Classroom Tea Shop

Target Grade: 3
Standards of Learning
> Science 3.1
> Reading 3.4
> Social Science 3.5 and 3.7

Overview
Students "shop" for tea, choosing one mystery teabag to investigate.
First they make sensory observations, then they read the box for information about the origin, preparation, and properties of their tea and mark the location on a world map. A tea tasting may follow.

Objectives
- Students will conduct an investigation in which they make observations and predictions
- Students will read and learn facts about tea
- Students will locate tea-producing countries on a world map

Essential Questions:
What is tea and where does it come from?
Who drinks it and why?

Management
- 45-minutes (more for tea tasting)
- Classroom with bulletin board
- Children work in small groups or with partners

Materials
- Boxes of tea from around the world, for example: Earl Grey (England), Darjeeling (India), Green (Japan), Rooibos (South Africa), flower teas such as Jasmine (China)
- World map
- Map pins
- Brown paper bags
- Small containers in which to empty teabags
- Tea Investigation (AP #1)
- Hot water urn, teapots and cups for tasting (optional)

Preparation
- Tack a world map on the bulletin board where students can easily view and access it.
- Photocopy the Tea Investigation sheet for each team of 3-4 students.
- Remove teabags from the boxes. Place each variety in its own paper bag. Number each bag. Also put the corresponding number on each teabag inside the paper bag.

Activity:

1. Tell students they will supermarket detectives today, conducting an investigation about teas from around the world. Ask questions and provide background information as necessary:
   - What do you think the people of the world drink most? *Tea is second only to water as the most consumed beverage in the world. There are many thousands of varieties of tea, but they are all made from the leaves of the tea plant, Camellia sinensis. The differences in flavor have to do with how the tea is processed—how long the leaves are fermented. Herbal teas are not really teas because they are made from herbs, not from tea leaves. The names of different teas reflect the places where each tea is grown and processed.*
   - How is tea made? *All teas are steeped in hot water to infuse the water with flavor. You may buy loose-leaf teas, powdered teas, or tea in tea bags.*
   - What do we know about tea in history? *What was Christopher Columbus looking for? A shortcut to .....? Columbus know he would find spices if he reached Asia. Spices were used to preserve food and make water and food taste better.*
   - What are some reasons that we drink tea? *Tea has many healthy properties. Antioxidants in tea help prevent cancer, heart disease and strokes. Fluoride in tea helps prevent tooth decay. Drinking tea helps people maintain a healthy level of fluid in the body.*
2. Assign teams of 3-4 students. Give each team an investigation worksheet.
3. Teams shop for a bag of tea and take it back to their desks.
4. Teams complete Part A on the worksheet.
5. Give each team the box that originally contained their tea. Ask them to complete Part B.
6. After the teams have completed their worksheets, ask the class to look at the map. White pins show the "guesses." Red pins show the actual tea origins. Ask which continent most of the teas are from. *Isn't this where Columbus wanted to go?*
7. If there is time, have teams rotate around the room to compare each other's teas and observations, then have a tea tasting. Let everyone sample the different teas.
8. A tea tasting can follow this activity. Pour hot water into teapots and infuse with different teas. Serve sample-size portions.

Assessment
Evaluate completed worksheets for apt observations and accurate answers about the origins of tea.

Variations
- If your school is within walking distance of a supermarket, tea parlor, or coffee house, take a field trip to investigate teas rather than set up shop in class. It might be interesting to compare the number of shelves devoted to tea, coffee, cocoa, and other hot drinks.
- Create a graph to show the countries most teas come from. (SOL Math 3.22)