
Should We “Buy American”?

Segment Length: 3:03 minutes; 5:36 minutes

Videos:

“Top 5 Reasons You Should Buy American”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hM5BBA3bd04>

“‘Buy American’ Is Nonsense”

<https://stosselintheclassroom.org/2016/10/22/both-sides-should-we-buy-american/>

Guide:

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

Analysis Questions:

1. The America Technical Furniture video said you should buy American because it supports human rights. Would buying American products improve working conditions in other countries? Why/Why not?
2. The America Technical Furniture video said, “When you buy American, the money stays in the U.S. economy.” What did they mean by this?
3. The American Technical Furniture video said “you’ll feel good about yourself when you buy American products.” Is this a good argument to buy American? Why/Why not?
4. David Henderson says we should buy things where they are cheapest without any fear of destroying American jobs. What happens to the savings from buying cheap, foreign products rather than goods made in America?
5. David Henderson says division of labor makes us better off, even when that means trading with foreigners. He says if buying American is good for America, then buying only in your state or city should be even better. What’s his argument as it relates to division of labor? How might someone on the other side of this issue respond?
6. Why is free trade coffee not the best way to ensure that overseas farmers earn a decent living, according to David Henderson?
7. What would happen to sweatshop workers if Americans stopped buying the goods they produce? Why would David Henderson say that sweatshops make both workers and consumers better off?