

Can't We Just Print More Money?

Worksheet for Lesson Four: Writing non-fiction and developing a podcast



Refer to Chapter Five: *Why are so many of my clothes made in Asia?*

Extract

Look at the labels on the clothes you're wearing now. What do you notice? Apart from finding that you might need a new T-shirt, if you're in the UK you may find that pretty much everything you're wearing has been made abroad. Nor is it just your T-shirts. In our living rooms we counted 'Made in' labels from over forty countries. Our lamp was made in Denmark, our sofa in Italy and our TV in Taiwan. Ikea is a Swedish company, but our Billy bookshelf was made in Germany.

[...]

The more complex the item, the more it seems to travel. On average, a smartphone has travelled around the world nearly twenty times during its manufacture, drawing on inputs from nearly fifty countries. An aircraft wing might be shunted back and forth across borders a dozen times before it even gets attached to a plane.

While all this swapping and changing sounds dizzyingly high-tech, there's little that's new about the principle. Trade has been happening for centuries – long before the era of planes and online shopping. That's because trade offers a clear economic benefit to those who undertake it.

[...]

The Silk Road, one of the oldest trading routes in the world, linked China and the Roman Empire from the second century BCE onwards. But slowly and surely, through history the amount of international trade has grown. By the seventeenth century, you could buy potatoes, tomatoes, coffee and chocolate in Europe, even though these were products of the Americas. The invention of steamships and trains in the nineteenth century then took global trade to hitherto unimaginable levels. As **Keynes** observed in 1919, 'The inhabitant of London could order by telephone, sipping his morning tea in bed, the various products of the whole Earth, in such quantity as he might see fit, and reasonably expect their early delivery upon his doorstep.'

Fast-forward to the twenty-first century and we live in a world of trade that even **Keynes** – writing over a century ago – could barely have imagined. [...] In fact, trade has increased by more than 4,000 per cent since 1900. This is one reason why the world feels like a smaller place. Globalisation – the growing interdependence of the world's economies – means that the vast majority of goods and services consumed around the world have been sourced from multiple countries.

Here, then, is the answer to why the T-shirts in your wardrobe are made in Asia...

Glossary:

Keynes: John Maynard Keynes was an early 20th century influential British economist.