



POWELL CENTER FOR
ECONOMIC LITERACY

Lesson Plan

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The Scarecrow's Hat:

Trading Up To Reach Your Goal

Time Required

15 Minutes

Economic Concepts

Barter - *Voluntary exchange of goods in which money is not used.*

Needs – *An economic good or service that is generally considered required for everyday life, such as food, housing, medicine.*

Wants - *Goods and services that people would like to purchase.*

Grade Level and Subject

Primary; Children's Literature

Keystone Principle

Principle #6 – Do What You Do Best, Trade For the Rest

Overview

The Scarecrow's Hat is a story about a chicken who swaps a series of items with different characters in order to gain Scarecrow's hat for her nest. The book becomes a springboard for an interactive lesson about bartering for needs and wants. If this book is unavailable, you can substitute any story you like that demonstrates how people can attain a longer-term goal by first engaging in a series of trades which incrementally advance them toward their goal.

Objectives

- Students will learn that both parties benefit from voluntary trade
- Students will make the connection between short-term steps to attain long-term

goals.

Materials and Handouts

- *The Scarecrow's Hat* by Ken Brown. Scholastic, Inc., c. 2001
- Chart paper
- Paper bags, paper plates, or poster paper

Teaching Activity

1. Review/teach the above definitions. Discuss the ways in which people are able to attain their wants and needs (*work for them, trade labor for money to buy them, beg, borrow, steal and barter*). Talk about the best choice to make as a means of obtaining wants and needs (*it depends on the resources available to you and the personal value system you bring to the question*).
2. As you read the story, tell the students to mentally note who is making a trade and what items are being traded. Have the students pay particular attention to the way in which the chicken achieves its long-term goal of obtaining the scarecrow's hat. Although the intermediate trades are not personally useful to the chicken, they are considered desirable by others and therefore become useful in a continuing trading cycle that ultimately produces the scarecrow's hat.
3. Ask the students to think of some long-term goals they might have (*buying a bicycle, making a new friend, visiting a relative - answers will be as varied as the students*). What interim steps might they attempt in order to achieve their long-term goal?
4. After the story make a list with the students of the book characters (hen, scarecrow, badger, crow, sheep, owl, donkey). Write the names on chart paper. On a corresponding line write what the character was willing to trade and what he/she needed or wanted.
5. Have students act out the play.
 - Assign a pair or small group of students to each character. Have them draw or make something to represent their character such as a paper bag puppet, a paper plate mask, a poster.
 - Also have students draw the item that the character is willing to trade.
 - After all of the simple props are in place, have the students act out the story as you read it.
6. You may also choose to type the story as a reader's theater and have your class perform it.

Additional Ideas

1. Read and compare this story with the book, *One Fine Day*.
2. Tell your class in the morning that during snack (or lunch time) there will be a time of open trading where they will have the opportunity to trade items from their lunch. You may want to have some extra items available for students who came to school without any snacks. (Allow them to exchange some kind of work with you to earn the snacks, such as cleaning the board, passing out papers, practicing their writing skills.) Remind students they have the option to make multiple trades to end up with the items they want.