

The big debate: chocolate in schools

Why do we eat chocolate?

Some discussion points might include:

Taste - What do we like about chocolate? Its texture, sweetness, aroma and added ingredients such as crispy rice, fruit and nuts?

Price - What do we spend? How are we encouraged to buy brands? Through price promotions, coupons etc?

Marketing - 'Marketing' means chocolate companies using lots of ways to make us buy more of their product, or choose it over another one. What do we know about the ways manufacturers try to persuade us to buy their products and do they work? Are we influenced by competitions, adverts or collecting coupons for prizes? Does packaging or the way the product is displayed in the shop influence what we buy?

Peer pressure - Do young people generally like to be seen with 'popular' products? Are they influenced by what their friends choose or by celebrity endorsements?

Advertising - What kind of image do chocolate brands try and promote with their advertising? Do young people like products with an 'attitude' and how would they define the 'attitudes' of different brands?

Availability - Does wide availability or ease of purchase affect choice? Do students go for the first thing they see on the shelf or hunt around for something they really like?

Product ethics - Do brands talk about the ethical value of their products, and all the different people behind the product?

Should Fairtrade influence what we buy?

- Does Fairtrade influence what students decide to buy, and if so, how?
- What do students know about the people who grow the cocoa for chocolate? (What do they earn? What conditions do they live in? What difference does Fairtrade make to their lives?)
- Is it our responsibility as consumers to find out as much as we can about the people who actually grow or make the things we eat? Should you act on what you discover?
- Look at materials promoting Fairtrade products, such as packaging, advertising, websites and educational materials and compare these to materials produced by other brands.

Should students be able to buy Fairtrade chocolate at school?

Are you allowed to eat chocolate at school? If chocolate is sold at school, you could look at which brands are available and if any of them are Fairtrade. How are decisions made over which brands to sell?

If chocolate is not allowed, what are the reasons for this? Do you agree with these reasons?

Healthy lifestyles may be an issue. Here are some discussion starters:

- Is chocolate a healthy 'product'? Why/why not? Where could we find out? Is there a 'healthy' amount of chocolate to consume?
- Where could we find out about healthy living guidelines, including information on a balanced diet? As well as what we eat, what else makes for a healthy lifestyle?
- Should young people be just told, or should they be able to make their own informed choices about living in a healthy way? What does it mean to be a healthy school?