

Hurst Green's Question activity



Year 4 and 5

Why do animals walk around where you are working?

Animals are usually only shut up at night to keep them safe.

How do you make sure that your animals don't get lost or stolen?

During the day they wander around and often a child makes sure that they don't stray too far. At night they are shut into a corral or goat house.

Do the animals ever get run over?

Yes. There aren't many cars on the roads in Malawi but goats just wander out onto the roads.

Where do you get your food from?

Most of our food we grow ourselves. Otherwise we go to the market and bargain for the best price. If we haven't got any money and we have used all that we have grown then we have to go without.

What do you eat for breakfast in the morning?

We often don't have enough food for breakfast but if we do we have nsima or pick a mango or baobab fruit on the way - if they are in season.

Who sells the food at the market?

The people who grow the food sell it at the market.

Do the people who are selling the food, grow it?

Yes. And sometimes a family member will sell it as well.

Do you make cheese?

No. It would go off too quickly as we don't have a way of keeping it fresh.

How often does your family go to the market?

We go nearly every day as we can't keep food fresh at home easily. Also it is a good place to meet people and chat.

How often is the market? Which days and for how long?

The market is on every day except Sundays. Usually it opens about 8 o'clock and closes about 3 o'clock. If everything has been sold then the person running that stall will go home.

Do you have to get permission to sell food at the market?

Anyone can find a spot to sell what they have grown but the regulars will go to the same place. Often people will just set up a stall on the road by their village rather than carry their things all the way to the market.

Do you buy all your food at the market or do you go to the shops?

Most things we get at the market as it is cheaper but there are some things that we have to get from the shops.

How do you get to the market?

Walk. Malawians mostly walk everywhere or they get a ride on a bike. This is called *dampa* and is a cheap way to travel in Malawi.

How long does it take you?

About half an hour or an hour to get there but longer to get back. We usually walk with a friend or two so that we can chat.

What do you like to eat?

Nsima is the favourite. But all food is delicious.

How many times a day do you eat?

If there is enough food then we eat two times a day. When there is only a little food we might only be able to eat once a day. In the really hungry season we often have very little to eat.

Who cooks your food?

Our mums. Cooking is for women to do. *Fydon* said that he sometimes cooks since he has been to England and seen that men sometimes do the cooking.

Do you build most of your buildings?

We make our own bricks from the earth around us and build kilns to fire the bricks in to make them waterproof. Often our friends and family help us to make our houses when we have made enough bricks.

How do you build your houses?

We make bricks. The floor is made of earth. Only people with money can afford concrete floors. Most people make their roofs from wood which they cover in plastic and then cover in grasses which have been cut it may and dried during the year. We need to make sure that our roofs don't leak in the rainy season. The rain starts in October. If we can afford it then we buy tin for the roof of our house as it lasts longer and it more waterproof.

Why don't your houses have two storeys?

Our houses usually only have two or three rooms so they only need to be on one level. A two storey house would cost more to build and be more difficult to build.

Why do all the girls wear skirts and not trousers?

It is tradition for the girls to wear skirts or dresses with a *chitenje* over it to keep it clean. It is considered rude to let boys see the shape of your leg. Nowadays some girls in the towns wear trousers but it is not considered the right thing to do in the villages.

Do you have to get permission to build a house?

We have to talk to the village headman to check that we can build a house where we want to.

Where do you eat your food?

On a mat outside our house, unless it is raining and then we would eat inside.

How do you cook your food?

On a fire. Some of us cook on a three stone fire but now in the Chitiwiri community we are using fires made of brick and mud because they use less wood and are less smoky so they are healthier for us. We are trying to look after our environment more.

If you don't have electricity how do you keep your food fresh?

It is a problem. When a goat or cow is killed we sell bits of meat in the community and people have to cook it and eat it quite soon before it goes off. This is why we don't drink milk or make cheese.

When did your school start recycling?

We have always recycled for as long as we can remember. Nothing goes to waste. The teachers have to make their own resources so they use all sorts of things that are lying around. TALULAR - teaching and learning using locally available resources. Our school bags are often old maize or ground nut bags

Are your animals free to roam?

Yes they have to go where they can find food - especially in the dry season when there isn't much grass for them

Why does the land get dry?

There is hardly any rain from April through to November.

Do you have snakes? What kind?

Yes lots! The most poisonous is the black mamba. We also have very big pythons which sometimes come and kill our animals.

Do they sell fruit at the market?

Yes - mangoes, tomatoes, Mexican apples, papaya and Guava are the most usual. And also baobab fruit.

Do you have farms in Malawi?

Yes. Nearly everybody is a farmer and has a bit of land to grow food for themselves and some to sell.

How many teachers do you have at your school?

8 teachers plus 3 student teachers.

In Malawi, does everybody speak English?

No. The language is Chechewa. In schools the children have to learn in English from STD 5 but often their parents don't speak English so they don't get as much practise as they should. All teachers have to speak English and you must speak English if you want to get on in life.

Are there jobs in Malawi?

Yes but not many and they are difficult to get. There is a lot of unemployment and then you have to rely on other members of the family. If you do well there are some opportunities such as teacher, nurse, doctor, dentist, banker, lawyer, work in the tourist industry or tobacco industry and others

What are the common jobs?

Most people are farmers. You can also be a tailor, carpenter, electrician, builder.

How many children are there in your class?

In STD 1 there are 125 children but it has dropped to about 40 in STD 8.

Do you have local football and netball teams?

Yes we play a lot!

How many classrooms do you have?

4 indoors and 4 outside. We are building a church at the moment and two more classes will go in there. We have also been told that the government will build another classroom block as all the classes will be inside.

What are the lessons?

How far is your house from the water pump?

Some people live very close but others live 1 or 2kms. It can take a long time as we need lots of buckets each day for cooking and washing.

Who collects the water in your house?

The women.

Do you ever buy bottles of water?

Never. It is far too expensive.

Can you get all that you need in the market?

Yes as long as we have the money and there has been a good harvest.

What is life like in Malawi?

Good. We have fun and we have a lot of friends and family but we think it might be better in England.

What games do you play in Malawi?

Football, netball, bowa and cards. We also like skipping and playing a game with bottle tops. We love to sing and dance and play the drums - especially at a Gule Wankule.

How old are the children in Chitiwiri School?

They start at 6 years old and some are 20 in STD 8

When was Chitiwiri built?

How much does it cost for a banana? A mango?

About 2p each.

What do children do after school?

Help at home on the farm. Play with friends. Help in the house.

How is the market kept clean?

There is often a lot of rubbish around the market. Sometimes someone is paid to clear it up.

Do you have a national food?

Nsima

Do you have school trips?

Yes. We had one to Kuti Wildlife park when our visitors were here. We go about once every two years. We also sometimes have school trips to the lake. Only the children who can get onto the truck can go. It is a big squash and it is great fun.

Are the animals owned?

Yes

What animals do you see around school?

Goats, cows, pigs, chickens. All of these wander in and out of the school grounds.

What is your favourite animal?

Giraffe but we only see them at Kuti!

How much are goats?

Do you have after school clubs?

No.

How often do you recycle?

As often as we can. We try not to waste anything. We can usually find some way of reusing things.

Do you recycle as part of your curriculum?

We are learning about litter and waste.

Do all learners help to look after the school?

Yes! We take it in turns on a rota to come into school at 7am to clean the school. We have to sweep and wash the floors. Sometimes we have to do this as a punishment as well.

Is it part of the whole school's responsibility to clean up?

We are proud of our school and we like to keep it tidy.

What do you do with glass?

What do you do with plastic?

We don't have much glass or plastic. Plastic bags are very thin and they are sometimes left lying around. Other plastic items would be reused if at all possible.

What rules do you have?

We have to do as we are told, be respectful to teachers and adults. We aren't allowed to bully other children.

What would happen if someone broke the rules?

We might have to do extra school work or clean the school. If we are really naughty we would be told that we couldn't come to school anymore and that would be dreadful and would be a disgrace for our families