

## **Teaching Channel Information**

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Year Starting Teaching: 2010

Currently Teach: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies

Concentration: Engagement/Class Culture

## **Economic Systems Introduction Lesson Plan- Emphasis will turn to China**

### **Rationale:**

Students will be introduced into three of the four main global economic systems. Each system varies in answering the key economic questions and also meeting the economic goals.

### **Key Questions**

- What goods and services should be produced?
- How should these goods and services be produced?
- Who consumes these goods and services?

### **Goals**

- Efficiency
- Freedom
- Security and Predictability
- Equity
- Growth and Innovation

By understanding the economic systems, students will have a better perspective on how qualities such as standard of living and opportunities are directly impacted by a society's economic system.

### **Goals:**

Students will gain a basic understanding of how economic systems work and their implications for the societies who practice them, specifically China.

## **Materials:**

- 45 sheets of white printer paper
- Large bag of M&M's
- Stopwatch
- Three separate teams of desks facing each other
- Economic Systems power point
- An image that can be drawn/divided into 8-10 different parts (I use a "kool kat")

## **Procedures:**

- Begin the lesson by having students sit according to the three teams you have divided them into. I number each seat with a number 1-10 (or however many students you have as long as they are equal on each team).
- Introduce the lesson by saying you have hired them to work for your new company producing\_\_\_\_\_. Before class I draw a cat on the board and divide the different parts of the cat into ten different parts for the students to "build". They will be working in an assembly line style to create my product and each student is responsible for drawing the part on the cat that matches the number of their seat.
- Students will go through the process three times: Once for each economic system (command, free-market, and mixed). The students have no prior knowledge of these systems before the activity.
- Command Economy**-The first time through, tell students it is not a race or a competition. Their job is to complete five "kool cats" and once they finish, everyone on every team will receive their "payment", which will be 3 M&M's per person. Once you tell them to begin, start the stopwatch to measure how long it takes them to complete their cats. This round will take the longest to complete. After they finish, make sure they have five cats completed and they receive their payment (I divvy up the M&M's before class to save time). Write down the completed time on the board under round one.
- Free Market Economy**- The second time through, tell the students it is an all out race. The first team to finish will be the only team to get paid. Inform them quality does not matter, only completed cats. Say go and start the stopwatch. This time through, students will furiously attempt to finish their cats and the quality of the product will suffer to a great degree. I usually like to "yell" at my students to tell them to work faster to raise their anxiety levels during the competition. After the first group completes their cats, I stop the stopwatch and write the time it took on the board. The time should be significantly less in the second round. I show the students their product, which looks extremely messy and poor. I then pay the winning team 5 M&M's each.

**-Mixed Economy-** For the third round, not only is it a race, but each team will be graded on the quality of their cats. This will demonstrate efficiency in the system. Begin the clock and after each team finishes, go through and inspect each cat to ensure it meets the specifications of the model. Grade in order of completion. The team with the best time AND the highest amount of quality cats will win a payment of 7 M&M's each.

After the activity, go through the power point and discuss the introduction of economic systems. Be sure to go through and highlight aspects of the activity that demonstrate exactly how the economic systems work. Students should be able to make good connections with the concepts and apply it to what they did.

I use this activity as an introduction to China's economy, but it can be used for a variety of methods. This lesson requires input and participation from your students.