make goods or income more available, but no trade choice removes the cost of what people give up.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could specializing in cocoa improve living standards for some families in Ghana? What could happen to those families if cocoa prices fall?

2. Why might buying rice from Vietnam improve living standards in Fiji? What trade-related risk could weaken that benefit?

3. Should Fiji send every tuna catch to Japan? Support your judgment with one benefit of selling tuna abroad and one cost from the passage.

4. Compare Ghana's cocoa trade with Fiji's tuna trade. How can each raise living standards, and what different resource or local need might each give up?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a town in the Southwest Pacific can grow pineapples or build rainwater tanks, but cannot do enough of both. In four sentences, judge whether it should specialize in pineapples and trade them to an Asian town for tanks, stating one living-standard benefit, one opportunity cost, and one condition that could change your judgment.

ANSWER KEY

Trade-Offs Across Oceans

GRADE 7 · 7.E.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one benefit and circle one opportunity cost or risk in each paragraph. Use your marks to compare how trade may change living standards. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could specializing in cocoa improve living standards for some families in Ghana? What could happen to those families if cocoa prices fall?	**Cocoa sales can provide income for food, school supplies, and medicine. If prices fall, families that rely on cocoa may earn less.**
2	Why might buying rice from Vietnam improve living standards in Fiji? What trade-related risk could weaken that benefit?	**The rice may make meals more affordable and leave farmland for other crops. Higher freight prices or late ships could make imported rice less useful or more costly.**
3	Should Fiji send every tuna catch to Japan? Support your judgment with one benefit of selling tuna abroad and one cost from the passage.	**A reasonable judgment is no. Export sales can bring wages and tax revenue, but sending every catch abroad could leave fewer fish for local markets.**
4	Compare Ghana's cocoa trade with Fiji's tuna trade. How can each raise living standards, and what different resource or local need might each give up?	**Both trades can bring income. Cocoa farming uses land that could grow local food, while tuna exports may leave fewer fish for local markets or reduce future catches.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would grow pineapples and trade some for rainwater tanks if the exchange brings enough tanks for the town. The tanks could give families more dependable water storage. By growing pineapples, the town gives up the chance to build its own tanks and develop those skills. If shipping tanks becomes too expensive, I would reconsider the plan.

Accept different judgments when students support them with a benefit, a specific opportunity cost, and a condition that could change the outcome. In question 3, students may also cite reduced future fish catches as a cost.