

Fair Trade – Introduction

PRE-READING VOCABULARY TASK *

Match the words on the left with the meanings on the right.

1. consumer	a. the lowest amount of money you can pay a worker
2. conscience	b. trustworthy to do the right thing
3. responsible	c. an object that is handmade
4. mass-produced	d. buyer
5. wages	e. earnings for work completed
6. artifact	f. a person who expresses negativity
7. critic	g. a sense of what is right and wrong
8. corrupt	h. to be dishonest for personal gain
9. minimum wage	i. to make sure that rules are followed
10. enforce	j. made in very large quantities



European Union FAIRTRADE Logo

Reading Sample . . .

Fair Trade

Are you a **consumer** with a **conscience**? Your conscience tells you when something is right or wrong. It sometimes reminds you not to buy something expensive that you don't need. Your conscience may also tell you to pay a little more for something that is made in a **responsible** way. Fair trade is a system that tries to give producers in developing countries the money they deserve. Popular fair trade items include coffee, tea, and chocolate. Do you look at the labels when you buy these items?

Products that are made far away are sometimes the least expensive. How can that be? It's simple. **Mass-produced** goods are often made by people who receive extremely low **wages**. The working environment in developing countries may be unsafe and unfair. Production may even involve child labor. This is what the fair trade movement tries to fix.

In some countries, women are not able to earn money. The fair trade system helps women earn money by selling handmade goods such as clothing, bags, and other **artifacts**. As a **consumer**, you can support a single, talented seamstress and her children instead of a **box store**.

Paying a little more for fair trade goods is a way for consumers to reduce poverty around the world. However, not everyone can afford to do this. Some people *live paycheck to paycheck*. They can only afford the lowest prices at the local chain store.

How reliable is fair trade labeling? Can you be sure that a farmer's family will benefit if you pay extra for your coffee? **Critics** of fair trade doubt this. They believe it's the companies that benefit from the higher prices. Some fair trade co-ops are **corrupt**. Corruption includes false labeling or not paying farmers the required **minimum wage**. It is difficult for the fair trade labeling organization to **enforce** fair trade practices in farms around the world. Should consumers do their own research?