

'Timber!'

A role playing exercise.

'Timber!' was originally written by Graham Pike, formerly of the Centre for Global Education, at the University of York, and currently teaching at the University of Prince Edward Island, Canada, who owns the copyright of the game.

NEAD has used 'Timber' in its programme of schools' work for many years, and has made a number of modifications to the original in the light of that experience.

This current version was edited and prepared for the 'Just Business' website, and it's audience of Economics and Business Studies teachers and students by Stephen Fairbrass of 'Just Business', Clare Howard, NEAD's Office Administration Co-ordinator, and

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a year 10 student at Hewett School, Norwich during her work experience placement at NEAD in June 2000.

If this game is downloaded from the website in PDF format, pasted to card and laminated, it is re-usable without wasteful further copying.

'Just Business' would appreciate teachers' or students' comments on their experience of using the game, which can be e-mailed to jusbiz@nead.org.uk

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Introduction.

'Timber' is a role playing exercise examining the issue of deforestation. The exercise considers the human dimension of deforestation, from the diverse perspectives of the different groups of people with an interest in the felling of trees. The game encourages participants to recognise that there are business, economic, cultural and political, as well as ecological, dimensions to the deforestation issue. The game allows exploration of 'globalisation' and 'sustainability' themes, and encourages ethical debate.

'Timber' can be used with a variety of audiences, at different levels. It is particularly appropriate for Business Studies, Economics and Geography classes, but has also been used in Biology/General Science lessons (to show the 'social' dimension of 'scientific' issues) and for delivering aspects of the PSHE and Citizenship curricula.

The following quotations are from sixth form students of Business Studies and Economics at Sir John Leman High School, Beccles, Suffolk after participating in 'Timber!'.

"We've done about the environmental effects in Biology and Geography, but I've never really thought about the people involved before." "It was definitely about how complex it was." "It was really good because before I thought all you had to do was stop people cutting down trees, but there's people who need to cut down trees to live." "I thought there were just two groups, like the people who live there and the people who want to cut it down, and I didn't think about settlers or the government or tourists or anything." "Tourism is a bit complicated isn't it, because you can see they need the money, the foreign currency that it brings, but they have to cut down trees to make a space for the hotels." "We could see the government needed money and needed the beef industry to get them out of debt. They weren't going to do anything to stop the trees getting cut down, but perhaps they didn't have any choice because they're being exploited by the richer countries." "It was more effective to do it this way than to try to lecture us because a lot of us would probably have drifted off in a lecture. If we're active participants it helps fix the ideas in your mind more than just listening."

Resources necessary to play 'Timber!'

In order to play 'Timber!' you will need:

1. The contents of this pack, i.e. one set of facilitator's game instructions, a set of nine role cards, a set of nine group name cards and two copies of the Rainforest Information Sheet.
2. 100 paper or plastic cups, 20 of which should be marked with a large blue dot on the base.
3. A whistle.
4. A set of sticky labels for participants to write their role names on, and to wear for identification purposes during the game.
5. A large room, capable of holding 9 small groups of players (depends on class size, but perhaps 3 to a group?) seated around the edges of the room, with a large space left in the middle for planting a 'rainforest' of upturned paper cups.

Facilitators Game Instructions.

The instructions below assume a class size of 27. The game may be played with 15-50 participants, but group sizes will need to be modified accordingly. The instructions assume a playing time of approximately 75 minutes, including the debrief, and timings for each part of the game are given to reach this total. Timings can be modified to suit the session available, but it is recommended that at least one hour is allowed.

Preparation.

Place 100 upturned paper or plastic cups in the centre of the room (not too close together) to represent the rainforest. The cups marked with a blue dot should be randomly spread amongst the others, but not at the edge of the forest. Place 9 circles of 3 chairs (assuming 3 players to a group) around the edges of the room, and put a group name card, a group role card and 3 sticky labels in each circle. Put one copy of the rainforest information sheet in the circle allocated to 'Forestwatch' (the second copy is for the use of the facilitator). The facilitator has the whistle.

Procedure to introduce the game. (10-15 minutes)

1. Participants should be divided into nine groups. (The 'Forestwatch' group is crucial to the development of the game, and facilitators may wish to ensure that the members of this group are confident and articulate individuals.) Each participant should write their group name on the sticky label, and stick the label on their chest, for identification purposes during the game.
2. The facilitator should give some background information about the destruction of tropical rain forests. (This can be done simply by reading aloud the Rainforest Information Sheet provided - but knowledgeable facilitators may give additional information as they feel appropriate).
3. The facilitator should invite each group to read their role cards and discuss their role amongst themselves. The facilitator should circulate amongst groups to check that all the information has been understood.

Beginning play. (20 minutes)

4. The facilitator should briefly introduce the nine groups who are all stakeholders in the rainforest. S/he should explain that the rainforest is based in the imaginary southern hemisphere country of Latacica. S/he should also explain that Nordia is a rich northern hemisphere country, in fact the richest country in the world.
5. The facilitator should explain that seven groups are users of the rainforest, needing to cut down trees (this is indicated on their rolecards); two have an interest in the rainforest, but do not require its timber.
6. The facilitator should explain that the paper cups represent the rainforest. The rainforest used to be considerably larger in size: This is all that now remains. The facilitator will blow a whistle every five minutes during the game. Each time the whistle blows those groups that need to cut down trees must take the number of trees (cups) specified on their role cards from the forest. Trees should always be taken from the edge of the forest. The trees marked with a blue dot are mahogany which is rare and takes many years to grow.
7. The facilitator should also explain that s/he will take the role of the United Nations Environmental Programme during the game, and if groups want to make agreements to cut down more trees or to replant, they must put the agreement in writing, all the parties to the agreement must sign it, and then bring it to the United Nations for approval. (NB. If there is an agreement to replant trees, the rate of replanting is one tree per group signing the agreement each time the whistle blows)
8. It has been rumoured that an international conference to decide what should be done about the destruction of the rainforest will take place sometime in the future; nobody knows exactly when.
9. The facilitator should suggest that certain groups might want to find out more about each other's plans, and to negotiate or form alliances...

Blow the Whistle !

10. The facilitator should allow the game to develop for the next 15 minutes or so, as groups meet with and discuss with one another. If this does not happen spontaneously, the facilitator can suggest to groups that they talk to others, but resist the temptation to interfere too often.
11. The facilitator must remember to blow the whistle every five minutes, on which signal groups must remove their tree allocation from the forest.

Preparing for the conference. (10 minutes)

12. After the first 15 minutes of play the facilitator should announce that the International Conference will be taking place in 10 minutes, and groups should be asked to begin preparing a two minute presentation of their case to put to the conference, including details of any agreements they have reached with other groups. During this period groups can continue to negotiate, but they must have their prepared statements ready on time. The whistle should still be blown each five minutes during this 10 minute period.

The Conference. (20 minutes) Arrange a circle of chairs to accommodate everybody.

13. The facilitator should take the role of a representative from the United Nations Environmental Programme, and act as the Chair of the International Conference. Each group should be given 2 minutes (maximum) to read its prepared statement. The Chair can then invite open discussion/debate. This can be allowed to continue for as long as it is productive. The Chair should close the debate by announcing that s/he has been called away to an important meeting in Geneva. During this period cutting down of trees is suspended.

The debrief. (15 minutes)

14. The facilitator should ask participants to get out of role by handing in role cards, and moving to a new seat away from members of their group. Participants might then be asked to reflect upon the experience of playing the game in the following ways:

- How did you feel about the role you were asked to play?
- How did the 'local people' (Kopano Tribe, Resettled People) feel about the 'outsiders' in the forest?
- What did those working in the forest think about the people who lived there?
- What were the respective attitudes of the groups towards conservation of the forest? Was there a similar attitude displayed by all those living there, and by all those working there?
- Did any groups increase their timber requirements during the game, or were any groups persuaded to reduce theirs?
- What do you think would have happened if the game had continued?
- Do powerful groups, like wealthy countries and transnational corporations, have a right to cut down large areas of forest? Whose interests are they serving?
- Who should protect the rights of the local people living in such areas, and how?
- What might be the long-term consequences of destruction of the world's forests (a) for people living in the region or country concerned, (b) for the rest of the world?
- What steps need to be/could be taken to halt the destruction of forests? Are there any 'economic' policies governments could pursue to protect forests?

Rainforest Information Sheet

Facilitator's Copy

Rainforests cover 2% of the Earth's surface, or 6% of its land mass, yet they house over half the plant and animal species on Earth. They originally covered at least twice that area - and if deforestation continues at current rates scientists estimate nearly all tropical rainforest ecosystems will be destroyed by the year 2030.

Global Rates of Destruction

The world's rainforests are being destroyed at a rate of 2.4 acres (1 hectare) per second - an area equivalent to a football field. This amounts to an area the size of New York City every day, 78 million acres per year. In Brazil alone, home to one third of the Earth's rainforest, 50,000 square kms is lost every year. In central and South America 2 - 4% of forest is destroyed annually. The remainder is in Africa: annual deforestation rates of between 8 and 15%, and South East Asia, where forest is destroyed at a rate of up to 8% per year.

Major causes of Rain forest Destruction

- Mining, oil extraction and hydroelectric dams.
- Slash and burn clearance for subsistence farming; the cleared area is then cropped for two or three years before it is abandoned.
- Clearance for firewood - one third of the world's population relies on firewood for heating and cooking. 86% of all wood consumed annually in least developed countries is for fuel.
- Organised national/international logging operations.
- Extensive clearing for grazing - a cheap source of land (particularly in Latin America) to raise cattle for hamburger manufacturers.
- Government policies of resettlement - to remove pressure of overcrowding in the cities and make economic use of the land.

Extinction of Species

Between 40 - 50% of all life forms on our planet - as many as 30 million species of plants, animals and insects - live in tropical rain forests. Scientists estimate that an average of 137 species of life forms are

driven into extinction *each day*. 6-9 million indigenous people inhabited the Brazilian rainforest in 1500. In 1992 less than 200,000 remained.

Medicinal/ food use

Many of the foods we eat today originated in the rainforests: including avocados, bananas, coconuts, black pepper, cocoa, lemons, oranges, cinnamon, cloves, rice, sugar, tomatoes, brazil nuts, cola, coffee and many more. The wild strains still in the rainforest of many of these plants provide genetic materials essential to fortify our existing agricultural stocks. A further 75,000 wild plant species have not yet been exploited by humans, many of them in the rainforest.

One quarter of all medicines owe their existence to plants. 70% of the drugs useful in cancer treatment are sourced only in the rainforest. Also medicines for heart ailments, hypertension, arthritis and birth control.

Global Warming

The greenhouse effect is caused by the millions of tons of CO₂ our cars and factories discharge into the atmosphere. Tropical rainforests act as carbon traps, and as they are destroyed this effect is reduced. Moreover if they are burned more carbon is released into the atmosphere.

Sustainably managing forests

The projected economic value of 1 hectare in the Peruvian Amazon is as follows:-

- \$6,820 if forest is harvested for fruits, latex and timber
- \$1,000 if clear cut for commercial timber
- \$148 if used for cattle pasture

Sources

Rainforest Action Network fact sheets : www.ran.org/ran/info June 2001

Rainforest Preservation Foundation : www.flash.net

Tropical Rainforest Coalition : www.rainforest.org

Children's Tropical Forests (U.K) Fact Sheet : www.tropical-forests.com

www.geocities.com

Rainforest Information Sheet

Forestwatch copy

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Burgerbeef Incorporated

Your company is based in Nordia, where you have a lot of fast food and takeaway restaurants selling beefburgers. Your restaurants have spread to many other countries. You also sell beef to other firms who supply supermarkets, schools and hospitals with burgers. More and more people want your burgers; your restaurants are full and making you a lot of money.

- You are just starting to buy parts of the rainforest where you can graze large herds of cattle to supply your 'Burgerbeef' restaurants and takeaways with beef.
- Land is cheap to buy in the rainforest - much cheaper than in Nordia - because there are not many people living there (only a few Indians) and the soil isn't good enough for growing crops like rice, wheat and corn. If it is cleared of all the trees and bushes it is good grazing land - wide open grassland for big ranches on which your cattle can roam. Unfortunately the cattle eat all the grass up in 2 or 3 years so that you must always be clearing a new ranch on land next door to keep your cattle fed.
- Your employees - the people working on the ranches - have had some trouble with the local people (particularly the Indians, and just lately with some of the new settlers) and your company now have to employ staff with rifles to protect your land, your cattle and your workers.
- There are other beef companies who want land in the forest and you hope to convince (or bribe) the Latasican government to give you exclusive rights to clear the forest for new ranches. You know that Latasica is deeply in debt and needs all the income it can raise.

You need to take three trees every five minutes - to clear land for your ranches. If you take fewer trees you must explain how you will keep your restaurants open and make money. To take more trees you must get the written agreement from two other groups in the forest. If you want to start replanting trees you need the help of two other groups and the United Nations.

Forestwatch

You are an international pressure group, with headquarters in Nordia. You are trying to halt the destruction of the rainforest.

- You raise a lot of your money from ordinary people in countries like Nordia. Your recent campaign to protect the Latasican rainforest has raised enough money from street collections, exhibitions, schools workshops and media events (stunts and pop concerts) to send a small team of people to Latasica to see the rainforest and attend the International Conference.
- The Latasican Rainforest Campaign made people think about what was happening to the world's forest and how they were involved in its destruction - you have gained a lot of supporters in Nordia who will write letters to newspapers and the government, and would be willing to join boycotts of companies they thought were behaving 'unethically'.
- The campaign pointed the finger at the Nordan industries, which made a profit out of rainforest destruction, the building industry that used so many hardwood doors and windows, the furniture industry that used mahogany and other hardwoods in sofas and kitchen units, and the paper making industry.
- Your campaign also pointed out that these industries started importing wood from the rainforests because the Nordan forests had been cut down years ago and that Nordia was now the world's main producer of air pollution from factory chimneys and car exhausts.

Your team must try to persuade the various groups who live and work in the forest to reduce their timber requirements and start a large scale reforestation (replanting) scheme of trees that are native to the forest (not just commercially viable). You are a non-violent group that is concerned not just about the trees but also about the people who live there.

Kapano Tribe-“ The Forest People”

Your people have been living in the forest for ever - “since people began” - it's your home!

- Your people are clever. You get your food from the forest. You build your homes from trees in the forest. Even when you are sick you find medicines in the forest. The forest is your life. You have small farms where you grow food like corn (maize), plantains (a banana like fruit), sugar cane and vegetables. You also grow tobacco and cotton. After a time you move to another forest area and start a new farm, this allows the soil time to regain its goodness (its fertility). This is called 'shifting agriculture' - using small parts of the forest for a short time.
- You also cut down a few trees in the forest to build your houses with, and for tools (for farming, hunting, building, etc), but most of all you use the forest to provide firewood for cooking. You know that the forest is being cut down too fast - mostly near the roads and the towns. This means that you cannot always move to another area because the whole forest is getting smaller as more people - invaders - move in and use it.
- These invaders are uncivilised; they have disturbed the balance of the forest and your lifestyle. You see the thoughtless damage on the edges of the forest and along the new roads and tracks that have been built through it. The biggest, best and oldest trees are cut down, huge areas are burnt to clear the forest for bigger, more permanent farms and big ranches.
- You are getting very worried about all these new people. Some of your tribe have been shot at and hurt. Should you still keep to your traditional beliefs of non-violence or get guns too?

You need to take 1 tree every 5 minutes- for firewood, homes, farmland, tools, etc. To take more trees you must get written agreement from two other groups in the forest, if you want to start replanting trees you need the help of two other groups and the United Nations.

Latasican Government.

You think it is a good idea to get people out of the crowded cities and into the countryside. Accordingly you have set up a Resettlement Scheme.

- The cities in your country (Latasica) are full. People moved to the cities because they thought that they could earn more money. But these people had only swapped one sort of poverty for another. They moved to the slums and shantytowns and found little work. Crime rates in the city increased. Your government decided to offer these poor city dwellers a new start through a Resettlement Scheme.
- The forest areas were empty and under populated. There weren't many people living there, only the 'Indians' (the indigenous tribal people), and people working for the logging company, 'TreeCo'. Land was cheap in the forest because nobody really owned it. Your government only had to build a few roads and houses and the poor city people could be moved there. If they started to earn a decent income there would be increased revenue for the Government in taxes.
- Under the Resettlement Scheme people would get a small plot of forest which they could clear, and have a simple house. They could grow crops, or get work with the logging company. You promised to build schools and hospitals for them. This was a popular policy with the voters and you won the last election because of it.
- Now you are worried because it seems that the forest is disappearing too fast. However you are faced with other problems; your country is heavily in debt to the Nordan government who insist on repayment, and the revenue from cutting trees is your main source of foreign exchange earnings; because of the debt you have been unable to build the schools and hospitals you promised, and the resettled people are getting disillusioned with you.

You need to take two trees every 5 minutes - for the resettlement scheme. If you want to take fewer trees you must explain how you would deal with the poor in your cities. To take more trees (which might be one way of earning money to build hospitals and schools), or to begin replanting trees, you must get a written agreement from two other groups in the forest.

Medico PLC

You are a large multinational pharmaceutical company with headquarters in Nordia, and offices and factories all over the world.

- Doctors and hospitals in every country in the world use the drugs and remedies you make and sell. Many of the raw ingredients for the drugs that you make were first found in the rainforest and they don't exist anywhere else, for example: Curare, which the Kapano Indians use as poison for their arrow tips, is turned into a drug which paralyses the nervous system, like an anaesthetic, and means that hospital operations can be carried out more easily; Ruawolfia is used as a medicine to treat people who have an irregular heartbeat; Reserpine (or Serpentroot) calms people down; relieving hypertension and helping people with schizophrenia (Medico now use it for most of their tranquillisers).
- You are sure that there are many other valuable drugs to be found from plants, roots and trees in the forest. You want to conduct a survey in the forest to find out what is there.
- If you can find and develop new drugs you may be able to produce medicines which could provide cures for AIDS, heart disease, cancer etc. Your company would make many millions of dollars from patenting these.
- If the rainforest disappears none of this research will be possible. Your organisation has given grants to Forestwatch because you think their work is important, and you hope that they will help you convince others of the need to protect the rainforest. You have influence with the Nordian government because you gave money for the Presidential election campaign.

You need to protect the forest for your scientific investigations. You want less trees to be cut down, at least until your research is complete. If you want to start replanting trees you will need the help of two other groups and the UN.

Nordian Government

Your government has been elected by the people of Nordia to give them a better standard of living. Nordia is already the richest country in the world but income is unevenly distributed and many people, especially those from ethnic minorities, are very poor. You believe that to solve poverty your economy must continue to grow.

- Nordian industries earn a lot of money and keep Nordia rich. Some of these industries need wood from the forest, e.g. the building, paper making and furniture industry; or make machinery for logging companies in the forest. These industries provide jobs for many of your people. If these industries declined there would be unemployment, which is politically unpopular.
- However, some people in Nordia are getting worried about global warming. Your industries, and the cars which so many of your people drive, burn fossil fuels which create this problem - in fact your country is the worst polluter in the world. Forestwatch have just started a major campaign to protect the rainforest because the trees are like the lungs of the earth, they clean the pollution from the air.
- The Latasican government borrowed a lot of money from your government 15 years ago, to build up its industry. You want to make sure these debts are repaid. Exporting timber is Latasica's main source of foreign exchange earnings, without which they cannot afford to pay the debt.
- You are trying to work out what to do. You need to talk to the Latasican Government and other people involved in the rainforest to see how you can protect the global environment, keep Nordan people happy, ensure the debts you are owed are repaid and keep your industries profitable. There are no easy answers it seems.

You need to take three trees every 5 minutes - two of these are for debt repayments, and one for Nordan industry. If you take fewer trees you must explain how you will keep Nordia rich. To take more trees you must get written agreement from two other groups in the forest. If you want to start replanting trees you need the help of two other groups and the United Nations.

Nordian Tourists

You are rich tourists from Nordia and you have come to the forest in Latasica on an adventure holiday.

- This holiday is expensive, but you have seen pictures of the forest in magazines and on TV and you know that it is slowly disappearing. You want to see what the forest is really like before it is destroyed (and before other package holidaymakers come and spoil it).
- You are interested in seeing the massive trees and the many varieties of wildlife that live here. This is the only place that you can see these animals outside zoos. You want to experience nature as it really is. You are rich enough to pay for the expensive airfare and the high hotel prices.
- So far the hotels have been very impressive (just as good as the ones in Nordia). It is nice to come back from your hot day trips in the forest and eat good food in the air-conditioned restaurant, relax in a hot bath before going to bed in a beautifully carved four poster bed. In fact all the woodwork in the hotel, and the wooden souvenirs that you brought in the shop, feel rich and warm and the red and dark brown wood looks the same as the windows and doors in your house in Nordia.
- You are about to go off deep into the forest on a four-day camping trip with your video cameras to try and film the strange tribes that live there. On the trip you will try and find out if the forest is really under threat and who is really responsible for destroying such a beautiful place. After all, you only have a few more days of your holiday before you go back to cold damp Nordia, with its cities, traffic jams and hard work at your office.

You need to take 2 trees every 5 minutes, for your hotel and Nordian homes etc. If you want to take fewer trees you must explain how you would live without them. To take more trees you must get written agreement from two other groups in the forest. If you want to start replanting trees you need the help of two other groups and the United Nations.

Resettled People of Latasica.

You moved to the forest from the city five years ago under the Government Resettlement Scheme.

- You wanted to move from the city because you lived in the poorest areas (the slums). You couldn't find a job and you wanted better homes and lives for your families. The Government Resettlement Scheme promised you new houses with water and electricity and enough land for growing crops. The Government said there was clean air and open spaces for children to play. They said they would build hospitals and schools. They said you could find work with the Timber Company 'TreeCo'. You were looking forward to an exciting new life.
- When you first moved here things were fine, the houses were better than the ones you had left, the crops you grew gave you a good harvest, and you could often earn extra money with temporary jobs as loggers for 'TreeCo' in the forest.
- Gradually, however the harvests have got worse, the soil seems to be getting worn out - you have had to chop down a new bit of forest every three months just to grow enough to eat. There is also less work in the forest with TreeCo, they use machines to cut wood these days.
- The prices in the local shops are rising and since you earn less from farming, and you have less paid work, you are finding it hard to live. It is difficult to afford even basic things like soap. The schools and hospitals, which the Government promised, have not yet been built.
- You feel that although it wasn't very good in the city, at least you had friends and neighbours to help. In the forest you feel alone, isolated and abandoned. You are forced to cut down more of the forest every year just to survive. You are becoming worried about this, what happens if there is no forest left? Will you have to move again?

You need to take 2 trees every 5 minutes- for firewood, home, farmland, tools etc. If you want to take fewer trees you must explain how you will live without them. To take more trees you must get written agreement from 2 other groups in the forest. If you want to start replanting trees you need the help of two other groups and the United Nations.

'TreeCo'.

You are a big company that employs about 1500 people in the Latasican rainforest. You began as a Latasican government-owned company, but you were 'privatised' when Latasica's government accepted an International Monetary Fund 'Structural Adjustment Programme', and you were recently taken over by a big transnational company based in Nordia.

- Lots of people in Latasica, and the rest of the world, want to buy the wood that you cut down, the demand is so great that you are finding it difficult to satisfy all your customers. Most people want the 'hardwoods' like Mahogany, but these trees are normally surrounded by other trees so that you have to cut other trees down to get to them. You would like the government to build new roads for easier access.
- You have just been offered a lot of money from a furniture company in Nordia to supply lots of hardwood, but they need the wood quickly.
- You use some local people to cut the trees down, but the bigger machines that you have just bought means that you need fewer workers - one machine can do the work of 50 people. These machines are made in Nordia and cost a lot, but it is cheaper than paying for labour.
- You do want to replant trees- otherwise you know that the wood will run out one day, but the best trees for you to plant are the quick growing varieties like Eucalyptus - the hardwoods can take up to a hundred years to grow fully. Tree poaching increasingly worries you. The settlers and the Kapano Indians have stolen some of your trees (particularly in the new reforested areas). You need to decide what you are going to do about this. You could ask the Government for better protection; after all you do pay a lot of taxes.

You need to take 3 trees every 5 minutes- for Latasican customers and Nordian Industries. If you want to take fewer trees you must explain how you would make a profit without them. To take more trees you must get a written agreement from two other groups in the forest. If you want to start replanting trees you need the help of two other groups and the United Nations.

Burgerbeef Incorporated

Forestwatch

Kapano Tribe

Latasican Government

Medico PLC

Nordian Government

Nordian Tourists

TreeCo

Resettled People of Latasica