

ACTIVITY SHEETS FOR ENGLISH

These activities are designed to accompany the Jubilee Scotland "Drop the Debt" education resource.

If you do not have a copy of this resource, go to www.jubileescotland.org.uk, or [click here to order a free copy](#).

ACTIVITY 1: DEBT QUOTATIONS

AIM: To analyse and reflect on meaning. To use language to convey a message effectively.

- Read through the following quotations.

"Debt, grinding debt, whose iron face the widow, the orphan, and the sons of genius fear and hate; debt, which consumes so much time, which so cripples and disheartens a great spirit with cares that seem so base, is a preceptor whose lessons cannot be foregone, and is needed most by those who suffer from it most."

(Ralph Waldo Emerson: American Poet)

"Debt is the fatal disease of republics, the first thing and the mightiest to undermine governments and corrupt the people"

(Wendell Phillips: American Orator)

"Debt is a prolific mother of folly and crime."

(Benjamin Disraeli: British statesman)

These quotations were written by 19th century writers, who were writing before the current global debt crisis.

What do you think each of them means?

Do you think they are still relevant today?

Why do you think that writers and politicians have been so concerned with the issue of debt?

Write a sentence to describe what you think about global debt.

ACTIVITY: CHALLENGING INJUSTICE

AIM: To think about environmental responsibility. To understand the concept of ecological debt in relation to global justice. To communicate ideas using appropriate language.

- Read through page 9 of "Drop the Debt". Discuss the meaning of 'ecological debt'.

Below is an extract from a leaked memo written by Larry Summers, former Chief Economist at the World Bank...

"Just between you and me, shouldn't the World Bank be encouraging more migration of dirty industries to the LDCs [less developed countries]? The economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable, and we should face up to that... Under-populated countries in Africa are vastly under-polluted; their air quality is probably vastly inefficiently low compared to Los Angeles or Mexico City... The concern over an agent that causes a one in a million change in the odds of prostate cancer is obviously going to be much higher in a country where people survive to get prostate cancer than in a country where under-five mortality is 200 per thousand."

Larry Summers, 'The Economist', February 8, 1992.

Quoted on www.globalissues.org

- Write a response to this internal memo from Larry Summers.
 - Give reasons why dumping pollution on poor countries is a bad idea – you can consider both moral **and** political arguments
 - Explain the concept of ecological debt. Why is it unjust for a rich country to dump 'a load of toxic waste' on a poor country, and how might this have dangerous implications for us all?
 - Suggest alternative options for dealing with polluting industries (you may want to conduct further research on this issue).

NOTE: Think carefully about your approach. Remember that the language you use to explain your point of view is very important. A formal, well-explained and reasonable argument is the most effective way of getting your point across.