

The Dark Side of Outsourcing



Summary of Issues and Learning Outcomes

Lesson Outcome	Students will be introduced to and asked to assess arguments opposed to outsourcing.
Inquiry Questions	To what extent is outsourcing detrimental to both countries involved?
Values and Attitudes Outcomes	3.6 analyze economic challenges of globalization (outsourcing). 3.2 recognize and appreciate impacts of globalization on people and the economy.
Knowledge and Understanding Outcomes	4.1 recognize and appreciate the impact of globalization on the quality of life of individuals and communities. 4.5 analyze impacts of globalization (awareness of global issues, employment issues) 4.8 analyze how globalization affects individuals and communities (contemporary issues). S.1 assess the validity of information based on context, bias, sources, objectivity, evidence or reliability. S.1 evaluate the logic of assumptions underlying a position.
Key Skills	S.1.5 evaluate personal assumptions and opinions. S.1.9 identify main ideas underlying a position or issue. S.8.2 engage in respectful discussion. S.8.4 ask respectful and relevant questions of others to clarify viewpoints on an issue. S.8.5 make respectful and reasoned comments on the topic of discussion.

Activity Overview

Time:

- 3 periods

Preparation:

- Obtain and prepare to show:
 - Video Clip #1 (Closing Scene of Michael Moore's "The Big One")
 - Video Clip #2 (Michael Moore's "NAFTA Mike")
 - Video Clip #3 (Opening of Michael Moore's "Roger & Me")
- Photocopy **Activity Master 12.1: The Dark Side of Outsourcing** and accompanying readings
- Obtain and preview film clips; make preparations for showing the film clips to the class

This activity examines the “down side” of outsourcing from the perspective of Michael Moore and countries involved in this process.

Students will watch and respond to several video clips and articles by Michael Moore. You may wish to include other perspectives such as Naomi Klein, Avi Lewis, or Maude Barlow.

Film clips will be used to explore the negative impacts of outsourcing on workers and communities in both the developed and the developing world. After examining these impacts, students will analyze the biases and point of view of the filmmaker.

Activity 12 and 13 are optional activities. If you wish to use them they should be placed after Activity 5. If you omit Activity 12, then you should also omit Activity 13.

Key Concepts

- outsourcing
- global labour pool; global economic competition
- free trade; employment issues of globalization
- globalization as a threat; job losses; loss of income
- corporate greed; profit motive;
- exploitation
- export processing zones; maquiladoras
- corporate social responsibility
- economic nationalism; protectionism
- bias; point of view; prejudice; slanted opinion; objectivity; subjectivity
- propaganda; balanced reporting

Resources

- Video Clip #1: “Nike Chairman Phil Knight with Michael Moore” from The Big One (8:03 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOI0V4kRCIQ&p=331EC70EB9AE6DC3&playnext=1&index=5>

At the end of this movie, Michael Moore confronts Nike founder and CEO Phil Knight about the outsourcing of shoemaking.

- Video Clip #2: Michael Moore's NAFTA Mike (24.33 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwJWF4RNsI4>

In this video clip, Darrel Hurt, a laid-off automobile factory worker, travels to Mexico to try to get his old job back. His job, according to the clip, has been shipped to Mexico due to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In Mexico, Hurt tours a factory where Mexican workers are now



doing the work that he used to do back in the USA. This video clip is readily available in two separate DVD sets: 1) “The Best of the Awful Truth” DVD by Michael Moore; and 2) “The Awful Truth, The Complete First Season” by Michael Moore. This clip was originally broadcast in Episode 12 of the first season of Michael Moore’s *The Awful Truth* TV series.

- Video Clip #3: Opening of Michael Moore’s *Roger & Me* (9:57 minutes)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xs9ODBUvdw&feature=related>
 Moore’s brief autobiographical account of his upbringing (son of an auto-worker; nephew of an auto-worker; friend of laid-off auto workers; former resident of a town—Flint, Michigan—devastated by the outsourcing of automobile manufacturing jobs) helps to contextualize his opposition to outsourcing. “Roger & Me” is widely available on DVD.
- iKachina’s “Michael Moore: Lightning Rod of the Left” (biographical article)
<http://agilewriter.com/Biography/Mmoore.htm>
- Joyce D. Sinclair’s “Is filmmaker Michael Moore biased?” (editorial about the objectivity of Michael Moore)
www.helium.com/items/1262676-michael-moore-bias-in-the-media
- Robert Douglas’ “Is Michael Moore biased?” (another editorial about the Michael Moore’s bias and point of view)
www.helium.com/items/463059-is-filmmaker-michael-moore-biased
- Profile of Michael Moore by American Movie Classics
http://www.amctv.com/originals/shootout/smsso_guests/biopage_moore
- Biography of Michael Moore from the Biography Channel
<http://www.thebiographychannel.co.uk/biographies/michael-moore.html>
- Biography of Michael Moore from Starpulse.com
http://www.starpulse.com/Actors/Moore,_Michael/Biography/
- Excerpts from Michael Moore’s book *Downsize This* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1996)
 - 1) “Phil Knight: Corporate Crook”, pp. 127-129
 - 2) “NAFTA’s Great”, pp. 275-276
 - 3) “Why Doesn’t GM Sell Crack?”, pp. 282-287
- Naomi Klein:
http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aeve/movieLauncher.html?movie=smil/no_logo.mov

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Objectives/Rationale

This activity will examine one of the most controversial trends within present-day economic globalization: the practice of contracting out work to a foreign supplier or manufacturer in order to cut costs. Students will extend their knowledge and understanding of outsourcing. Students will continue to develop appreciation of and a respect for alternate perspectives.

Instructional Strategies

- 1) Introduce the concept of outsourcing and have students evaluate the following quotation:
“Corporate executives who outsource work abroad are traitors to Canada. Canadian businesses have a patriotic duty to employ Canadians. It is wrong for Canadian companies to profit from firing Canadian employees and contracting out their work to low-wage workers in foreign countries.”
Ask students to express their level of agreement with this opinion (Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). Invite students to explain their positions in a classroom discussion.
- 2) Distribute Activity Master 12.1: The Dark Side of Outsourcing and suggested readings. Introduce the assignment. Instruct students to complete as much of the worksheet as possible during their viewing of the upcoming clips from Michael Moore’s films.
- 3) View the first film clip from The Big One (8:02 minutes).
- 4) Discuss whether students side with Michael Moore or Phil Knight on the issue of outsourcing. Discuss whose opinion about outsourcing is most valid. Discuss whether or not all opinions are equally valid.
- 5) View the second film clip NAFTA Mike (24:33 minutes).
- 6) Discuss Michael Moore’s economic beliefs and how these beliefs may influence his opinion about outsourcing. The discussion should focus on economic nationalism, protectionism, and leftism.
- 7) Introduce the concepts of bias and point of view. Discuss personal factors that may shape our opinion on issues.
- 8) View the third film clip from Roger and Me (10 minutes). Moore provides a short autobiography at the beginning of Roger & Me which helps to reveal his formative influences.
- 9) Discuss personal factors that may influence Moore’s standpoint on outsourcing.

Follow Up

Students complete Activity Master 12.1 as a homework assignment—using the readings as sources of information.

Check if homework is done at the beginning of the next class period; discuss student answers following the homework check.

Differentiated Learning

Select one part of the lesson to focus on (particular film clip, section of the worksheet, single article, or exploration of bias).

Metacognition

Did this activity challenge your ideas and position on outsourcing? How?

Assessment

The teacher may choose to take in the assignment for formal grading.



ACTIVITY MASTER 12.1:
The Dark Side of Outsourcing



Instructions: Use the film clips and readings provided to complete the following exercises as thoroughly as possible

A) Film clip from The Big One.

A1. What is outsourcing?

A2. Complete the following two-column chart in the space provided.

What arguments does Phil Knight make in support of outsourcing?	What arguments does Michael Moore make against outsourcing?

A3. Whose defence of position do you find most convincing on the outsourcing issue—Knight’s or Moore’s? Why? Explain.



A4. In your opinion, does Phil Knight deserve to be labelled “a corporate crook” by Michael Moore? Why or why not? Explain.

B) Film clip from NAFTA Mike.

B1. Complete the following two-column chart in the space provided.

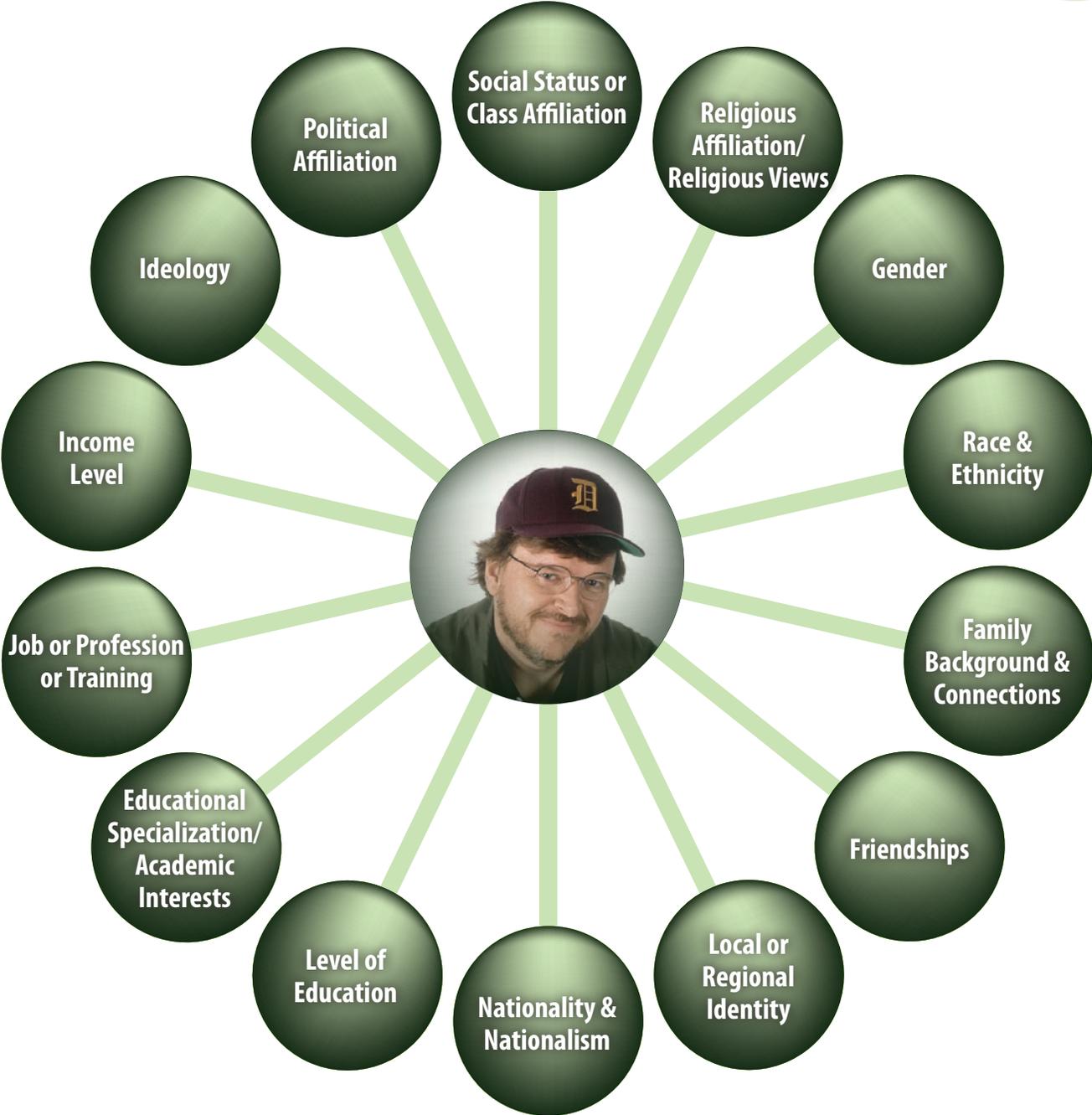
According to the NAFTA Mike video clip, what are the negative impacts of outsourcing on American workers?	According to the NAFTA Mike video clip, what are the negative impacts of outsourcing on Mexican workers??

B1. Complete the following two-column chart in the space provided.

Term	Definition	Can this term be used to accurately classify Michael Moore?
a) economic nationalist	Someone who believes that all members of a nation should purchase products made by national companies rather than foreign companies; someone who believes that national companies should show loyalty to national consumers and workers; someone who wants to limit foreign ownership and investment	
b) protectionist	Someone who wants his/her national government to shield the nation's domestic industries from foreign competition by taxing imports; an opponent of free trade; a supporter of trade barriers and tariffs	
c) liberal	Someone who calls for greater personal freedom and a development towards a fairer sharing of wealth and power within society; someone who favours gradual reform, especially reforms that extend democracy, distribute wealth more evenly, and protect the personal freedom of the individual	
d) socialist	Someone who supports social welfare programs, higher taxes for corporations and the rich, labour rights and protections, and the regulation of private businesses	
e) leftist	Someone who believes that wealth and power should be shared between all parts of society; someone who calls for liberal reform or revolutionary change in the social, political, or economic order; a supporter of liberal, socialist, or communist political and social changes or reform	
f) trade unionist/ labour unionist	A supporter of labour unions and collective bargaining; a supporter of the right of labour unions to collect dues from members, bargain with employers for higher wages and better working conditions for union members, and to carry out strikes against employers; a supporter of any organization of workers formed for the purpose of advancing its members' interests in respect to wages, benefits, and working conditions	
g) populist	A supporter of ordinary people; a defender of the rights and interests of ordinary people; a believer in the rights, wisdom, or virtues of the common people; a leader who represents the interests and concerns of the common people rather than the rich, the politically powerful, or the intellectual elite	
h) anti-globalist	Someone who rejects the current global economic and trade system because of the belief that it undermines prosperity, the environment, labour rights, national sovereignty, and the interests of developing countries	



Examples of Personal Factors That May Influence a Person's Standpoint on an Issue



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D. Bias/Point-of-View Analysis of Michael Moore's Anti-Outsourcing Perspective

D1. After reading the attached biographies of Michael Moore, identity five factors which probably and significantly shaped Moore's standpoint on outsourcing. Explain how and why each factor might have influenced his position.

Personal Factor	Explanation of how and why this factor may influence Moore's views on outsourcing
a)	
b)	
c)	
d)	
e)	



E. Excerpts from Michael Moore's Downsize This!

E1. What arguments against outsourcing are presented by Moore in Downsize This!?

E2. To what extent does Michael Moore persuasively defend his position on outsourcing in Downsize This!? Why? Explain.

E3. Briefly describe the argumentative strategies and persuasive approaches used by Michael Moore to win over an audience (with his films and TV programs) and/or a readership (with his books). What are the strengths and weaknesses of these strategies and approaches?
