International Cooperation

We need international cooperation to make decisions about things that affect people in more than one country, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, conflicts and climate change.

We can only solve these global issues if countries work together, so it is important that countries learn how to cooperate fairly and effectively - agreeing on shared goals, and recognising that countries have different levels of responsibility and wealth.

The Sustainable Development Goals are a great example of international cooperation.

Conversation starter

What could we achieve if we all work together?

Class activity

The Riddle of the Resources

This game, which brings to life the Tragedy of the Commons, helps learners to explore the challenge of balancing our individual needs with the needs of the larger community.

Divide the class into groups of 4, plus 1 additional person in each group who will take the role of Refiller.

Give each a group a container with 10 counters inside, and give every Refiller a store of counters.

Explain to the groups that the aim of the game is for everyone to get as many counters as possible. They can take counters out of the bowl at any time and in any quantities.

Every 10 seconds, ring a bell. At this point, the Refiller will double the number of counters left in the container, to a maximum of 10 counters.

The game ends after 5 minutes, or if the group's container is completely empty.

Players are not allowed to communicate with each other during the game.

After the first round of the game, allow groups five minutes to invent their own rules to increase their harvests.

Afterwards ask learners to reflect on the experience and on how it relates to the theme of international cooperation.

This activity is adapted from Joanna Macy’s “Riddle of the Commons”

**NOTE:** We've used counters for the resources, but you can use cubes, bricks, dice or any other large quantity of items you may have in your classroom. You could also use wrapped sweets.
THIS MONTH’S CHALLENGES

International Cooperation

Complete one or more of the challenges below as a whole class, or choose 2 or 3 pupils to complete one each month over the course of the year.

Creative challenge

International Paper Chains

Give every student a strip of paper (roughly 2cm x 12cm) and allocate them each a different country.

Invite them to decorate their strip, front and back, to represent their country – they may wish to write and decorate the country’s name, or draw their flag.

Connect all the strips together into a paper chain and hang it up around the classroom – perfect for Christmas!

Research challenge

Sustainable Development Goals

The UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a really important example of countries working together to build a better world.

Choose one of the 17 SDGs and find out what different countries have been doing to make that goal a reality.

Action challenge

Partner with another school

British Council’s Connecting Classrooms programme allows students to experience international cooperation first-hand, by helping UK-based schools find partner schools in almost 30 countries across Africa, the Middle East and South Asia.

There is a range of support to help you get started and build a strong and sustainable school partnership,