

6 C: The Chocolate Collection

In this unit, students explore the world of chocolate, using primary documents and conducting independent research to understand the diverse range of roles that chocolate has played in cultures around the world. Students have access to primary and secondary articles, artifacts, and images that cover the 3,700 year history of chocolate and take students on a journey that includes ancient times in Mexico, as well as the Olmec, Mayan, and Aztec peoples and their cultures, through to current day issues in chocolate production, including the movement for better labor practices and reduced destruction of the natural habitat of plants and animals. Students build information literacy skills, learn how to craft and then answer a research question, and collaborate to conduct a Socratic seminar. They learn how to construct an evidence-based argument and use those skills to write a short piece aimed at convincing readers that their favorite kind of chocolate is the best, debate whether or not chocolate should be included in school lunches, and draft a persuasive letter to a candy store owner.

Throughout these activities, students learn to build their knowledge by identifying and researching source documents, and to construct explanations and arguments based on solid, relevant evidence and information. As students reach the end of the unit, they synthesize all of the skills they've developed to tackle a culminating research project.

Core texts your student will read:

- Excerpt: "Prehistoric Americans Traded Chocolate for Turquoise?" from National Geographic News by Christine Dell'Amore
- Letter from Lord Rothschild to Laurence Fish
- "Pilot Dropped Candy into Hearts of Berlin" by ABC News
- Excerpt: Appendix C Statement from Labour in Portuguese West Africa by William A. Cadbury
- "Is It Fair to Eat Chocolate?" from Skipping Stones by Deborah Dunn
- "Eat More Chocolate, Win More Nobels?" from Associated Press by Karl Ritter and Marilyn Marchione
- "Can Chocolate Be Good for My Health?" by Katherine Zeratsky,

Adapted from Amplify's Welcome Letter for The Chocolate Collection

- Excerpt: “Dark Chocolate: A Bittersweet Pill to Take” from USA Today by Mary Brophy Marcus
- “Chocolate” from American Smooth by Rita Dove
- Excerpt: Act I, Scene Eight from *Così fan tutte*: English National Opera Guide
- Excerpt: *Chocolat* by Joanne Harris
- Excerpt: *The Dharma Bums* by Jack Kerouac
- Excerpt: “The Sweet Lure of Chocolate” by Jim Spadaccini
- Excerpt: “The Tropics” from *The Story of Chocolate* by National Confectioners Association’s Chocolate Council
- Excerpt: “Good Harvest” from *All Animals* magazine by Karen E. Lange

What my student will do/learn:

- Students conduct fun and “low-stakes” scavenger hunts to become familiar with the range of texts and images included in this unit. Students learn how to construct research questions and identify appropriate and relevant websites and Internet sources for answers.
- Students will learn how to skim or scan a document quickly to determine if it might have relevant information they are looking for.
- Students write an argumentative letter, persuading a candy store owner to consider the ways in which their chocolate is produced.
- Students work in groups to research the health pros and cons of chocolate, prepare arguments, and debate whether chocolate should be included in school lunches.
- Students use key classroom routines, including the sharing routine, during which classmates respond to shared writing by noting one effective way the writer used details or evidence.
- Students write in response to prompts 2–3 times weekly, and practice analytic writing in response to text by developing an idea or claim and providing support with details or evidence.
- Students write an end-of-unit essay and develop an interactive timeline to share their essay research with the class.

Here are some conversation starters that you can use during this unit to promote discussion and encourage continued learning with your student.

1. What is plagiarism? What steps can you take to avoid it?

2. As you worked to evaluate sources, what did you notice about the credible websites? What advice might you give a friend looking for information on the Internet?
3. What are some new facts that you've learned about chocolate from the readings in this Collection? Does anything you read change the way you buy or eat chocolate?