



POWELL CENTER FOR
ECONOMIC LITERACY

Lesson Plan

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Economics in *The Tale of Despereaux*: Wants & Resources

Time Required

Varies with time spent on the book.

Grade Level and Subject

Grade 3 - 5: Language arts, reading.

Keystone Principles

[Principle #1: We all make choices.](#)

[Principle #8: Quantity and quality of available resources affect living standards.](#)

Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics

[Standard #1](#) – Scarcity: Productive resources are limited. Therefore, people cannot have all the goods and services they want; as a result, they must choose some things and give up others.

[Standard #5](#) – Gains from Trade: Voluntary exchange occurs only when all participating parties expect to gain. This is true for trade among individuals or organizations within a nation, and among individuals and organizations in different nations.

Economic Concepts

Wants – *Everyone has wants. We are never satisfied. We have a constant drive for more.*

Resources – *Everyone uses resources to satisfy their wants. Natural resources are those that occur in nature. Human resources are the skills and effort (mental and physical) that allow us to do various things. Capital resources are tools we use to help us produce*

goods and services. All three of these are considered productive resources because they are used to produce goods and services.

Factors of Production – Human resources (labor), natural resources (land), capital resources (capital) and entrepreneurship (innovation) used to satisfy wants.

Overview

This lesson will have students identify wants and resources to satisfy those wants as they appear in the book *The Tale of Despereaux*.

Objectives

- Students will identify the wants of major characters in the book *The Tale of Despereaux*. Major characters should minimally include Despereaux, Princess Pea, Miggery Sow and Chiaroscuro.
- Students will identify the resources (natural, human and capital) that become available to the characters during the story and that allow them to satisfy their wants.

Materials and Handouts

- The book, *The Tale of Despereaux* by Kate DiCamillo.
- The worksheet at the end of this lesson, or you can construct a similar form on an easel, overhead or poster.

Teaching Activity

1. Give each student a copy of the worksheet.
2. Tell students they are to do three things:
 - a. Draw a picture of the character in the indicated box on the chart.
 - b. As they or you read the story, they should keep a list of the wants for each of the main characters.
 - c. As they or you read the story, they should keep a list of any resources the character has that allows them to satisfy their wants. The resources can be natural (things that occur in nature), capital (tools), or human (labor, time or talents). Have students put a “N” next to resources they think are natural; a “C” next to resources they think are capital; and “H” (or “M” for mouse) if they think the resources are human.
3. After the story is finished, have the class discuss what wants the characters had and what resources they used to satisfy the wants.

Follow-up Activity

You can do this again, but consider doing a chart for other characters, such as the King, Despereaux’s family, the cook, or the dungeon guard.

Economics in *The Tale of Despereaux*: Wants & Resources
Worksheet

Character	Wants	Resources
Despereaux		
The Princess		
Miggery Sow		
Chiaroscuro		