**Coffee Script**

Good morning everybody. Oh, that’s good. Do you know what this is? This is a cup of coffee. I love coffee. I drink maybe a little bit too much, I have about four cups a day. Could be too much. I don’t know. But, I really like it. Anyway, today I want to talk to you a little bit about coffee. There are many different ways of drinking coffee. I have a cup of coffee with milk. Café au lait. Café au lait comes from the French, of course. “Café” is coffee, “au” is with and “lait” is milk. There’s café latte. Which comes from the Italian. “Café”, again, is coffee. “Latte” is milk. Café Americano. That comes from the Second World War, I believe. The American soldiers that were living in Italy … stationed in Italy, the coffee there was much too strong for them so they used to water it down with some boiling water. That’s why strong coffee with water is called a Café Americano, or an Americano.

Anyway, let’s talk about the etymology of “coffee”. Where does the word coffee come from? “Café” in French. Well, we don’t really know, but, probably, it comes from the Arabic. There are two words in Arabic, “qahwah” and “quwwah”, which could have become “coffee”. “Qahwah” means to lack hunger and “quwwah” means strength. In the very beginning … well … five, six hundred years ago, the first people to use coffee lived in the Sufi region, and they used it to stay awake during their religious rituals. The rituals would go on and on and on all night long and, to avoid falling asleep, they would drink as much coffee as possible. And that’s where the drinking of coffee really came from.

Right, these days, where is coffee grown? Well, most of the world’s coffee comes from Brazil, of course. You probably already knew that. But coffee is generally grown in what is called the “bean belt”. This is a band across the middle of the Earth, that generally goes along … follows the equator around the Earth. And coffee is grown just to the north and just to the south of the equator. Why is that? Well, obviously because of the climate. It’s fairly hot. Coffee needs hot weather to grow. You can’t grow coffee where I come from, in England. It just won’t grow. So, most of the world’s coffee comes from the “bean belt”.

Coffee was probably first discovered in Mozambique. Which is the island near Africa … near southern Africa, of course. And from there it probably moved up to the Sufi region, which is in north east Africa … er … towards the Middle East, by the fifteenth (15th) century. And from there it moved up into the Middle East, by the sixteenth (16th) century and then it was in Europe and generally America by the seventeenth (17th) century. I said earlier that most of the world’s coffee comes from Brazil, well coffee is not actually native to Brazil. A Frenchman, I believe it was, took coffee across from Europe to North America and … er … South America in 1720. He realized that the climate in Brazil was perfect for growing coffee so he started planting coffee trees and now Brazil grows more coffee than any other country in the world. Brazil is first. Vietnam is actually second. And then Colombia and Indonesia. They grow the most coffee in the world.

Now, how do you drink coffee? Well, obviously I have it with milk, here. But, that’s not what I mean. How is coffee prepared? Well, obviously, coffee is a bean. It grows on a tree. The first thing you have to do is harvest the bean. You can do that by hand or you can do it with machines. Obviously, by hand is much cleaner. You can take off just the beans, but by hand is much more labor intensive. It takes a lot longer to do it. Machines are much faster, but they also … er … harm the tree as well. So, once you’ve harvested the beans, you have to dry them. Generally, they are spread out over a large area and dried naturally in the sun. Then, once they are dried, you have to sort them. You can sort them for different sizes, different qualities, and different types of bean. Once they are sorted, they are roasted. So, you can roast them for different lengths of time. A little bit or a very long time. And the length of time you roast them … er … changes the flavor, obviously of the bean. So, once they are roasted, they have to be shipped. They’re put into sacks, usually, and they’re shipped all around the world. Then, once you buy your beans from the shop you grind them and then you pour boiling water through them and you make your coffee. Simple.

In the very beginning, coffee beans were not roasted. In the very beginning, they were eaten. Legend has it that people saw animals eating these beans and watched their reaction and thought, “well, we should try that, too”. But eating raw coffee beans, they’re not very nice. Even eating roasted coffee beans is not that nice. You can actually buy coffee beans covered in sugar. So, in the beginning they tried eating them raw and then they tried roasting them. Once they’d tried roasting them it was a natural progression to making coffee, of course. So, that’s generally the history of coffee. These days most coffee is drunk in America. Americans drink more coffee than any other people on Earth, pretty much.

Now, you can’t really talk about coffee without covering the fair trade industry a little bit. Coffee is produced, as I said, mostly in Brazil, but in many other countries. And what these countries generally have in common is that they are not very wealthy countries. So, companies like, for example Starbucks, I’m not saying Starbucks does this but, for example Starbucks, or Costco, or Walmart, when they buy their coffee they can buy it from these poor countries, from these poor farmers and they can use their buying power to push down the price of the coffee. For example, if one farmer grows his coffee and says, “I’m going to sell it to Walmart for two dollars ($2) a kilogram (kg)”, for example, Walmart can say, “Oh, we don’t want to buy that. We’re going to go to this farmer over here who’s willing to sell it to us for one dollar ($1) a kilogram (kg).” The other farmer, the first farmer, he doesn’t have any choice. He either reduces the price of his coffee, or he goes out of business, he can’t sell his coffee. So, Walmart use their power, their strength to push down the price of coffee. Thanks to that. “Thanks” to that, we can buy pretty cheap coffee. However, that might be good for us, the consumer, but of course, it is not good for the person producing the coffee. They have to sell the coffee for almost less than it costs to produce it. They cannot survive on that. So, we have fair trade. Fair trade started, oh, I guess, forty (40) years ago now. Fair trade means paying the people that produce the food a fair wage, a fair income, a fair price. Now, fair trade coffee is usually thirty percent (30%) more expensive than non-fair trade coffee. Of course, we say thirty percent (30%) more expensive, but we should be saying non-fair trade coffee is thirty percent (30%) cheaper than fair trade coffee, because fair trade, that should be the real price we are paying, that should be the base line. Anything under that is unfair to the famers, unfair to the producers. So, fair trade coffee is more expensive. If you go into the shops, you can find it’s expensive, fair trade coffee, fair trade chocolate.

We should buy it. We should buy it, of course. As humans, as people living in a first world country, we have a responsibility to buy fair trade food, we have a responsibility to give more money to the farmers producing our food. Do we? Well, a survey taken in Belgium, asked people how likely they were to buy fair trade food. Fifty percent (50%), well, forty-nine percent (49%) of people said, “Yes! We will buy fair trade food! We always buy fair trade food!” Then the same people went to a supermarket, they went to many supermarkets and they interviewed people after they had been through the checkout. And they said, “how many of you bought fair trade food?” Eleven percent (11%). So, half of us say, “Yes, we will buy fair trade food”, but only eleven percent (11%) of us actually buy it. Why is that? Because it’s expensive, because we are comparing it to the cheaper versions, because we don’t have enough knowledge, enough education about the situation, because we don’t know that we will be helping people, because we are not aware of our responsibility. So, hopefully, next time you go to the supermarket, next time you are looking at buying some coffee, compare the brands, see the one that has the fair trade sticker and buy that one. Please.

Anyway, thanks for listening. I’m going to go and enjoy my coffee. Talk to you later. Bye.

**Coffee Questions**

1. What difference between Italians and Americans caused Café Americano to be created?

A: The Italians drink more coffee

B: The Americans were fighting in the War

C: The Americans were living in Italy

D: The Italians like stronger coffee

2. From what language does the word “coffee” probably come?

A: Arabic

B: French

C: Italian

D: Sufi

3. Why did the Sufi originally drink coffee?

A: To stay awake in religious rituals

B: By watching the reactions of animals that ate the beans

C: To travel up into the Middle East

D: There were many different religions

4. Why is the “bean belt” called a belt?

A: It is an area of nothing but coffee beans

B: It follows the equator

C: It goes around the middle of the Earth like a belt.

D: Local people make belts in these areas

5. When could you find coffee in America?

A: The 14th century

B: The 15th century

C: The 16th century

D: The 17th century

6. What’s a disadvantage of using machines to harvest coffee beans?

A: They are extremely labor intensive

B: They are not fair trade

C: They work very fast

D: They harm the tree

7. Which of these is the correct order for preparing coffee?

A: sort – harvest – sell – boil – roast – dry – ship – grind

B: harvest – dry – sort – roast – ship – sell – grind – boil

C: boil – roast – sort – ship – sell – harvest – grind – dry

D: dry – ship – roast – harvest – boil – sell – sort – grind

8. Which country in the world drinks the most coffee?

A: Brazil

B: Columbia

C: Vietnam

D: America

9. How does Walmart push down coffee prices?

A: They use their buying power

B: They pay $2 for 1kg of coffee

C: They buy mainly in Brazil

D: They sell only fair trade coffee

10. In the survey in Belgium, how many people actually bought fair trade food?

A: 11%

B: 30%

C: 49%

D: 50%

11. In the last paragraph, what is Steven trying to convince you to do?

A: To do something if you say that you will do it

B: To stop using Starbucks, Costco and Walmart

C: To be responsible and buy fair trade food

D: To buy the cheaper coffee whenever you can

12. When Steven says “Thanks to that. **“Thanks”** to that, we can buy pretty cheap coffee,” he uses his fingers to make quotation marks around the word “thanks”. What does this mean and why does he do it?

13. Explain how the fair trade system works.

14. Coffee is not a native species to Brazil. What can happen when you introduce a non-native species into an ecosystem? Use examples to support your reasons.

15. To produce coffee in Brazil and other countries, large scale deforestation takes place. Can you think of two other environmental problems caused by the consumption of coffee?

16. Would you buy fair trade food? No one is going to read your answer, so be honest. State your reasons.

**Coffee Answers**

1. D 2. A 3. A 4. C 5. D 6. D 7. B 8. D 9. A 10. A 11. C

12. When Steven says “Thanks to that. **“Thanks”** to that, we can buy pretty cheap coffee,” he uses his fingers to make quotation marks around the word “thanks”. What does this mean and why does he do it?

When you make quotation marks with your fingers, or air quotes, it means you are joking, or you don’t believe what you are saying. In this case, Steven says “thanks” to Walmart pushing down the price of coffee, we can buy cheap coffee. He is implying that the ability to buy cheap coffee at the expense of destroying farmers in coffee producing regions is not something we should be particularly thankful for.

13. Explain how the fair trade system works.

The fair trade system is relatively simple. For years companies like Walmart have used their strength as the only buyer in a region to crush the price of things. A good example is pickles. In the mid-1990s in America, Walmart started to sell a gallon (2.2L) jar of pickles in its shops for $2.97. That price was so low that the company making it could only get about $0.02 profit per jar. And, as sometimes happened, if the price of cucumbers went up, they would even make a loss. They couldn’t keep it up and asked Walmart to raise the price. Walmart said, “if you raise the price we will stop buying all the other things you make and we will find someone else who can sell the jar of pickles for $2.97.” The pickles company had no choice and kept selling the pickles. They went bankrupt in 2001. This pickle company was based in America, not a poorer country, but the same method applies. Walmart is (or was until Amazon arrived) the largest retailer in the world. If a producer can’t meet their low price, they will look to another producer. Usually Walmart are the only buyer in town, so if you don’t sell to them, you don’t sell. This means that poor farmers are having to sell their product at almost 0% profit. They cannot make a living on that.

Fair trade started in the 1960s. People realized that these farmers were being exploited so that we could have cheap products. They started a system of paying a fair price for items. Fair trade. As this slowly caught on, major retailers started stocking fair trade products and people started buying them. He movement took off. Farmers, producers in poorer regions began to be helped by people in wealthier countries. But, it still isn’t enough. Most people don’t buy fair trade.

14. Coffee is not a native species to Brazil. What can happen when you introduce a non-native species into an ecosystem? Use examples to support your reasons.

Introducing a non-native species into an ecosystem almost always has a negative effect. This can be seen most easily in Australia. Australia was colonized by the British in the late 18th century. Many of the first people that were shipped over were convicts who were being transported away from overcrowded prisons in the UK. After a while, as news of free land and possibility spread through the UK, wealthier people started to move over to Australia. One of these wealthy people, Thomas Austin, in 1859, decided that he wanted something to hunt. Back in the UK he had hunted rabbit, so he asked his nephew to send him some rabbits. Once they arrived, he released them into the wild. Rabbits do two things very well: mate and eat. In the UK rabbits are eaten by foxes, birds of prey and other predators. Australia doesn’t have any animals that prey on rabbits. This coupled with the mild Australian winters, they were able to safely mate year round, and within five years there were millions of rabbits ravaging the landscape, eating everything. As a solution, three different viruses have been created over the years to only affect the rabbit populations. Each one causes the number of rabbits to drop from 600 million to about 100 million, but the remaining rabbits develop a resistance and soon return back to their previrus numbers. The only real way of control is to limit their available food. So, as this example shows, introducing a non-native species can have dreadful consequences on the native wildlife because they compete for food and they have no natural predators.

15. To produce coffee in Brazil and other countries, large scale deforestation takes place. Can you think of two other environmental problems caused by the consumption of coffee?

Two other environmental problems could be the amount of water used and the amount of paper wasted.

To produce one kg of coffee requires 19,000L of water. Then, once you have bought it, you can get about 140 cups of coffee from that kg. Once cup of coffee is about 150ml, so that means another 22.5L. So, a lot of water is used to bring that cup of coffee to your mouth. Often this water must be diverted from more necessary places. Of course, this doesn’t account for the water required to ship the coffee, make the bags it is stored in and make the paper cups it is served in.

In the UK alone, 2.5 billion paper coffee cups are thrown away each year. The UK has a population of about 60 million people, so that roughly means 41 cups per person. Across the world, that number becomes staggeringly high. Some companies, Starbucks for example, are attempting to use recycled cups, but the amount of waste paper is still astoundingly high. Of course, we also must consider the energy, water and resources that go into making, disposing or recycling each cup.

16. Would you buy fair trade food? No one is going to read your answer, so be honest. State your reasons.

Yes. But I don’t. My wife does 98% of the shopping in our house and she is always looking for the cheapest bargain. She tends to buy things “made in Japan” where she can, so fair trade wouldn’t be an issue. I am the one that tends to buy coffee and chocolate. I must confess that when I am in the shop, it never even occurs to me to look for fair trade. I know about this, I understand the situation, but when the time is right, I don’t even think about it. This shows the problem fair trade producers face. I am going to try. Will I? I hope so.