

Farming Methods

Tim Webb

1 Methods of farming around the world

Reading

- a Read the text and underline the phrases that explain the key terms shown in bold.

Methods of farming around the world

Around the world there are many different methods of farming, or agriculture. In order to study and understand them fully, we must classify them.

Farms can be classified in terms of what they produce. Farms on which land is cultivated to grow crops are called **arable** farms. For example, farms producing corn in the 'corn belt' of the USA's Midwest can be classified as arable farms. When a crop is grown for money rather than just to feed the farmer's family, it can be called a **cash crop**. When only one crop is grown on a very large scale, this is called **monoculture**.

The rearing of animals is **livestock farming**. When the land is left as grassland (or pasture) and animals are left to feed on it, this is **pastoral farming**. Examples include sheep on the 'stations' of Australia or cattle on Argentina's 'Pampas'. Meat is exported from both these areas.

Of growing importance in some coastal areas is **aquaculture** or fish farming – raising fish in natural or artificial ponds or lakes. One example is the breeding of salmon and shellfish in Scotland's lakes, or 'lochs'.

A farm that produces both crops and animals is called a **mixed farm**. This type of farming was once very common throughout southern England. Although it is on the decline as farms have become more specialized, there are still a significant number of mixed farms in the region. **Fodder crops** are often associated with this type of farming. These are crops grown for feeding to animals, particularly during the winter months when they cannot rely on pasture.

In **MEDCs** (More Economically Developed Countries), such as the USA, Australia or Japan, most agriculture can be described as **commercial farming** – the crops are produced for sale and the farm is run as a profitable business enterprise. Some farms in MEDCs have grown in size to become very large enterprises indeed, with huge areas of land and very sophisticated machinery. This has become known as **agribusiness**. The farms are often owned by food-processing companies.

In **LEDCs** (Less Economically Developed Countries), such as India, Kenya or Brazil, a lot of farming can be described as **subsistence farming**. This means that farmers grow just enough to feed themselves and their families. Some subsistence farmers burn the natural vegetation to clear the land in order to grow crops. After a few years the soil becomes less fertile and they have to clear a new area. This type of farming is called **shifting cultivation** (or 'slash and burn'). However, there are plenty of examples of commercial farming in LEDCs, too. On Indian tea plantations the crop is cultivated on a large scale, taking advantage of cheap local labour. This is a cash crop and much of what is grown is sold abroad.

Some farming may be **capital intensive**. This is where large amounts of machinery, such as tractors and combine harvesters are used per unit of land. This is typical of farming in MEDCs. **Labour-intensive** agriculture, on the other hand, uses a large number of workers per unit of land. This is more common in LEDCs.

Some farmers are **nomadic**, moving from one place to another in search of new pastures for their animals, such as the Sami people of northern Scandinavia, who keep reindeer, or the Masai people of Kenya, who keep cattle. Most farmers, however, stay on the same piece of land. They are called **sedentary** farmers.

- b. Write as many definitions as you can for the key terms below without looking back at the text. If you have forgotten some of them, use the text you have underlined in exercise a to remind you.**

Key terms	Definition
Arable farming	<i>Farms that cultivate the land to grow crops.</i>
Cash crop	
Monoculture	
Livestock farming	
Pastoral farming	
Aquaculture	
Mixed farming	
Fodder crops	
MEDCs	
LEDCs	
Commercial farming	
Agribusiness	
Subsistence farming	
Shifting cultivation	
Capital intensive	
Labour intensive	
Nomadic	
Sedentary	

- c Check your chart with a partner and discuss any differences.**

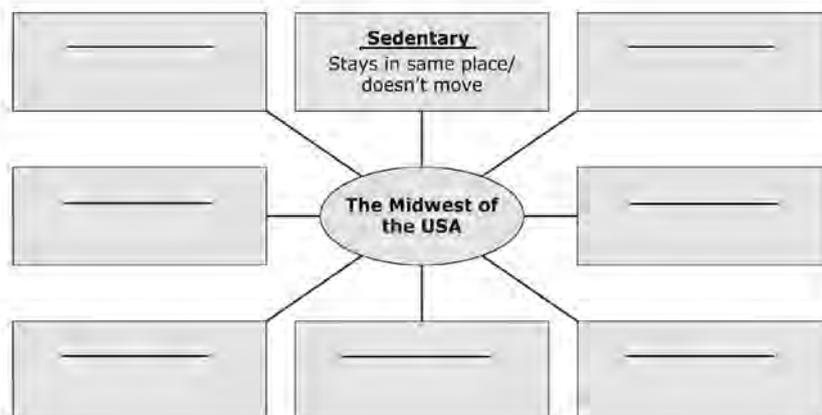
d Read the text again and look at your completed table in exercise b. Work in pairs and discuss which key term can be used to describe these farming regions mentioned in the text.

- 1 The Midwest, USA _____
- 2 The Pampas, Argentina _____
- 3 Australia _____
- 4 Scotland _____
- 5 Southern England _____
- 6 India _____
- 7 Northern Scandinavia (Sami) _____
- 8 Kenya (Masai) _____

Farming in the American Midwest

Reading, speaking, writing

a Draw a spider diagram for the Midwest of the USA. Decide which of the key words from 1 to apply to it, and label each leg with the appropriate word. Underneath each key word, give a reason from the text that supports your choice.



Useful language

(sedentary farming)...	can be understood can be explained can be identified	in a number of ways:	firstly..., secondly... it is mainly...
		in the following ways:	
		according to the following characteristics / factors:	
One way of ... Another way of...	explaining identifying classifying	this this type of farming	is..... (use key words from diagram)
It can It can also It could	be called be known as be said to be	(use key words from diagram)	because..... (use explanation from text or diagram)
It is also In addition it is	an example of a kind of	(use key words from diagram)	because..... (use explanation from text or diagram)

- b Work in pairs. Look at your completed diagrams and discuss any differences between them.**
- c Write a short description of the different types of farming. Choose phrases from the Useful language box below to help you. You will not need to use all the phrases to explain each type.**

3 Researching farming methods in a LEDC

Reading, writing

- d Choose an LEDC mentioned in the text 'Methods of farming around the world', and draw a spider diagram showing the farming methods used there. Use the Internet to do further research and your previous spider diagram for guidance.**

Farming Methods

Tim Webb

1 Methods of farming around the world

Reading

Aims

Students read a text about different methods of farming worldwide and write definitions of key terms in a chart.

Time

40 minutes

Procedure

- 1 Tell students they are going to read about different methods of farming around the world. As a warm-up, ask students to give you any words they know relating to farming and write them on the board. Some of these may not relate to the text they are going to read, but will focus their minds on the subject.
- 2 **Exercise a** Ask them to read the first half of the text as far as the definition of MEDCs. Ask them to explain the words in bold orally and then underline the phrases in the text when you are all agreed. Repeat this process with the rest of the text. Assess whether students have a good understanding of these terms. If they haven't, continue with more oral practise of terms from the whole text.
- 3 When you feel they are confident, ask them to fill in their charts with definitions of the key terms. Tell them not to look back at the text at first, but see how many they can write down from memory. Tell them it is not a test, but a way of learning the meaning of new vocabulary. Walk round the class to monitor progress. When they have done all they can, allow them to look back at the text and write in the definitions they couldn't remember.
- 4 Students check their charts with a partner and discuss any differences.
- 5 To recap, students read the text again, and, in pairs, write which type of farming occurs in the regions in the table below, all of which appear in the text.

Key**Exercise b****Key Terms****Meaning**

Arable farming	Cultivating land to grow crops
Cash crop	A crop grown for money
Monoculture	Only one crop is grown on a very large scale
Livestock farming	The raising of animals
Pastoral farming	Animals or livestock graze on land left as grassland
Aquaculture	Raising fish in natural or artificial ponds or lakes
Mixed farming	Farms produce crops and animals
Fodder crops	Crops grown for feeding to animals
MEDCs	More Economically Developed Countries such as the USA, Australia or Japan
LEDCs	Less Economically Developed Countries such as Kenya, India or Brazil
Commercial farming	Crops are produced for sale and the farm is run as a profitable business enterprise
Agribusiness	Very large farms with lots of very sophisticated machinery
Subsistence farming	Farmers grow just enough to feed themselves and their families
Shifting cultivation	Burning the natural vegetation to clear the land in order to grow crops
Capital intensive	Large amounts of capital (machinery) are used per unit of land.
Labour intensive	A large number of workers (labour) are used per unit of land
Nomadic	Farmers move from one place to another in search of new pastures
Sedentary	Farmers stay on the same piece of land

Exercise d

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1 arable | 5 mixed |
| 2 pastoral | 6 subsistence farming |
| 3 pastoral | 7 nomadic |
| 4 aquaculture | 8 nomadic |

2 Farming in the American Midwest**Reading, speaking, writing****Aims**

Students draw a spider diagram to show different types of agriculture found in the Midwest of the USA

Preparation

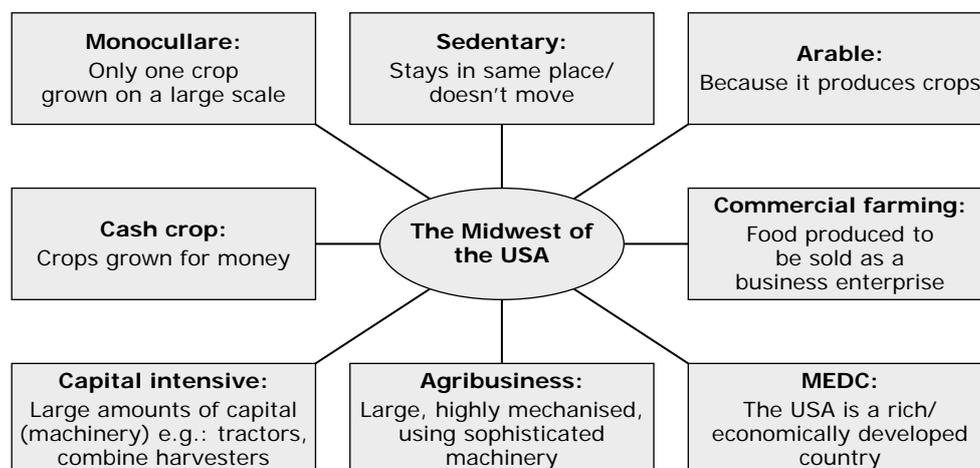
If possible, a map of North America, with the Midwest indicated.

Time

20 minutes

Procedure

- Discuss the Midwest of America, and if possible, show the class a map of North America and the area involved. Run through some of the types of farming from 1 and ask if you think they would be found in this area. If your class is on the weak side, you could write on the board the types that they will need in their spider diagram as you discuss them.
- Exercise a.** Ask students to write in the Key words as headings on their spider's legs. They can check with a partner that they have the same headings. They should then write the definition for each one. It does not matter if they look back at the previous exercise to do this, as long as they get the information.



- 3 Exercise b.** Let students check with each other, then check with the whole class.
- 4 Exercise c.** Now that they have the information, ask students to write a short description of farming in the Midwest of America. Before they start, run through the phrases in the Useful language box, explaining that the language here is more formal than spoken language, and is used for writing. Go round the class as they write their descriptions, giving help, and checking grammar and spelling.

Other spider diagrams could be given as homework. Key words would include:

Pampas, Argentina: livestock farming, pastoral farming, commercial farming, LEDC

Australia: livestock farming, pastoral farming, commercial farming, MEDC

Scotland: aquaculture, MEDC, commercial farming, livestock farming

Southern England: mixed farming, MEDC, cash crop, fodder crops, commercial farming, sedentary

India: arable farming, cash crop, monoculture, commercial farming, labour-intensive, LEDC, sedentary

Northern Scandinavia (Sami): livestock farming, pastoral farming, nomadic, MEDC

Kenya (Masai): livestock farming, pastoral farming, nomadic, subsistence farming, LEDC.

Exercise c

Example answer

- Farming in the Midwest of the USA can be classified in the following ways.
- First, it can be identified as **arable farming** because it produces crops.
- Secondly it can also be called **sedentary agriculture** because the farmers don't move from place to place.'
- It is also farming in an **MEDC**, because the USA is a rich, developed country.
- Another way of classifying this is **commercial farming** as the food produced is sold as a business enterprise.
- I think that it could be called **capital intensive** or **agribusiness**. My reasons for saying this are that that it is on a large scale and large amounts of machinery such as combine harvesters are used.

Aims

Students use the internet and what they have learned so far to make a spider diagram outlining farming methods in an LEDC mentioned in the text.

Preparation

Re-read the text on farming methods.

Time

60 minutes (depending on internet research time)

Procedure

Start a discussion eliciting expectations that students might have on the differences in types of farms and methods of farming in LEDCs compared to MEDCs.

Ask students to read over the text on farming methods and tell them that they are going to choose an LEDC country to research.

Ask them to draw a spider diagram in preparation for their research. Once they have written the name of the country they have chosen in the middle, ask them to use their spider diagram on the Midwest and their research on the Internet to make a similar diagram for their chosen LEDC.