

Sugar

By: Khalil Gibran Muhammad

Excerpt #1

Directions: Read the passage and make the following annotations/steps:

- Place a \$ symbol next to each portion of the text that describes the amount of money made in sugar production today.
- Place a + symbol next to each portion of the text that describes the amount of sugar Americans consume.
- At the bottom of the text, create a t-chart that lists who you think benefits (left side) and is harmed (right side) by the sugar industry.

Domino Sugar's Chalmette Refinery in Arabi, La., sits on the edge of the mighty Mississippi River, about five miles east by way of the river's bend from the French Quarter, and less than a mile down from the Lower Ninth Ward, where Hurricane Katrina and the failed levees destroyed so many black lives. It is North America's largest sugar refinery, making nearly two billion pounds of sugar and sugar products annually. Those ubiquitous four-pound yellow paper bags emblazoned with the company logo are produced here at a rate of 120 bags a minute, 24 hours a day, seven days a week during operating season.

The United States makes about nine million tons of sugar annually, ranking it sixth in global production. The United States sugar industry receives as much as **\$4 billion in annual subsidies** in the form of price supports, guaranteed crop loans, tariffs and regulated imports of foreign sugar, which by some estimates is about half the price per pound of domestic sugar. Louisiana's sugar-cane industry is by itself worth \$3 billion, generating an estimated 16,400 jobs.

A vast majority of that domestic sugar stays in this country, with an additional two to three million tons imported each year. Americans consume as much as 77.1 pounds of sugar and related sweeteners per person per year, according to United States Department of Agriculture data. That's nearly twice the limit the department recommends, based on a 2,000-calorie diet.