



# Sweet like chocolate

*Mmmmmm... tickle those learning taste buds  
with a scrumptious cross-curricular topic*

Imagine six weeks of teaching chocolate to your class. The teachers who have done it have actually said that they'd like more time! And, although it may sound unbelievable at first, when you stop and consider the subject of chocolate, you suddenly realise that a whole wealth of learning opportunities exist. Chocolate often suffers from a poor reputation – labelled a 'bad food', it's not something that you'd automatically consider focusing on in school. However, it's an extensive and instantly appealing topic which, with a little imagination, can lend itself to many areas of the curriculum.

### **A cross-curricular treat**

And that's just what the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) has captured in its unit on chocolate. As with other IPC units, the Chocolate topic is cross-curricular; separating, yet integrating, the foundation subjects and science, while enabling links to literacy and numeracy. Tasks are linked directly to a Chocolate theme, so that children can see that there is a purpose to what they are learning. For example, in history, children explore the discovery of chocolate and the changing attitudes towards it through the ages. In geography, they look at the countries that grow cacao (the edible seed used in the manufacture of chocolate) and how particular localities have been affected by its production and slash-and-burn farming. In art, children design their own chocolate bar packaging and advertising posters. In ICT, they research a variety of chocolate's aspects using the internet and other technology. For a good example of how chocolate fits into history and geography, check out the **Interactive resource**, 'From bean to drink – a journey' available at [www.scholastic.co.uk/junioredplus](http://www.scholastic.co.uk/junioredplus) (subscribers only). IPC learning goals are cross-referenced to meet National Curriculum guidelines and all meet the latest Government recommendations for a more creative, yet rigorous, approach to the curriculum. ▶



*'The Chocolate unit is a great example of how you can make learning meaningful by putting it into context'*

So how does the IPC's Chocolate unit go about achieving a creative, yet rigorous, approach?

'The Chocolate unit is a great example of how you can make learning meaningful by putting it into context,' says Elizabeth Mee, Year 5 teacher at Warren Farm Primary School in Birmingham, who taught it last year. 'When we started the unit it was obvious that every child knew something about chocolate. They recognised some brands and liked the taste of it, but few children knew much more than that. There was absolutely no depth of knowledge.' Elizabeth's headteacher is Margaret Goodwin. She sums up the impact that the IPC has had at Warren Farm Primary since they took it on two years ago: 'The IPC has changed us as teachers and it's changing our children too. It's a pivot for their creativity, a route to their contextual understanding; it's changing their attitude and outlook, motivating their learning and giving them aspiration. It's widened my children's world and is turning them into lifelong learners. I can't ask for much more from a curriculum than that.'

### Learning through fun

Similarly, Year 4 teacher at Albert Primary School in Penarth, South Wales, Ceri Hawkins, completed the IPC Chocolate unit last term. 'We all loved it!' she



says. 'Looking at the Chocolate unit as a learning platform, meant there was a great deal of purposeful investigation, both independent as well as a significant amount of collaborative work. We also made learning connections with other IPC units we'd previously worked on. The children were completely engaged because they were having so much fun learning through a subject that they found exciting. It was good to have a concentrated amount of time to spend on the unit (each IPC unit lasts between two and 12 weeks) because it meant the children got totally absorbed in their learning, achieving a deeper understanding and skill development.'

You can read more about Ceri's experience of teaching chocolate on page 36, and on our website [www.scholastic.co.uk/junioredplus](http://www.scholastic.co.uk/junioredplus) (subscribers only).

### A dream to teach

But it was not just the children who enjoyed the Chocolate unit. Ceri found the unit a pleasure to teach, and not just because it was about chocolate! 'Because the teaching framework is provided, you don't have to spend hours and hours developing your lesson plans,' says Ceri. 'Instead, I had

time to focus on the creativity and the learning. I was able to work from the IPC teaching framework, which I already knew was rigorous, and add my own ideas and explore new sources for investigation and development. I adapted some of the tasks to suit the needs of my class and combined other tasks together to make them bigger and better. I love that I now have time to be creative. And to see the children enjoying their learning is wonderful. It's completely transformed my job as a teacher.'

So what are some of the tasks within the teaching framework for the Chocolate unit that Ceri facilitated? IPC shares some of them with *Junior Education PLUS*...





## Art: Design a wrapper

### Research activity

- Working in groups, children compare chocolate wrappers. Ask:
  - Which chocolate wrapper do you like the best?
  - Why do you like this particular one?
  - What is it about this wrapper that makes you like it?

Ask the groups to share their ideas and results.

- Next, ask: *What is on the wrapper?* Explain that some of the information is present because it is a legal requirement, while other information appears because people demand to know it. So, whereas the ingredients are legally displayed: the energy levels are an expectation. The designer has to fit the words on the wrapper, without making it look boring.
- Discuss advertisements for chocolate products. What do manufacturers try to convey? How do they do this? If possible, watch videos of television commercials.

### Recording activity

- Individually, get the children to design their own chocolate wrapper with the knowledge that they have about colours, words, and so on. They must then show their design to a partner and explain why they have chosen certain colours and designs.

## History: Chocolate – now & then

### Research activity

- Explain to the children that the Aztecs already drank a chocolate drink when the Europeans arrived hundreds of years ago. Challenge the class to investigate how chocolate was brought back to Europe and to find out about the difference in ingredients between the original chocolate drinks and modern versions.
- Tell the children that Hernán Cortés was a Spanish explorer who conquered the Aztec Empire in 1519 and brought chocolate to Europe. Cortés captured and destroyed the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán and built Mexico City in its place. Challenge children to find out more about

Cortés. Ask: *What did he discover, when and where?*

### Recording activity

- Ask the children to tell Cortés life story in pictures and words.

## Science: Food for fuel

### Research activity

- As a class, explore the food value of chocolate. Determine that a chocolate bar is mostly energy – a lot of energy – in the form of carbohydrates (sugars). Explain that if your body released all the energy in one go, it would explode like a stick of dynamite. Instead, the body burns the energy off slowly.

### Recording activity

- Ask the children to present the following hypothetical information as a graph:
  - Time taken to eat a chocolate bar: one minute
  - Time to burn off the energy from the chocolate bar:
 

Running	14 minutes
Walking	52 minutes
Swimming	24 minutes
Watching TV	four hours
Sleeping	five hours
- Ask: *Why is it important to balance chocolate eating with activity? What happens to all this energy if you do not burn it off?*

## Geography: A growing curiosity

### Research activity

- In groups, invite the children to find out where in the world the Cacao Tree grows (South and Middle America, West-Middle Africa and South East Asia). Ask:
  - *What is the climate like in these countries/areas?*
  - *How does growing cacao beans affect the environment?*
  - *How does growing the beans affect the lives of the people?*
- Ask children to research income, pesticides and new agricultural methods.

### Recording activity

Using their information above, ask the children to colour these areas on a blank world map.



## Technology: New choc on the block

### Research activity

- Chocolate bars often contain dried fruit and nuts. Ask pairs of children to devise new additions to the chocolate bar.
- Using a selection of nuts and dried fruits (Note: check first for allergies), encourage the children to make imaginative mixes and compare their popularity and taste. Hygiene precautions must be carefully followed. Suggest combinations such as pine nuts and chopped apricots, or raisins and peanuts.

### Recording activity

- Ask the children to record the most popular combinations and devise a marketing strategy for the new product. Ask questions, such as:
  - *Who will it appeal to?*
  - *Who will buy it?*
  - *How much should it cost?*

## IGT links

[www.purefood.org](http://www.purefood.org)  
[www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org)  
[www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org)  
[www.ethicalconsumer.org](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org)  
[www.fooddirectory.co.uk](http://www.fooddirectory.co.uk)  
[www.indians.org/welker/aztec.html](http://www.indians.org/welker/aztec.html)  
[www.biggar-net.co.uk/equalexchange.cocoa.html](http://www.biggar-net.co.uk/equalexchange.cocoa.html)

## Further information

To visit an IPC school near you, or for a free sample of another IPC unit and more information, go to [www.internationalprimarycurriculum.com](http://www.internationalprimarycurriculum.com) or call at 020 7531 9696.

IPC has just launched the Members Lounge, an interactive e-learning platform for IPC teachers to exchange ideas, resources, portfolios of evidence, forums and opportunities for children across the world to learn from each other through similar global themes. ▶

# Ceri's diary

Last term, Ceri Hawkins, Year 4 teacher at Albert Primary School in Penarth, South Wales, used IPC's Chocolate unit for the very first time. *Junior Ed PLUS* asked her to keep a diary of her experience. These are some of her highlights...

## Week one

Today was the Entry Point for the Chocolate unit. What a fun day! We spent the whole time tasting. In the morning, we learned about the sense of taste and tried a variety of substances to measure our taste preferences and taste sensitivity. The children did some incredible work and were able to use the Venn-diagram skills they'd learned last term in numeracy to create some excellent results.



## Week two

The children are so much more globally minded since working on the IPC. They love finding out about other countries and are starting to get a good sense of the world. This week we looked at cacao plantations and the harvesting of the fruits. The children loved researching the plantations and their localities. This gave us the chance to discuss the issues of Fairtrade.

Today was a brilliant day. The children took a trip to Starbucks to find out about different drinking chocolates and how they are made. They had a wonderful time, tasting lots of different flavours, and asked great questions about where Starbucks gets their chocolate products from and whether they support Fairtrade. The people at Starbucks were impressed!

## Week three

Today we started designing a new chocolate bar by researching chocolate wrappers. Everyone brought in loads of example. We looked at all the information they feature, including ingredients, marketing slogans, the logo and imagery, colour, typeface, fonts, incentive offers, prices and nutritional information. Some children were really interested by the nutritional contents: it was a great opportunity to lay the foundations for their Year 5 work on percentages.

We've been working on our chocolate bar designs for a few days now. The creative ideas are very good. Two children went home and created designs on their computer in their own time.

## Week four

The children did some superb collaborative writing linked to the Chocolate unit today. There are so many opportunities to incorporate literacy into the units and it gives the children purpose for their writing. I put them into groups and then read a description from Ted Hughes' *The Iron Man*



(Faber, £4.99 PB). The children then worked together to write stories about a man made from chocolate. We're reading Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Puffin, £5.99 PB) to link with the unit, too.

## Week five

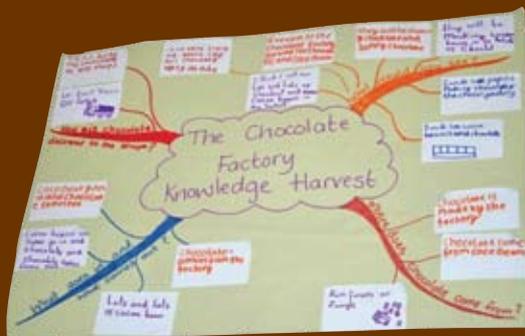
We have been investigating the Aztecs and how they created the first drinking chocolate. The children enjoyed role playing the story of Hernán Cortés and have recorded it in a picture story series, too. These were two good alternatives to traditional written recording and the results were very good. We have all loved working on the Aztecs and I wish there was more time to investigate them further.

## Week six

Our final week of the Chocolate unit. Lots of exciting things to do. We're making a group poster to advertise our chocolate bars, making our very own chocolate by melting milk chocolate and mixing it with a variety of dried fruit ingredients and we're visiting the chocolate factory in Swansea. We were hoping to visit the factory at the beginning of the unit, but I think it's working out even better going at the end. The children have a far greater understanding of what they will be seeing and hopefully will be able to apply some of their knowledge during the visit. I wonder if there'll be any free samples? I just love the Chocolate unit! ■



Subscribers can access lots of extras at [www.scholastic.co.uk/junioredplus](http://www.scholastic.co.uk/junioredplus) including this article; an extended version of Ceri's diary; the **Video resource**, 'IPC Chocolate unit' – a video diary which shows the unit in action and the **fantastic Interactive resource**, 'From bean to drink – a journey'.



Today was our Knowledge Harvest for the Chocolate unit. I put the children into groups to make large, poster-size mind-maps of their present knowledge about chocolate. Not only were they mind-mapping their existing knowledge, but they were sharing new knowledge with each other; swapping facts and ideas and learning in the process. They were also pulling knowledge from previous IPC units that they'd worked on. Many children were talking about the cocoa beans coming from the rainforests which they'd learned about during the IPC Rainforest unit they did last year.