



TRADERS' GAME

GRADE LEVEL: 6-8

SUBJECT: Economics

NATIONAL STANDARD(S):

(6-8) ECO: 1.1-4, 2.1, 4.2, 10.1-4

THEME: Commodity Trade

FOOD AND FIBER TOPIC: II-B, IV-A

LEARNER OBJECTIVES:

Students will play a game aimed at demonstrating how relationships with other communities or countries affect the food and fiber system. The game simulates the unequal distribution of natural resources which creates the need for interdependent relationships between communities and/or countries.

VOCABULARY

bartering— Trading goods or services without the exchange of money as payment.

goods— Articles of trade or commerce, especially agricultural products that can be transported.

New World— The Americas

BACKGROUND

Almost everyone has traded something at one time or another. It may have been a ham sandwich for someone else's peanut butter and jelly. It might have been one comic book for another, or sports cards. It may have even been making a deal with your parents to keep your room clean in trade for a toy you really wanted!

Before there was money, people traded **goods** with one another for the things they needed. Ancient people traded things like animal furs and meat for medicinal herbs and vegetables. Some of the earliest Europeans in the **New World** were French fur traders. The Indians traded their furs for beads, blankets and other goods the French traders could get from Europe.

In our country's early history, most families grew their own food and even raised the plants and animals they needed to make their own clothing. Even then, families sometimes had to trade with their neighbors for the things they needed. Sometimes one family would have dairy cows, while another would have chickens. The family with the cows could trade milk and butter for eggs and feathers. This is called **bartering**.

Money has taken the place of bartering today, but people still have to depend on other people to meet all their needs. For example, people who live in cities can't grow their own food. They have to depend on farm communities for that. In cities there are factories that produce the equipment farmers and ranchers need to keep their farms and ranches going.

Most of the soybeans grown by American farmers are pressed for oil. The meal that remains is fed to livestock. Foods made from soybeans aren't very popular in our country at this time, but in many Asian countries, soy products like tofu (soybean curd) and miso (a paste used for soup stock made with fermented soybeans and rice) are very important foods.

Since soybeans grow better here than they do in Asian countries, we sell some of our soybeans over there. This is called “export.”

Farmers in the United States raise a lot of wheat. However, we do not produce enough coffee in our country. (It is only grown in Hawaii) Coffee is grown in several South American countries. We can buy their coffee and sell them our wheat.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

1. Using the teacher resource on the following page, prepare four large manila envelopes.
2. Share background material with your students. Challenge them to think of other agricultural products that we have because of trade.
3. Divide the class into four groups, representing four different countries. Instruct each group to give itself a name and to select a leader. Record the names and the leader on the board.
4. Give each leader one of the envelopes you have prepared. Instruct students not to open their envelopes until told to do so. Tell students that each community should complete the task sheet in the envelope, even though all the resources needed won't be in the envelope. Encourage students to trade with other “countries” in any way necessary to complete the task sheets. Explain the importance of each “country's” interdependence on the others.
5. Give the signal to begin. Watch the groups as they complete their tasks. Note comments the members make as they try to complete the tasks. Record on the board the order in which each “country” completes each task.
6. Use the questions at the bottom of the teacher instruction page to lead a class discussion.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. As students to think of every-day ways they use the barter and trade system. It can be at home with siblings or with friends at school. List responses on the board.
2. Brainstorm items that early settlers might have bartered and traded. List these items on the board. What are some things the early settlers had to purchase from a store? Why?
3. Have each student research a favorite food to find out where it is produced. Discuss the concept of imports and exports.

RESOURCES

Student Books

- Adams, B. J. (1992). The Go-Around Dollar. Macmillan.
- Brittain, B. (1979). All the Money in the World. Harper Collins.
- Byers, P. & Preston, J. (1983). The Kids' Money Book. Liberty.
- Cook, J. & Bond, S. (1988). Where Food Comes From. EDC.
- Elkin, B. (1983). Money. Children's Press.
- Horowitz, J. (1986). Night Markets: Bring Food to the City. Harper Collins.

Teacher Resources

“Food for America,” National FFA Supply Service, 5632 Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway, Alexandria, VA 22309. (teaching guide with activities, \$7.50 per kit).

Related Internet Websites

The United States Department of Agriculture website will provide information on all commodities, and livestock produced by, exported to, or imported into the United States: <http://www.usda.gov>

The National Agricultural Statistics Service website can be used to find most production statistics for livestock and crops produced in the United States: <http://www.usda.gov/nass>

The Chicago Mercantile Exchange website: <http://www.cme.com/>

EVALUATION

Were students able to complete the activity? Did the activity stimulate student discussion?

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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TRADERS' GAME

Teacher Instructions

Prepare four manila envelopes, as follows:

Envelope #1

Two pair scissors	One ruler
20 paper clips	Two pencils
Two 4-inch squares red paper	Two 4-inch squares white paper

One task card, with the following instructions: "Make four strips of gold paper, each three inches by one inch."

Envelope #2

One pair scissors	One glue stick
Two 8.5X11 sheets blue paper	Two 8.5X11 sheets white paper
Two 8.5X11 sheets gold paper	

One task card with the following instructions: "Make a green 'T' four inches high and three inches wide."

Envelope #3

One 8.5X11 sheet green paper	One 8.5X11 sheet gold paper
One 8.5X11 sheet blue paper	One 8.5X11 sheet red paper
One 8.5X11 sheet purple paper	

One task card with the following instructions: "Make a two-inch white square. Attach a gold triangle to one side of the square."

Envelope #4

Two felt pens	Two 8.5X11 sheets green paper
Two 8.5X11 sheets white paper	Two 8.5X11 sheets gold paper

One task card with the following instructions: "Cut one four inch by two inch strip from four different colors of paper. Create a paper link chain from the strips."

After students have completed the activity, lead a discussion, using the following questions:

1. Could you have completed your tasks without trading resources with another country? Why or why not?
2. How did your country solve the problem of not having all the resources it needed?
3. Were there any conflicts between communities? Why, or why not?
4. How did you feel when you realized the resources were unequally distributed?
5. Give some examples of innovative or unusual ways your country completed its assigned task.
6. How do our relationships with other countries affect our daily lives? Our food and fiber system?