Emily’s World (Secondary)
Emily’s World (Secondary)

Purpose:
1. To introduce students to the many ways in which they are linked to the wider world.
2. To identify the defining character of that wider world.
3. To examine the students’ responsibilities as citizens of that wider world.

Materials:
1. Black Line Master, “Emily’s World”
2. Black Line Master, Emily’s Connections to the World
3. Black Line Master, Web of Interdependence
4. Supplementary Resources

Procedure:
Since students often respond best when they move from the concrete and the familiar to the abstract, the following activity introduces students to a young teenager, Emily. It then explores the connection between Emily and the world and the possible implications of those connections.

A. Emily’s Link to the World

1. Read “Emily’s World” to the students and ask them to record examples of Emily’s connections to the world on the chart, Emily’s Connections to the World.

2. Examine and elaborate on the connections the students noted by engaging the students in a discussion that draws attention to the following:

   a) Emily’s MP3 Player

   The MP3 Player brings immediate and constant information about the world, so that Emily is as likely to become aware of something that happens in Asia or the Middle East before she learns of something that happens in her neighborhood or village. That news may include reference to pandemics such as SARS, HIV/AIDS or Bird Flu, all of which have the potential to affect Emily, her family, and her friends. It may include reports on international terrorist activities that have the potential to threaten Emily’s well-being. It may include mention of the possible impact of climate change on the agricultural and forestry sectors of the local Florenceville economy.

   The MP3 Player also houses songs that reflect Emily’s tastes in music. That may include groups such as U2 from Ireland, Jamaica’s Bob Marley, Oasis from the UK, or Simple Plan from Montreal. It may include blues or jazz, both of which have roots in Black America and therefore Africa, or a mixture of traditional and modern.

   b) Grocery Items

   The groceries picked up in the local supermarket may include bananas from Costa Rica, coffee from Columbia, cacao products from Ghana or Indonesia. Explain that these are called ‘cash crops’ because many of the developing countries produce and export these crops to obtain foreign currency to meet their debt obligations. This often means that they are growing food for export rather than consumption. One might also explore with students the conditions that many plantation workers face – low wages and dangers to health resulting from the use of pesticides. Various activities (The World in a Chocolate Bar, Trading Fairly in Our World; see supplementary resources) exist that allow students to analyze who benefits from the production and sale of cash crops. Students may be asked to record the origin of the groceries...
that can be found in their family kitchens or may be taken on a visit to the local grocery store to examine the source of the items on the shelves.

c) Emily’s Clothes

Students may be asked to examine the labels on the clothes of their classmates to determine where they are being made. Any record of such items is likely to reveal that the clothes and footwear are made in the developing world. Further discussion might explore why this is so (availability of cheap labor in an industry that is labor intensive) and why the textile industry is often peopled by women and children.

d) Family Car and School Bus

Students may discuss the make of their own family car as an introduction to the nature of today’s automobile industry. Discussion should note that the idea of a “foreign” or “domestic” car has little significance today and given the source of the many raw materials that go into the making of an automobile, the idea of a domestic car perhaps never had validity. Students should note how decisions made in the boardrooms in Tokyo or Detroit may mean the loss of livelihood for Canadian families. An examination of the automobile industry may serve to introduce the larger topic of the dominance of much of the economy by transnationals and the globalization of the economy.

One may choose to follow the examination of the automobile industry with an exploration of the gas that goes into that auto. This may include reference to how events in the Middle East influence the price we pay for that gas or how a hurricane in the Caribbean may reduce the flow of oil and drive up the cost of heating our homes or the cost of any number of petroleum-based products.

e) Hamburger Stand

The hamburgers that Emily and her friends eat may link them to the destruction of parts of the world’s rainforest as land there is cleared to graze cattle. If the hamburger is being consumed at a McDonald’s outlet, students may investigate the use of the phase “McWorld” to describe the spread of Western culture, the homogenization of cultures and the subsequent loss of traditional or indigenous cultures.

f) Television Set

The TV also provides an opportunity to note the homogenization of world cultures when one explains that the programs that Emily is watching are being watched by other teenagers in some of the remotest parts of the world.

g) Job Prospects for Emily and her Father

Emily’s father is employed by McCains, one of the giants in the international food market and therefore his continued employment and chances for promotion depend upon McCain’s ability to maintain or enlarge the market for its products in Europe, Latin America, and Asia. Emily’s town of Florenceville prides itself on being the most multi-cultured community in New Brunswick and this is because McCain’s workforce is drawn from around the world.

Emily’s own job prospects will largely be determined by events elsewhere and she is unlikely to remain in Florenceville. In the past, the Emilys in New Brunswick headed for Ontario or the New England states to find employment when the economy turned sour. Today, the Emilys of New Brunswick are just as likely to head for Japan or Korea or China.
B. Suggest a Word

Ask students to suggest a word or adjective that best describes the type of world in which Emily lives. Student suggestions should draw attention to the interconnected or interdependent nature of Emily’s world. Ask students to explain what is meant by the phrase, “We all live downstream”, and have them provide examples that illustrate this observation. Have students working in groups complete a poster based on the Black Line Master “Web of Interdependence” and post the completed posters in the classroom.

C. Making Choices

Explore with students what responsibilities are attached to Emily’s status as a citizen in an interdependent world. Discuss how these responsibilities may influence the choices Emily makes in her daily life. Attention might be given to how Emily might use her power as a consumer to respond to the situations identified in establishing her links to the wider world. An examination of the principles and practices of Fair Trade might be pursued here.

Emily’s World

Emily has just turned 14. She has lived all her life in Florenceville, a small, fairly isolated village in northeastern New Brunswick. From her front door, she looks out on the Saint John River and the distant potato fields that supply McCain’s Foods, where her father is employed. Emily rarely travels far from home. Most of her friends and relatives live in the towns and villages scattered along the banks of the river.

The family drives once a fortnight to Woodstock to buy groceries and other items from the newly built Walmart or to Houlton, Maine for other shopping; most other provisions are purchased locally. The longest journey of the year is usually the August camping trip to Nova Scotia. Emily spends her leisure time listening to pop music on her new Mp3 player (a birthday present from her parents), watching television, reading, and sometimes walking with friends along the river and stopping at a local hamburger stand. Emily also enjoys Girl Guides, dancing, and new clothes. Her favorite jeans, pullover, and blouse were bought out of her birthday money.

Emily goes to the central high school. School buses collect students from the village in the morning and return them to their homes in the afternoon. In snowy weather, the buses often do not run. At the moment, Emily’s thoughts are on what subjects to choose as she enters grade 10. She has been told to bear in mind possible job preferences in deciding which subjects to take. Emily – who would like to be a social worker – is all too aware that the job market is soft and she may have to leave the area eventually in search of job opportunities.

Emily’s Connection to the World

On first impression, Emily’s world may seem small and enclosed, and, save for its beauty and relative remoteness, unexceptional. If we dig a little deeper, however, we discover a personal world rich in connections with the wider world. Examine each of the headings below and speculate as to the linkages with this outer world.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Linkages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emily's MP3 player</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily's clothes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family car/School bus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamburger stand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily’s and her father’s job prospects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Supplementary Resources**

Your Community and the World
(http://www.globaled.org/globalLiteracy/activities/glGlobalConnections25.html)

Continental Connections: The Twenty-Four Hour Trip
(http://www.globaled.org/globalLiteracy/activities/glGlobalConnections31.html)

The Food We Eat: Where Did It Come From?
(http://www.globaled.org/globalLiteracy/activities/glGlobalConnections32.html)

The World In Your Closet
(http://www.globaled.org/globalLiteracy/activities/glGlobalConnections33.html)

What’s In A Thumb?
(http://www.globaled.org/myself/whatsin.html)

Becoming the Change We Want to See Project
(http://www.sacsc.ca/Elementary_Unit_and_Lesson_Plans.htm#GlobalEducationLessons)

Trading Fairly In Our World
(http://www.eoccc.org/fairtrade/index.html)

Globalization, Sweatshops and the Clothes We Wear
(http://www.commontreads.ca/projects/globalization/default.htm)

Who’s Running the Show?
http://www.videa.ca/global/trade/action.html

Food and a Table
http://www.videa.ca/global/food/index.html

No Sweat Lesson Plans
(http://www.oxfam.ca/news-and-publications/educational-resources/lesson-plans/)
Web of Interdependence

Emily