How would you like to have thousands of people all over the world working for you? You do—right this minute. In fact, even while you sleep, people around the world are working in mines and factories and on farms to produce things you need. As you read this, ships and planes are crossing the oceans to bring these things to you.

You may be feeling rather special by now. But you needn’t be. The fact is that all people, all over the world, work for each other. We all depend on others for things we cannot make for ourselves. We are all interdependent.

The Global Pencil

One example of how interdependent we all are may be in your hand right now. Or perhaps it is in your pocket, or your desk, or your notebook.

It takes the efforts of thousands of people from as many as 20 different countries and states to make one little pencil. You can imagine how many people it must take to make something like a car or a television set!

The roar of the chain stops as the cedar tree starts to fall. Much of the wood for pencils comes from trees in Oregon. The chain saw may have been made in Japan. The gasoline to run it started out as crude oil. Perhaps the oil came from Texas. But chances are good that the oil came from several places, such as Mexico, Alaska, Saudi Arabia, or the North Sea, located off the coast of the United Kingdom.

The logs are loaded onto a truck. The truck may have been made in Michigan. However, it could have been put together in a plant just across the border from the United States in Canada. And, of course, the trucks run on fuel made from crude oil.

The logs may be taken to a sawmill in California. The logs are sawed into small pieces before being sent to the factory in Pennsylvania. It is in Pennsylvania that the other parts that make up a pencil are added.

The “lead” in pencils is not really lead at all. Pencil lead is a mixture of several things. Graphite comes from mines in Sri Lanka. It takes the work of miners and dock workers in Sri Lanka to put the graphite on a ship built in Japan. The ship owner lives in France. The ship company that operates the ship does business from Liberia. The graphite is mixed with clay from Mississippi and wax from Mexico.
For many people the most useful part of a pencil is the eraser. The rubber in the eraser likely came from Malaysia. The gritty stuff in the eraser that wears the pencil marks off the paper is pumice. Pumice comes from volcanoes in Italy. The piece of metal that holds the eraser in place is made of brass. Brass is made of zinc and copper. Zinc comes mainly from the United States, Canada, Australia, and Ireland. The copper may have come from Bolivia, Chile, or Zambia.

The pencil is almost finished. But first it must be painted. One of the main things that goes into the paint is castor oil. Farmers in Africa grow the castor bean plants from which the oil is made. After the pencil is painted, the name of the maker is stamped on it. The black paint used to stamp the name of the pencil maker has carbon black from the far north of Texas in it.

Now the pencil is finished, but it must still be sent to you. Hundreds of other people are involved in shipping and selling the pencil after it leaves the factory. People in any one of the 50 states could have played a part in bringing you the pencil you use every day.
**Reviewing Key Terms**

Write the correct term from the box in each sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>balance of trade</th>
<th>life expectancy</th>
<th>imports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>urbanization</td>
<td>demographic transition</td>
<td>trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>population density</td>
<td>migration</td>
<td>refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>transportation</td>
<td>interdependence</td>
<td>exports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Moving people and goods from place to place is called ________________.

2. ________________ is the buying and selling of goods.

3. People relying on each other is called ________________.

4. ________________ describes how long the average person will live.

5. The permanent flow of people from place to place is ________________.

6. A country ________________ the goods it needs from other countries.

7. The goods a country sells to other countries are called ________________.

8. Countries that export goods worth more than the goods they import are said to have a favorable ________________.

9. ________________ flee their countries because of danger or persecution.

10. ________________ is the number of people living in a unit area of land.

11. The ________________ is a model used to explain the population history of a country.

12. The movement of people to cities is called ________________.