

Economics 11/12th Grade – International Trade

How can I impact change on local economic policy?	
Standards and Content	Economics 2.8 The Effects of government intervention on markets. 2.9 International Trade and Public Policy
Staging the Compelling Question	Have the class identify the country of origin for a piece of apparel they are currently wearing. Label the countries of origin on a world map. Elicit responses from the class about the map. Is this geographic trend positive or negative for local North Carolinians (consumers, labor, producers)?

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
What factors led to the decline of the textile industry in western North Carolina?	In what ways did the textile industry impact labor in western North Carolina in the early 20th century?	What is the future of the textile industry in Western North Carolina? Is it possible for this industry to remain in the region in any capacity?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Using the tools of supply and demand, create a graph that illustrates either the rise, or the decline, of the textile market in the United States during the 20th century. Use two of the key terms: quota, tariff, imports/exports, consumer/producer surplus.	Utilizing your prior knowledge of United States history and the sources provided, write a thesis statement which includes an original claim evaluating the impact of the textile industry on labor in western North Carolina. Identify at least two quotes from the sources provided to support your thesis. (Alternative extension) Textile mills were often independently owned and a primary employer in small towns in western North and South Carolina. Sketch a graph of the labor market in one of the towns mentioned in the sources. Hint: think monopsony.	Create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the textile industry in the early 20th century, which you read about in Supporting Question #1, and the more contemporary sources you read in Supporting Question #3.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
Source A: “Two Sides to Every Story”, <i>The Sunday Star</i> , February 1956 https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1956-02-12/ed-1/seq-28/	Source A: Cotton Mill Colic Song: Dave McCarn- Cotton Mill Colic (1926) - YouTube Source B: Uprising of ‘34 Documentary clip: UPRISING OF '34 - YouTube Source C: “A War of Words”, p. 73, <i>Textile Town</i> , Thomas Barry article in Philadelphia Press.	Source A: “Textile Industry Improves Profits”, <i>The Daily Tarheel</i> , 1986 Source B: USDA, 2004, USDA ERS - The Changing World Network of Trade in Textiles and Apparel

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Source B: “First Union’s President and Chairman Cites Textile Facts”, May 4, 1967, *The Transylvania Times*

https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn91068098/1967-05-04/ed-1/seq-26/print/image_604x817_from_0,0_to_4633,6263/

Source C: USDA Cotton and Textile Import Data by Region (use the excel sheet in the link)

[Cotton and Textile Apparel Imports, by origin 1989-2021](#)

Source D: Migration from the Mountains, p.83, *Textile Town*, pictured contract.

Source E: “Jobs in Textiles: An Endangered Species”, *The News-Journal*, April 14, 1977.

https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn93064776/1977-04-14/ed-1/seq-16/print/image_529x817_from_0,0_to_4533,7000/

Source C: Area Development, 2017, [The Comeback Kid: Textiles Are Returning Stateside - Area Development](#)

Source D: Letter from the National Council of Textile Organizations to Vice President Harris:

[Joint-Letter-NCTO-and-Region-FINAL-5.31.2022.pdf \(textilesinthenews.org\)](#)

Source E: Milliken and Company Patents

<https://www.milliken.com/en-us/businesses/textile/get-to-know-us/over-the-years>

Summative Performance Task	ARGUMENT: <i>How can I impact local economic policy?</i> Roleplaying as a local community organizer in western North Carolina, write a policy proposal to present to local government advocating for policies that will impact the textile industry and/or textile workers in your district. Construct your policy proposal using specific claims and relevant evidence from sources while acknowledging competing views.
	EXTENSION: Write a letter to your local representative advocating for policy action on economic issues such as international trade, local employment, outsourcing, or barriers to trade. Create a Public Service Announcement or flyer spreading awareness of the socioeconomic impacts of a business, profession, or industry that is declining in your local area.
Taking Informed Action	UNDERSTAND Research wage rates and labor conditions for a specific industry in western North Carolina. ASSESS Compare labor conditions in the present day in your community to conditions in the textile industry at the turn of the 20th century. ACT Advocate for labor rights in an industry that impacts your local community.

**Featured sources are suggested. It may be that these resources are no longer available, and we apologize in advance for the inconvenience.*

How can I impact change on local economic policy?

Overview

Inquiry Description

This inquiry prompts students to reflect on local economic history and consider how they can influence economic policy.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question “How can I impact change on local economic policy?” students work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources to construct an argument supported by evidence while also acknowledging competing perspectives. The Supporting Questions guide students to assess the past, present, and future of the textile industry in the Carolinas. The first two Formative Tasks give students the opportunity to apply the tools of economics to a historical scenario, while the last Formative Task has them connect the past to the future. Students will engage with primary sources and datasets to track trends in the textile industry throughout the past century.

Staging the Compelling Question

To introduce the inquiry, the teacher should have students make a personal, real-world connection to the compelling question by having students evaluate the source of the clothing they wear every day. Students are asked to record the item and its nation of origin on a sticky note. Then students should place these sticky notes on a world map to give students a visual representation of where our clothing comes from. Have students survey the map and make observations. Guide students in sharing their observations and establishing trends illustrated on the map. Follow up this conversation about observations and trends by asking students if these trends have a positive or negative impact on the economy of the United States. This Compelling Question can also be extended to other imported goods in the United States. This staging exercise helps students to personally connect to international trade and its impacts.

Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question, “What factors led to the decline of the textile industry in western North Carolina?” introduces students to the history of the textile industry in the region, the predominant industry in many small towns across the Carolinas during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This question supports the Compelling Question by providing historical context for students to examine the textile industry. Students will examine three sources: two contemporary news articles featuring multiple perspectives on the state of the textile industry in the mid-20th century and a USDA dataset on textile imports from 1989-2021. For the Formative Performance Task, students are asked to illustrate historic changes in the textile industry using the economic graphing tools of supply and demand. Students should be encouraged to create multiple graphs to demonstrate change over time and the impact of government intervention in the market. Furthermore, students should employ key economic vocabulary when constructing their graphical responses, which illustrates their ability to apply these concepts.

Supporting Question 2

The second Supporting Questions, “in what ways did the textile industry impact labor in western North Carolina in the early 20th century?” asks students to consider how the rise and fall of industries has lengthy and wide-ranging impacts on society, and specifically, labor. This question supports the Compelling Question by having students evaluate the effects of economic policy on households, different wage earners, and different social groups. Meanwhile, the Formative Task prompts students to synthesize information from the first two Supporting Questions to formulate their own interpretation of the varied impacts of the textile industry on different stakeholders. The Featured Sources have students engage with primary and secondary sources that allow students to draw their own conclusions and consider perspective and bias in these sources. The Uprising of '34 features a short clip from the documentary, but other voices in this oral history can be accessed and utilized in this Supporting Question. The teacher should allow students to draw their own conclusions in the writing of their thesis, but an emphasis can be placed on the stories of individuals across race, class and gender in their exploration.

Supporting Question 3

The Supporting Question, “What is the future of the textile industry in Western North Carolina? Is it possible for this industry to remain in the region in any capacity?” has students examine contemporary sources to make an evidence-based prediction about the textile industry. This question continues to build towards the Compelling Question by having them begin to consider how policymakers can shape the future of the textile industry. The Formative Task asks students to compare the status of the textile industry across time. This guides students to build a connection between the past and present in the economy of their community. Students will be confronted with a variety of sources: a newspaper article, graph, dataset, a lobby group’s letter to the Vice President, and a timeline showcasing the evolution of the Milliken Corporation. The range of sources has students use data, consider bias, and form their own opinions about a possible path forward for the textile industry.

Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have examined the socioeconomic impacts of the textile industry in western North Carolina. Students should be expected to demonstrate the breadth of their understandings and their abilities to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students construct an evidence-based argument using multiple sources to answer the compelling question “how can I impact local economic policy?”. The argument may take the form of a presentation or a detailed letter.

Students’ arguments will likely vary, but could include any of the following:

- The textile industry must evolve through research and development to meet the demands of the market in the 21st century. I could advocate for training and education
- Government should use policy to protect domestic jobs in the United States textile industry. I can take action to influence the decisions of policymakers to enact protective measures.
- The government should take a laissez-faire approach to the textile industry and labor conditions in the United States and allow the forces of supply and demand to determine the fate of the industry.

As an extension activity, students may be asked to craft a letter to a local government representative detailing their position on an issue that impacts workers and the economy in their area. Alternatively, they can create a Public Service Announcement or flyer calling for action

In the Taking Informed Action Task, students would research wage rates and labor conditions to better understand a specific industry in western North Carolina. Students would then assess the current state of labor conditions by comparing labor conditions in this specific industry to conditions in the textile industry at the turn of the twentieth century. Students would use this information to determine how they can advocate for labor rights that will benefit employees of that specific industry and the community more broadly.

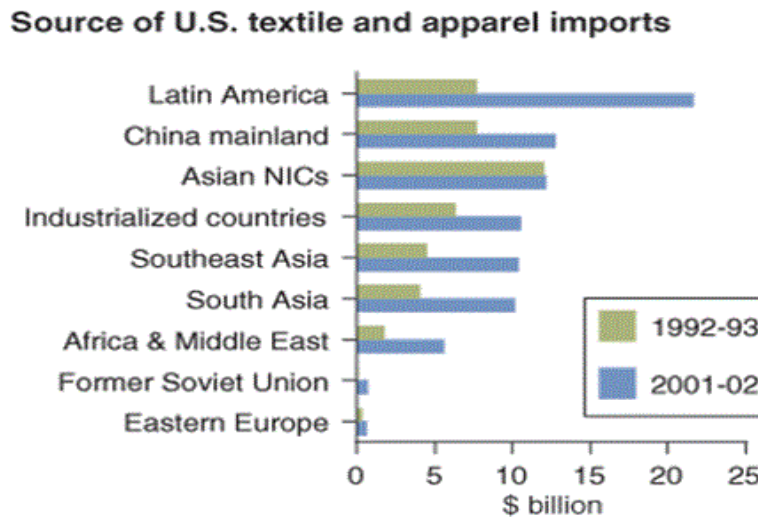
Supporting Question 2: Featured Sources

Supporting Question 3: Featured Sources

Source A: “Textile Industry Improves Profits”, *The Daily Tarheel*, 1986



Source B: USDA, 2004, [USDA ERS - The Changing World Network of Trade in Textiles and Apparel](#)



Source C: Area Development, 2017, [The Comeback Kid: Textiles Are Returning Stateside - Area Development](#)

Textile Firms Locating in the U.S. Southeast

Year	Company	Product(s)	Capital Investment	Jobs	State
2013	JN Fibers	Recycled polyester staple fiber	\$45 million	318	SC
2013	Keer Group	Industrial yarn	\$218 million	500	SC
2014	Beaulieu International Group	Carpet, vinyl, and wood flooring products	\$200 million	350	SC
2014	PolyTech Fibers, LLC	Polyester staple fibers	\$12 million	114	GA
2014	Gildan Activewear	High-tech yarn spinning	\$250 million	500	NC
2015	Sandler AG	Non-woven textiles	\$30 million	140	GA
2016	Everest Textiles	High-performance sports apparel	\$18.5 million	610	NC
2016	King Charles Industries (JV with Taiwan Kingwhale Corp.)	Finished fabrics	\$12.5 million	100	NC
2016	Jushi	Fiberglass reinforcements and fabrics	\$300 million	400	SC
2016	B&W Fiberglass	High-performance textiles	\$5 million	46	SC
2016	Labon	Fiber and textiles	\$3.1 million	23	SC

Source D: Letter from the National Council of Textile Organizations to Vice President Harris:

[Joint-Letter-NCTO-and-Region-FINAL-5.31.2022.pdf \(textilesinthenews.org\)](#)

Source E: Milliken and Company Patents <https://www.milliken.com/en-us/businesses/textile/get-to-know-us/over-the-years>