

After a terrible cup of joe in the office, a founder decided to bring African coffee traditions stateside

Level 1: Elementary

1 Warmer

a. Discuss these questions.

1. When do you drink coffee or tea?
2. What kind(s) do you drink?
3. In your culture, how is coffee and / or tea prepared?
4. Do you know about another coffee or tea culture? Describe it.

2 Key words

a. Choose the correct word to match each definition below. Then find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

1. money that someone lends you and you have to pay back
a. loan b. immigrate c. customer
2. to move to another country with the intention of living there permanently
a. customer b. focus c. immigrate
3. a person who buys things from a shop or a café
a. loan b. customer c. available
4. giving the same amount as someone else
a. deal b. invest c. match
5. an agreement between people, often to buy or sell something
a. quality b. deal c. invest
6. to pay special attention to something
a. focus b. double c. available
7. something you can get or use
a. available b. match c. quality
8. how good or bad something is
a. double b. quality c. available

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9. to put money into something to try to make more money
a. deal b. loan c. invest
10. to make something twice as much
a. invest b. double c. quality

b. Complete the sentences with words from the previous activity. You might have to change the form of the word.

1. The coffee farmer received a(n) _____ from a local bank to buy new equipment.
2. The _____ at the new coffee shop liked the special coffee they bought.
3. The special African coffee is now _____ in many stores in the United States.
4. The customers loved the high _____ of the coffee from the small farms.
5. The coffee farmers used their extra money to _____ in better machines for their farms.
6. By accident, the cashier charged the customer _____ for her coffee, so her bill was almost 10 US dollars!

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Kahawa 1893 prioritizes small producers and premium beans, while also offering consumers a 'virtual pot' to support its suppliers

Claire Wang

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- 1 When Margaret Nyamumbo was a child in Kenya, she learned something important at her grandfather's coffee farm. Women would put a pot on a table and drop money into it. This was called "table banking". Later, the women could take small loans from this money. In Kenya, women do 90 per cent of the work on coffee farms but own just 1 per cent of the land.
- 2 Ten years after immigrating to the US, Nyamumbo started her own coffee company, Kahawa 1893. She wondered if customers would "pitch into this 'virtual pot' and then farmers can have money to go around". Kahawa 1893 is named after the Swahili word for coffee and the year coffee farmers started selling coffee in Africa. The company buys beans from Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Congo. Customers scan a QR code on each bag to give extra money to the tip fund. The company matches the money. So far, they have raised 45,000 US dollars. With the match, 90,000 US dollars have gone to more than 500 women and girls in Africa.
- 3 Kahawa 1893 quickly became popular in the US. In 2021, it became the first Black woman-owned coffee company to be sold at Trader Joe's. By 2023, the company made 3 million US dollars. Nyamumbo appeared on Shark Tank, which helped her get a deal with Keurig.
- 4 Nyamumbo remains focused on lifting up the farmers. She said that this means they lose some money in the short term, but it works in the long term.
- 5 After Nyamumbo finished her MBA at Harvard, she worked on Wall Street. She had the idea because she drank very bad coffee at her office. She knew there was really good coffee in Africa, and she wanted to make it available.
- 6 In fair trade, what companies pay goes back to farmers. Tipping is similar. With the QR code, they've helped around 500 women, 200 in Kenya.
- 7 Usually, farmers get the same low price. So, they'll not spend money on better quality. However, we buy from small farmers year after year. We work with them to improve quality. That means they are willing to invest because they will get a higher price. Kahawa 1893 pays farmers nearly double the minimum fair-trade price of 1.80 US dollars per pound of coffee.
- 8 My dream is to open a coffee shop. I'd love to have stores in different cities, starting in New York City and definitely in Nairobi, as well.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. Where did Margaret Nyamumbo learn about table banking?
2. What percentage of work do women do on coffee farms?
3. What percentage of land do they own?
4. Where does the company's name come from?
5. From which four African countries does Kahawa 1893 source coffee beans?
6. How does a customer give to Kahawa 1893's 'tip fund'?
7. How much money has the tip fund raised?
8. How many women and girls has it helped?
9. How much money did Kahawa 1893 make in 2023?
10. What is Nyamumbo's dream for her company?

4 Key language

a. Complete the sentences using the correct phrasal verb from the wordpool.

lift up

pitch in

go around

focus on

1. Would customers _____ to a 'virtual pot'?
2. The tip fund helps farmers have enough money to _____.
3. Nyamumbo wants to _____ the farmers.
4. The company wants the farmers to _____ quality.

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b. Match each phrasal verb to its definition. Use the sentences above for context clues to help you.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1. lift up | a. to put money, effort or time into something to receive a benefit |
| 2. focus on | b. to give out or be enough for everyone |
| 3. pitch in | c. to help someone get to a better position or condition |
| 4. go around | d. to contribute or help |

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- 'Fair trade helps farmers to help themselves'.
- 'Fair trade is not charity. It is just a fair way to do business'.
- 'Customers care about how products are made and who makes them'.

6 In your own words

a. Work with a partner. Ask your partner the following questions and note their answers.

- What is *fair trade*? Can you explain it to your partner?
- Have you ever bought a fair-trade product? What was it? Did you like it?
- Why do you think it's important to pay a fair price for products?
- What are some benefits of buying fair-trade products for workers in other countries?
- Do you think more people should buy fair-trade products? Why or why not?

b. Work with a new partner. Exchange information about what your previous partner said.

- *He / She bought ...*
- *He / She liked / didn't like this product because ...*
- *He / She thinks fair trade is important because ...*
- *He / She said the benefit of buying fair trade was ...*
- *He / She said people should buy fair-trade products because ...*

c. Discuss with your partner which of the opinions you agree with.