



POWELL CENTER FOR
ECONOMIC LITERACY

Lesson Plan

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Last Modified: April 17, 2005

Trade Around the World: Exploring Yesteryear and Today

Time Required

5 -6 days

Economic Concepts

Trade
Productive resources
Natural resources
Human resources
Capital resources
Specialization
Interdependence

Overview

Students explore and experience the importance of trade and interdependence among countries. Students learn about these important economic concepts, as well as productive resources, specialization, and the assembly line, as they participate in a play and produce their own product in a class project.

Objectives

- Students learn the three types of productive resources (land, labor, capital) and identify productive resources used to produce goods and services.
- Students identify how producers use productive resources to produce goods and services.
- Students define specialization and identify specialized jobs.
- Students define interdependence and give examples of how people and nations depend on each other for goods and services.
- Students learn why people trade for goods and services.
- Students compare daily life in the past and present.
- Students give examples of our country's role in world trade.

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Lesson Plan

Materials and Handouts

- Three sheets of butcher paper (approximately 2 feet by 2 feet) with an outline of a drawstring bag on each
- Magazines and newspapers
- Glue, scissors, ziplock sandwich baggies, measuring cups
- Ingredients for trail mix: 1/4 cup of each item per student. Possible ingredients for trail mix include chocolate pieces, nuts, dried apricots, banana chips, oat cereal, wheat cereal, corn cereal, raisins, sunflower seeds.
- World map
- Handout 1 — **The Trades I Made**
- Handout 2 — **Working Toward My Own Definition**
- Handout 3 — **The Trail Mix Monster**
- Handout 4 — **Label Search**

Teaching Activity

Day 1

Begin the unit by reading the book *Three Ships for Columbus*, by Eve Spencer, Steck-Vaughn Co., New York, 1993, or *Follow the Dream: The Story of Christopher Columbus*, by Peter Sis, The Trumpet Club, New York, 1991.

Introduce the concept of trade. Ask students to point out examples of trade from the story. Point out that trade is still used today and give examples. Ask students to complete Handout 1 on trade.

Key questions:

- What is trade?
- Have you ever engaged in trade? For example, have you ever traded a pencil for an eraser or a crayon? Remind students they may have traded services such as desk cleaning for braiding hair.

Day 2

Read and discuss *The Tree That Would Not Die*, by Ellen Levine, Scholastic, Inc., New York, 1995. In the story, an acorn grows into a tree that lives 400 years. The story is told in first person and chronicles the history of America from the viewpoint of the oak tree.



POWELL CENTER FOR
ECONOMIC LITERACY

Lesson Plan

Ask students if they can find examples of trade in the story. Introduce and define the concepts of *productive resources*, *natural resources*, *human resources*, and *capital resources*. Ask students to point out examples of these concepts in the story. Do not forget to look at the illustrations.

Draw the outline of a drawstring bag on three large sheets of butcher paper. Give each of the three "bags" a label: Natural Resources, Human Resources, and Capital Resources. Instruct students to go through magazines and newspapers to find examples of these productive resources. They should clip out the examples and glue them on the appropriate bag.

Key Questions:

- What natural resources might have been available to early settlers when they came to America?
- What human resources?
- What capital resources?
- If the settlers did not readily find the resources needed for production of a particular good or service, how might they have obtained them?

Day 3

Read and discuss *Make Mine Ice Cream*, by Melvin Berger, Newbridge Educational Publishing, New York, 1993, or *From Peanuts to Peanut Butter*, by Melvin Berger, Newbridge Educational Publishing, New York, 1992. Ask students to give examples of productive resources. Introduce and define *specialization*, *assembly line*, and *interdependence*. Ask students to point out examples of these concepts in the story. Prepare three copies of Handout 2 for each student. Instruct students to complete each handout, using one term per sheet.

Distribute Handout 3, **The Trail Mix Monster**, to the class. Explain to students they are going to participate in a play. No rehearsals will be necessary, since they will read their parts. Read through the handout as a class and explain the setting of the play. Explain that the objective is for the main character, Lot O. Goodies, to get the coconut he/she needs to make a special trail mix. Next assign the roles. Position characters around the edge of the classroom. Assign remaining students



POWELL CENTER FOR
ECONOMIC LITERACY

Lesson Plan

to play the part of sea monsters in the center of the room.

In the activity, Lot first goes to the country that produces coconuts and offers the last bag of trail mix for coconuts. Lot discovers he/she cannot make a clean trade; therefore, Lot must go from country to country until a trade is made. On the way back, Lot stops by each state and completes his/her trades. In order to have Lot sail great distances to make trades, place countries in opposite parts of the room.

Students not assigned a speaking role will play the hungry sea monsters. Every time Lot sails, the sea monsters should make monster noises until he/she reaches land safely. When Lot finally gets the coconut to make the trail mix, the sea monsters should be silent because they have been fed!

Key Questions:

- What did Lot do to get coconut?
- Why did Lot have to go to so many places?
- Why was Lot successful on the second round of trading but not on the first?
- How did the trades help all the characters?
- How do we (or people in history) use trading? What are the advantages? What are the disadvantages or problems?
- What have we done to make trading easier for everyone?

Instead of using **The Trail Mix Monster**, give each student a unique recipe for trail mix. Each recipe has five ingredients, some of which are common and therefore easily obtained by trade, while others are relatively rare. Each student should also hold five to 10 cards with trail mix ingredients printed on them. Students should trade for cards to complete their unique recipes. Each recipe can be completed with available cards; however, depending on the trades made, not everyone will be able to make his or her recipe. Use this alternate activity to get students thinking about scarcity and the benefits of trade. The activity can also lead into a discussion on the development of money or currency.



HANDOUT 1
The Trades I Made

Directions: For the next two days, keep track of the trades you make to acquire goods or services; record your trades. Then complete Section B at the bottom of the page.

Section A

Day of Week	What You Traded	What You Received
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Section B

Use tally marks to complete this section.

1. Number of trades: _____
2. Number of goods traded for goods: _____
3. Number of goods traded for services: _____
4. Number of services traded for goods: _____
5. Number of services traded for services: _____

With permission from *Teaching Economics Using Children's Literature*, by Callie Marksberry, Mary Sturgeon, Mary Ann Fultz, and Kathy Heise, Indiana Department of Education, 1997.



HANDOUT 2
Working Toward My Own Definition

You have been given three copies of HANDOUT 2. You may work individually or in pairs. Using one term per sheet, define *specialization*, *assembly line*, and *interdependence* based on your present knowledge of the terms. If you do not know these terms, you should try and satisfy the categories. Refine and edit your definitions as we discuss in class.

Definition

Characteristics

**Pictorial
image**

Examples

Non-examples

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HANDOUT 3 The Trail Mix Monster

The play *The Trail Mix Monster* takes place in a primitive economy. The people of this country fish for a living, but the waters are infested with sea monsters! As long as the sea monsters are fed the special trail mix, they leave the fishermen alone. Without the mix, they devour them! Lot O. Goodies is the maker of the special trail mix the monsters desire.

Materials for the play:

- 5 cards with each trader's part
- 5 cards with drawings of the following items: trail mix, coconuts, bananas, chocolate, and peanuts

Tips for main character, Lot O. Goodies:

- Lot O. Goodies ad-libs the ongoing conversation.
- Lot O. Goodies repeats why he or she wants to trade at each country.
For example: "Hi! I'm Lot O. Goodies. I need coconuts for my special trail mix. You have _____. Would you trade them for my last bag of trail mix?"
- Lot O. Goodies backtracks the trade route after making the trades. At each country, Lot says, "I now have the _____ you wanted. Now we can trade your _____ for my _____."

Lot O. Goodies: "Oh, good grief! I've run out of coconuts for the country's special trail mix! I'll have to go to Mexico to get some more. If I can't make the special trail mix, the sea monsters that live in the ocean will eat all of the fishermen. Then our country will suffer. For you see, our people are fishermen, and the trail mix keeps the sea monsters happy. In a way, the special trail mix is a form of national defense! I have only one bag left to trade."

Wave E. Palms, Trade Secretary of Mexico, Coconut Producer: "We don't need any trail mix. The sea monsters don't bother us. What we really need are bananas to feed the wild animals that live in the mountains. If you can get us some bananas, we will trade you our coconuts."

Juanita Chiquita, President of Honduras, Banana Producer: "No, no, no! We do not need trail mix. But we are in desperate need of chocolate. Our famous chocolate-covered bananas are a big hit with people in our country and all over the world. If you can get us chocolate, we can trade you bananas."

Her C. Bar, Leader of the Dominican Republic, Chocolate Producer: "We really can't use your trail mix. The monsters don't bother us. But we are in great need of peanuts. We are running out of our chocolate-flavored peanut butter. If you can get us some peanuts, we'll be happy to trade you our chocolate."

I.M. Nuts, Chief Spokesperson for Nicaragua, Peanut Producer: "Why, I am so glad that you arrived! I was just thinking how nice it would be to serve trail mix tonight for dinner. We have lots of peanuts, but not trail mix. I would love to trade our peanuts for your bag of trail mix."

Taken from *Teaching Economics Using Children's Literature*, by Callie Marksbarry, Mary Sturgeon, Mary Ann Fultz, and Kathy Heise, Indiana Department of Education, 1997.



HANDOUT 4
Label Search

Break into groups for the following activity. Check clothing labels and items or objects from around the classroom. Fill in the blanks below. Be sure to describe the item clearly and carefully.

Leader _____

Recorder _____

Group members _____

Clothing or item description

Country where produced

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Why do you think these countries specialize in the production of these specific items?

Adapted from *Trading Around the World*, by Harlan Day, Indiana Dept. of Education, 1997.