

## Interdependence



**Lesson Title: Economic Interdependence**

**Grades: 6-8**

**Duration of Unit: 1 – 50 minute period**

Agriculture in Montana Schools [www.aginmontanashools.com](http://www.aginmontanashools.com)

### STAGE 1 – DESIRED RESULTS

**Montana State Standards:**

**Social Studies: Content Standard 1: Students access, synthesize, and evaluate information to communicate and apply social studies knowledge to real world situations. 1.** Apply the steps of an inquiry process. **End of Grade 8.**

**Social Studies Content Standard 5: Students make informed decisions based on an understanding of the economic principles of production, distribution, exchange, and consumption. 1.** Identify and explain basic economic concepts (e.g., supply, demand, production, exchange and consumption; labor, wages, and capital; inflation and deflation; and private goods and services). **End of Grade 8.**

**National Economics Standards:**

**Standard 6: Specialization and Trade Students will understand that:**

When individuals, regions, and nations specialize in what they can produce at the lowest cost and then trade with others, both production and consumption increase.

**Understanding(s) /Big Ideas:**

Students will understand interdependence as an economic term.

**Essential Question(s):**

What is interdependence?  
Who are the key players in interdependence?

<p><b>Students will know:</b> Farmers raise certain crops for a reason. People, states, and countries are interdependent. People are dependent on farmers for food and fiber.</p>	<p><b>Vocabulary:</b> interdependence dependence dependent Bread basket states Pacific Rim countries</p>
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**STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE**

<p><b>Performance Task(s):</b> Pretest: Are iPod manufacturers dependent upon farmers? Critical thinking reevaluation: Are iPod manufacturers dependent upon farmers? Discussion of interdependence.</p>	<p><b>Other Evidence:</b> Hands on, minds on activity: Students will cut out pictures from magazines to show dependence on farmers/ranchers for clothing and food.</p>
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**STAGE 3 – LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

*Activity 1: Interdependence*

**Are iPod manufacturers dependent upon farmers?**

Step 1. Divide the class into two groups, and ask them to debate the question for 5 minutes, and then give their answer with a brief explanation. After the discussion tell students that today you are going to teach them about interdependence.

Step 2. Handout copies of the student section to the students. (Pages 3-5). Give students time to read the information. Clarify any questions students might have.

*Activity 2: Review maps of the “Bread Basket” states and of the “Pacific Rim” countries. (Part of student section)*

**Hands on, minds on activity:** Ask students to work in groups of 5. Have one student in each group take out a piece of plain paper, and draw a dividing line, making two halves. The line does not need to be straight. In one section write dependent and in the other section write not dependent. Ask each group to identify manufactured goods in the classroom that were produced without dependence on anyone else but the manufacturer or grower. Students will soon realize that the paper will be blank on the not dependent side when they are done. Emphasize interdependence in today’s economy.

**Re-evaluation Verbal Quiz**

Ask students to recall the answers they gave in Activity 1, Step 1: “*Are iPod manufacturers dependent upon farmers?*”

Ask them how they would you change their answers? Ask them to identify who we are dependent on for our food?

Ask students to describe the statement “I am not dependent upon anyone.”

Ask students to define interdependence?

## *Student Section*

**ONE** of the most basic terms in the study of economics is *Interdependence*. It is a big word, but it means "dependent on others for some needs. "In other words, you can't produce everything you need.

**IF** you live on a farm you might be close, you might grow all your own fruits and vegetables. You might have cows and chickens to give you milk and eggs. You might have chickens, hogs, and beef to give you meat. You might not ever need to go to a grocery store for food, because here in Montana, farmers produce high quality wheat for flour, and even produce sugar from sugar beets. But wait, you probably don't make your own farm equipment such as tractors for planting and harvesting, and you probably don't make the food processing equipment for processing sugar. You are *dependent* on someone else for those things. If someone else didn't make the tractors and tools that your family uses, you wouldn't be able to produce all that food.

**UNLESS** you live on a farm and only eat what you can grow without any equipment, you are *dependent* on others for all kinds of food. Farmers today usually specialize in one or a few kinds of foods or fibers that they grow and sell to other people. Rarely do you see one farm that sells fruits, vegetables, meat, cotton, wool, eggs, and dairy products. A farmer might grow several different kinds of fruits or a few different kinds of vegetables because these are the crops that grow best in the area that the farmers live. The foods that this farmer raises are sold in grocery stores, farmer's markets, or even purchased by large food distribution companies to sell to other countries. When each farmer sells their crops this makes a variety of foods and fibers to choose from. We *depend* upon farmers for our food and fiber.

**LET'S** talk more about food that grows better in certain areas of the United States or even the world. Hard red spring wheat used for bread flour grows very well in Montana, but other areas of the United States cannot grow wheat of same high quality. Bakers need high quality hard red spring wheat flour to make high quality bread. Montana is part of a group of states known as the "Bread Basket" because of the high quality red spring wheat they grow. Many of the people who live along the "Pacific Rim" (countries which lie along the Pacific ocean, like Japan, China, Hong Kong, and Southeast Asia) buy wheat from the United States. Rice grows very well in China and in Southeast Asia. It doesn't grow so well in Montana. So, many people who live in China and Southeast Asia grow rice, which they then sell to people around the world. If you live in Montana and you want to eat rice, you are *dependent* on other people to grow the rice and sell it to you, and in turn, if you live along the Pacific Rim, you are *dependent* on others to grow the wheat and sell it to you.

**DO** you have entertainment in your daily life? Do you listen to an iPod or watch television? Someone else probably made those items and you or your family bought them. Those books

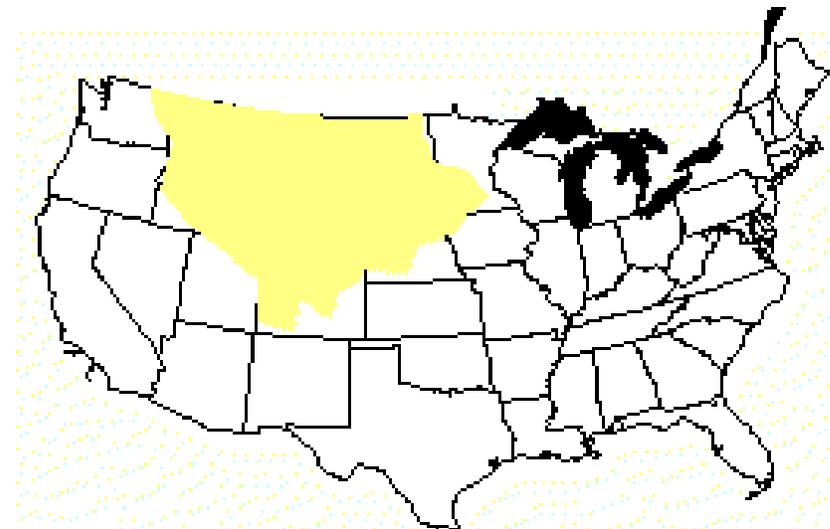
and comic books you read were written, printed, and sold by someone else. All you did was buy them. If you want to listen to an iPod, watch TV, or read a book, you are *dependent* on someone else to make those things.

**DRESSING** up, how about the clothes you wear? Those are probably made by other people. But, before clothes are made, the fiber for them has to be grown and harvested. Check the label on your shirt, if it contains cotton, your clothing was made from cotton grown and harvested by a farmer. If it contains wool, your clothing was made from the hair of a sheep (called wool), which was raised by a rancher or farmer and then processed by yet other people! Again, we see the idea of *dependence*. You *depend* on other people to raise the fiber for your clothes, and are also *dependent* on others to make the clothes you wear.

**DOING** what you can do best makes sense. If you are a farmer who grows wheat in the “Bread Basket” (noun - an agricultural area that provides large amounts of food, especially grain, from which breads and pasta are made.) You will want to spend your time and energy growing wheat because you can make money doing it. You won't want to spend your time trying to grow other kinds of food that don't grow well in the area where you live, like rice. So, you grow and sell your wheat and buy the other kinds of food you eat. If you work at a factory that makes iPods, then your company will want to spend its time making iPods and not trying to also grow its own wheat or rice. Your company makes a lot of iPods, but your employees need to eat in order to work. The farmers need to sell their food, and the workers need to eat; this makes the farmer and the company *dependent* on each other.

**FACT** is we can now talk about the idea of *interdependence*. Things like food, clothing, iPods, TVs, and books are made by people all around the world. Some people can make things better than others. Some foods grow more easily in some countries than in others. What does all this mean? Since people who use their own hands to make everything they could ever want or need are rare these days, we are all basically interdependent.

*Interdependence* is the idea that you as a person, and I as a person, *depend* on other people for certain things. The same is true of families, towns, and even countries, we are interdependent, and we want or need someone else's products. *Interdependence* is a big word; now you know what it means.



Map courtesy of: [http://www.commodityseasonals.com/types\\_of\\_wheat.htm](http://www.commodityseasonals.com/types_of_wheat.htm)

This map shows the areas hard red spring wheat is grown. (**Hard Red Spring** - This wheat contains the highest percentage of protein, making it excellent bread wheat with superior milling and baking characteristics.) The majority of the crop is grown in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota. It is exported largely to Central America, Japan, the Philippines and Russia. Find these countries on map below.

### Pacific Rim Countries



Map courtesy of: [academic.evergreen.edu/g/grossmaz/pacificrim.html](http://academic.evergreen.edu/g/grossmaz/pacificrim.html)

Use these maps as you need!

