

Activity

Episode 15
3rd June 2014

Palm Oil

Key Learning

Students will develop a deeper understanding the impact palm oil production has on the habitat of orang-utans. They will also investigate the use of palm oil in grocery products.

The Australian Curriculum

Science /Science Understanding/ Biological sciences

Interactions between organisms can be described in terms of food chains and food chains and food webs; human activity can affect these interactions

Year 7 ([ACSSU112](#))



Civics and Citizenship/Knowledge and Understanding/Citizenship, diversity and identity

The obligations citizens may consider they have beyond their own national borders as active and informed global citizens

Year 6 ([ACHCK039](#))



Discussion Questions

1. What have you learned about palm oil and its impact on orang-utans as a result of watching this story?
2. How many types of orang-utans are there in the world? Name them.
3. Where do orang-utans live?
4. Describe the orang-utans' natural environment.
5. Why have orang-utans become an endangered species?
6. What is palm oil and where does it come from?
7. Why does Tahlia want palm oil production stopped?
8. How are the palm oil plantations important to the economy of Indonesia and Malaysia?
9. Some people have started sustainable palm oil plantations. What does this mean?
10. How many orphan orang-utans has Tahlia adopted? What are their names?

Activities

Glossary

Working in pairs, students create a glossary of words related to the palm oil. Follow up this activity with a class discussion to ensure students understand the terms.

Palm oil	Deforestation	Habitat
Orangutan	Indonesia	Plantation
Biofuel	Borneo	Sustainable

Students will present their glossary in an interesting way

- *Wordle* word cloud <http://www.wordle.net/>
- A poster to go up around your school
- Use the words to form your own sentences

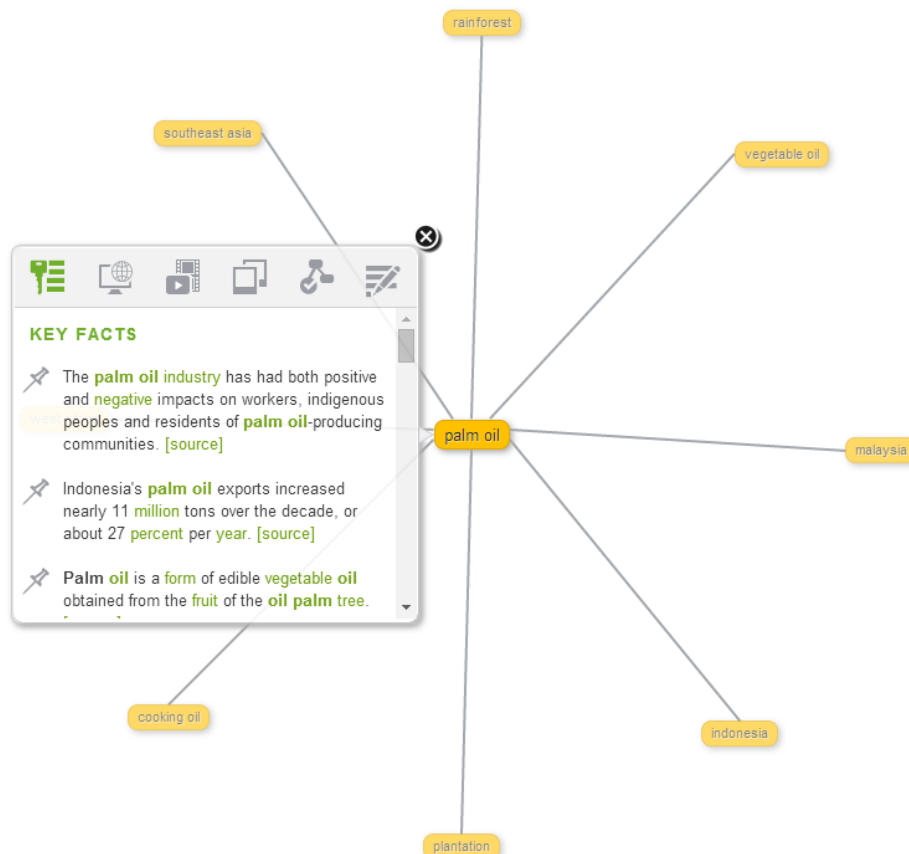
Finding out about Palm Oil

After watching the BtN *Palm Oil* story, hold a class discussion to encourage students to engage with the topic and learn more about palm oil. Provide students with the opportunity to conduct their own research using some of the following questions.

Research questions

- What is palm oil?
- Where is most of the world's palm oil grown? Locate using Google maps.
- How is palm oil grown?
- Why does the growing of palm oil lead to deforestation?
- How much land/forest is cleared every year for oil palm plantations?
- What is sustainable palm oil?
- How much palm oil does Australia import each year?

To help with their research, students can use an interactive mindmap at the InstaGrok website <http://www.instagrok.com/> Students can find out more about palm oil using the different functions of the mindmap; *key facts, websites, videos, images, concepts or adding notes.*



Palm oil and Orang-utans

Of the 11 million hectares of oil palm plantations around the world, about 6 million hectares are found in Indonesia. Two species of orang-utans that are affected by palm oil production

Create a profile for each including the following:

Common names

Scientific name

Location

Population

Status

Main threats to the species

Sumatran Orang-utan



Borneo Orang-utan



Investigate:

What effect do palm oil plantations have on the orang-utan habitat?

What is being done to protect orang-utan habitats?

Design a poster that shows the connection between palm oil and orang-utans.

Products containing palm oil

Students will investigate the use of palm oil in grocery products. The following questions may help guide their research:

- What is palm oil used for?
- What products contain palm oil?
- How are food products that contain palm oil labelled?
- What can consumers do?
- What are some solutions to the palm oil problem? What is sustainable palm oil?
- Is boycotting palm oil products the solution? Explain why or why not.

Ask students to make a list of products that contain palm oil and list possible alternatives. The websites at the end of this activity may help students find the information. Discuss ways that students can raise awareness about the issue.

Related Research Links

Behind the News - Orang-utans

<http://www.abc.net.au/btn/story/s2502368.htm>

WWF – Palm oil fact sheet

http://www.wwf.org.au/our_work/saving_the_natural_world/forests/palm_oil/fact_sheet/

WWF – Orangutans and oil palm plantations

http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/about_forests/deforestation/forest_conversion_agriculture/orang_utan_s_palm_oil/

ABC Splash – Palm Oil (video)

<http://splash.abc.net.au/media/-/m/525335/palm-oil>

Palm Oil Investigations - About Palm Oil

<http://www.palmoilinvestigations.org/about-palm-oil>