

A bunch of ripe yellow bananas, slightly curved, with a small brown stem at the top. They are set against a plain white background.

Banana worker

Plantation owner

Shipper

Shops and supermarkets

Importer and ripener

30p

Pictures of the banana journey. You could cut out and use these to support your writing if you would like to.



Banana worker



12-14 hours per day of hard physical labour in hot conditions.

Selecting the best bananas.

Washing bananas – you will have your hands in water all day.

Cutting bananas – you will have to carry heavy loads of bananas on your back.

Applying fertilisers and pesticides – can lead to health risks such as cancer and other diseases.

Pesticides are also sprayed from planes – they are likely to fall on your home or the local school.

Worry: Will you have enough money to buy food, pay medical bills or to send your children to school?

You may not be allowed to meet together with other workers to complain about your pay, the way you are treated at work or where you live. You will be discouraged from joining a trade union.



Plantation owner



Plantation running costs: You will have to pay for expensive pesticides, fuel for pesticide-spraying aeroplanes, tools and machinery.

Cost of lawyers: In case workers sue you for work accidents.

Waste: Regulations in most countries in Europe and most shoppers want "perfect fruit" – no mark on the skin, nice shape etc. This takes a lot of skill and money to achieve. If any of your bananas don't meet these high standards they have to be scrapped – so you lose money.

Risk factor: You bear the cost if the harvest is bad, or a hurricane or pest destroys your crop.

Modernisation investments: You need money to keep paying for the latest machines and ideas, so your plantation stays up to date and you stay in business.

Cost of land: The longer your land is used to grow bananas, the more the goodness in the soil will be used up and you will need to pay for expensive fertilisers, or buy new land!



Extra information

Growers

After planting the banana plants it will take 18 months before the bunches of bananas are ready to cut down. During this time farmers have to protect their bananas from damage by the weather and by pests. To do this, bananas have to be covered in plastic sheets. Some farmers will use fertilizers to help the crop grow and pesticides to help protect the crop from bugs and pests*.

Both will need to be bought by the farmer. When the bananas have grown, but still green, the farmer cuts them from the plants with a machete and packs them in boxes. The plants then die and the farmer must grow new ones.

Shipper



You face the following costs:

Ships: Big cargo ships are very expensive to buy and keep in working order.

Fuel: You need to pay for fuel for the ships – one load between Latin America and Europe may be at sea for up to five weeks.

Insurance: If a cargo is lost or damaged, it may be your fault and you may have to pay for it.

Refrigeration: On board, the bananas are kept in big fridges to prevent them from ripening during the time at sea. If they ripen too soon they will be spoilt by the time they arrive at the shops.

Port fees: You will have to pay for your ships to be in port at both ends of the sea journey.



Shops and supermarkets



Staff: You have to pay the people who work in your store.

Running costs: Lighting, transport, designing of staff uniforms, carrier bags etc.

Competition: You need to take on new ideas, maybe build a bigger shop, buy new machinery – all to make sure you make more money than other shops and stay in business.

Risk: If the bananas are handled badly or arrive on the shelves over-ripe, your customers will not be happy – they may decide not to shop at your store any more.

Advertising: You will need to advertise what you sell and to show how good your shop is so that shoppers come to buy their shopping at your store rather than going anywhere else.



Importer and ripener



Transport: By truck from the European port to big ripening centres, and from there to the shops.

Contracts: You will have to promise the plantation owner that you will buy a certain amount of bananas each week. You will have to promise the shops you will provide a certain amount of bananas each week. Whatever happens, you will have to keep the promises, even if something goes wrong in the supply chain and you are let down.

Licence fee: You will have to pay for an import license to bring your bananas into the European Union.

Big offices: Importers "need" big, fancy office buildings for the work that their role involves.

Ripening gas: Ethylene is used to ripen bananas.

Repackaging: After ripening the bananas must be repackaged so you will have to pay for the materials and for the workers to do this.



Extra information

Winward Island Banana Development Company

This company works to support the growers. They work to get as good a price as possible for the farmers who sell their bananas. They also supply the farmers with fertilizers, pesticides, plastic sheets and boxes and give farmers advice on growing bananas.

Shipping, importing and packaging Company•

This company transports the boxes of bananas from the Caribbean to the UK in refrigerator ships. The journey takes about six days. Once the bananas arrive in the UK they have to be carried by lorry to the factory where they are carefully ripened for about a week. They have to be kept in special rooms at the right temperature to help them ripen. They are sorted into different sizes and packed ready for sending out to the wholesalers or retailers.

Wholesaler

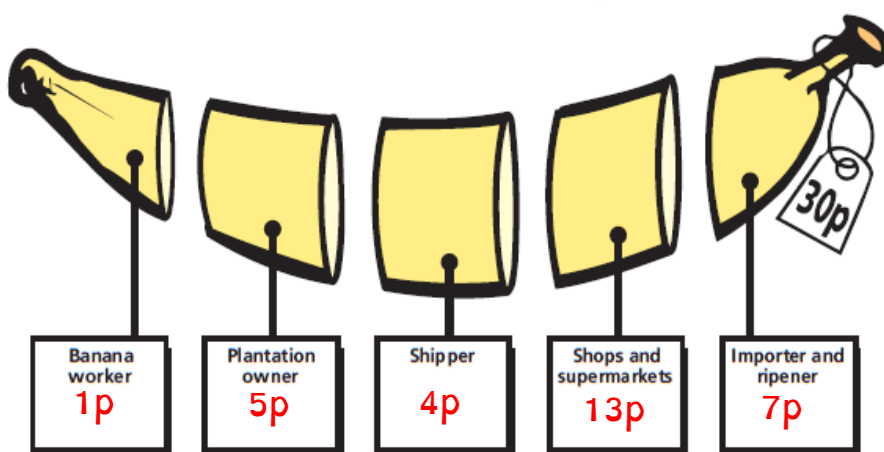
Receives boxes of ripened bananas from the packaging company and sells them on to different retailers who then sell them in their shops.

Retailer

Sells the ripe bananas in a shop or on a market stall. They need to be sold fast before they over-ripen and turn brown.

This is how 30p would actually be split between the different groups. Is this fair? What would you change if you could? And why?

Banana Split



Watch the clip about the banana industry of the [Windward Islands](#).

Have a look at these websites to find out about making trade fair.:

[Fairtrade](#)

[Bananalink](#)

Watch and learn about [Foncho](#)



Try the [Banana Quiz](#)



Facts and Statistics



In the UK, we eat over 5 billion bananas a year, 13 million a day, 9,000 a minute and we now spend over £550 million a year on them.



80% of the bananas bought in the UK are bought in supermarkets.



We typically paid 18p for a loose banana 10 years ago but now we can pay as little as 11p.



Over the same period, costs to growers of producing bananas (such as fertilisers, spraying and fuel) have more than doubled.



We typically pay 20p for an apple grown in the UK compared to 11p for a loose tropical banana.



Between 1992 and 2008, annual export volumes fell from 56,000 tonnes to 9,300 tonnes, revenues crashed from US\$40m to US\$8m, and the number of banana farmers fell from 6,000 to 1,200.



In total, the number of small-scale banana growers in the Windwards has fallen from 25,000 in 1992 to fewer than 4,000 today.