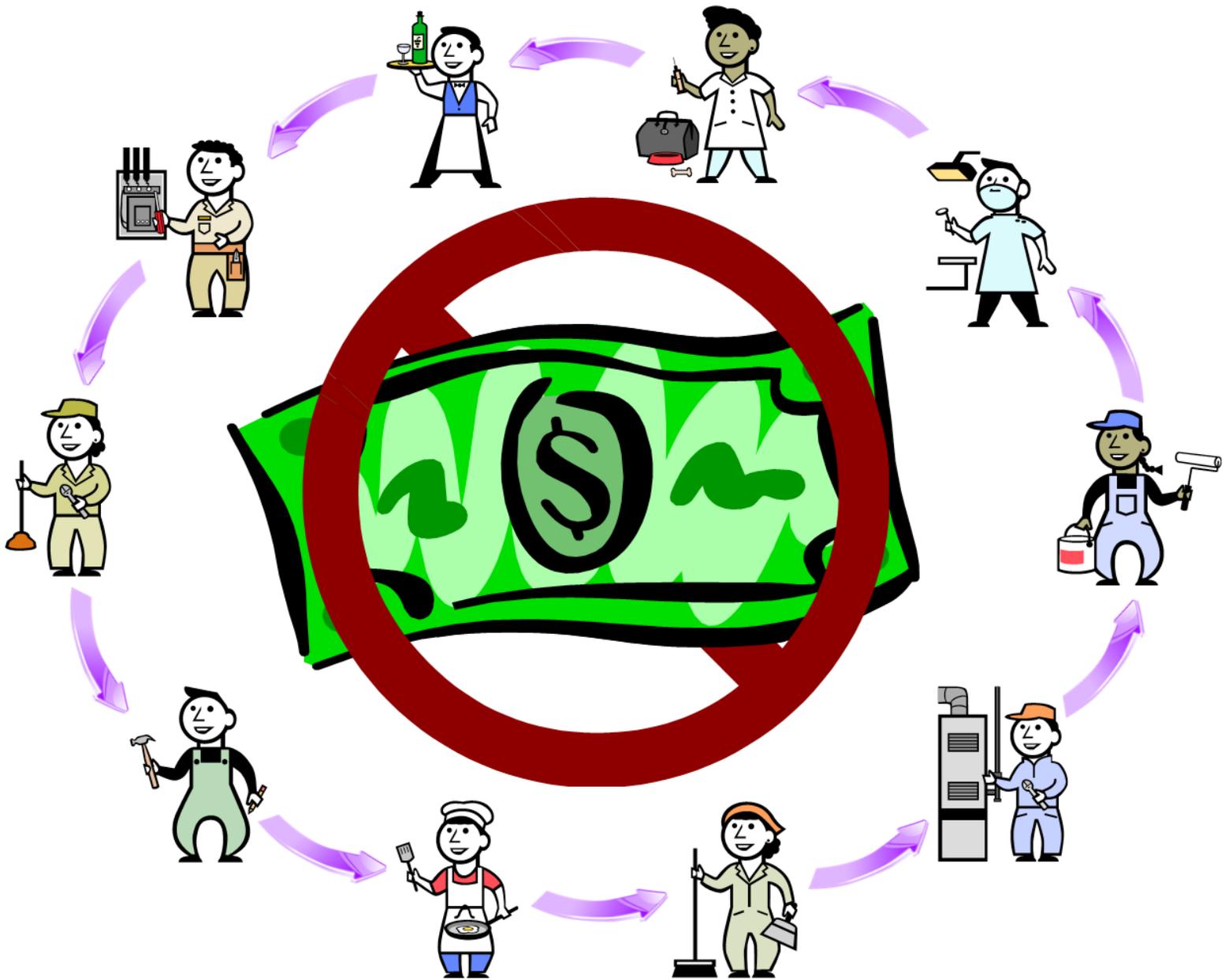


MERCHANTS AND TRADERS

A Supply and Demand Game

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Tennessee 4-H Youth Development

Merchants and Traders

A Supply and Demand Game

Skill Level

Intermediate

Learner Outcomes

The learner will be able to:

- Model a supply and demand relationship.
- Model a bartering economic system.
- Build Communication skills.

Educational Standard(s) Supported

Social Studies 6.07, 6.18, 6.25, 6.38

Success Indicator

Learners will be successful if they:

Understand a basic supply and demand relationship.

Time Needed

45 minutes to 1 hour

Materials List

Silk, gems, cotton balls, salt, tea bags, Popsicle sticks, sheep pictures, coins.
Enough for 10 “currency” (gems or coins) for half of group and 10 “commodities” for half of group

Introduction to Content

This lesson introduces the concepts of supply and demand as well as uses key terms from sixth-grade social studies. The barter trading system and scenarios reinforce the importance of commodities and currency used in ancient world history. This lesson explores bartering from several different periods including Mesopotamian, Greek and Roman times.

Introduction to Methodology

“Merchants and Traders” is a simulation designed to teach the concepts of a barter trading system as well as supply and demand. The simulation is set from the time period of approximately 4,000 BC to 44 BC, which correlates to the ancient world history curriculum covered under the current education standards.

Author

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Terms and Concepts Introduction

Defined in supplemental information

Setting the Stage and Opening Questions

Begin by asking:

- “What are you currently studying in social studies?”
- “What are some common goods that were traded in that area?”
- “Today you are going to be either a merchant or trader, you will have to barter for commodities (goods) or currency and learn about how some people once survived.”

Before we begin, let’s talk about the **commodities** and **currency**.

We’ll be using:

- **Silk** — Made by silkworms, the secret of these insects was closely guarded in China during the Han period; revealing the secrets was punishable by death.
- **Gems** — Commonly found in Africa, gemstones are found in a variety of colors (rubies, sapphires, emerald, diamonds, etc.). However, the quality of the stone determines the value.
- **Cotton** — Cotton was grown in the rich soil of Mesopotamia. When harvested, it was baled for easy transportation.
- **Salt** — Salt was highly valued for its preservation abilities as well as its ability to provide flavoring foods.
- **Tea** — Tea was also a highly prized commodity from Asia. Due to its short shelf life, its freshness was valued.
- **Lumber** — Lumber was a prime building material for the ancient world.
- **Sheep** — Sheep were commonly kept in ancient times as they provided milk, meat and hides.

Experience

1. Divide the class in half. One half of the students are merchants; the other half of the students are traders.
2. Traders will remain at their desks, and merchants will move around the room to trade with the traders.
3. Each merchant should receive 10 units of currency, and each trader should receive 10 commodities. Vary the currency and commodities to encourage trading. The goal is for the students to acquire a variety of commodities and currency.
4. Traders can ONLY trade with merchants, and the students can only trade once per round.
5. One “Merchant and Traders” card is drawn after they have been cut apart. This affects the supply and demand in the game.
6. If the card increases supply, students collect extra commodities or currency. If the card decreases supply, students must pay the instructor.
7. After cards are read, students trade, making sure to record the transaction on their transaction record.

Tips for Engagement

- Explain that students can trade as many items as they want at one time but can only trade once per round, just as they can buy a cart full of groceries but they will only go through the checkout once.
- Set a time limit for each round. Two minutes is all that is needed to complete a trade.
- Emphasize key terms, places and events when reading scenario cards to reinforce what they are already studying.
- You can give a bonus commodity/currency for questions answered. For example: *Q. What is a cataract? A. A river rapid.*
- When selecting a scenario card, choose one that will impact the supply or demand of a commodity that is highly in play. For example: If lumber is not being highly traded/valued, draw the card that makes students lose this good. With the supply diminished, the demand and price will increase; discuss this at the end of the lesson.

Share

- Ask students, “*Who can explain what we just modeled in their own terms?*” (Answers will vary)
- Select other students and ask them, “*Do you think this is how it worked in Ancient Cultures? What would have been similar?*” Answers will vary.

Process

Ask students:

- “*What was your strategy for buying and selling?*” (Answers will vary.)
- “*Who was your best customer, and why?*”

Generalize

Ask students:

- “*How did you decide whether or not to make a deal?*”
- “*Was it hard to stay in one place and wait for traders to visit you?*”

Apply

Ask students, “*What scenario most affected supply and demand?*”

If time allows, allow students to work in groups to develop their own scenario. Have them predict what the effect on supply and demand will be.

Life Skill(s)

6th Grade:

- Use the senses to gain new information or find new ways to use information. (Head)
- Use appropriate social skills to interact in group settings. (Heart)
- Develop a sense of belonging with others. (Caring)

Supplemental Information

Educational Standards Met and Definition of Terms

6.07 — Explain how irrigation, silt, metallurgy, production of tools, use of animals, slave labor, and inventions such as the wheel, sail, and plow led to advances in agriculture.

6.18 — Analyze the achievements of ancient Egyptian civilization, including: hieroglyphics, papyrus, and the pyramids and Sphinx at Giza.

6.25 — Identify and locate geographical features of ancient India, including:

- Ganges River
- Himalayan Mountains
- Indian Ocean Indus River
- Monsoon winds
- Subcontinent of India.

6.38 — Describe how the desire for Chinese goods influenced the creation of The Silk Road and initiated cultural diffusion throughout Eurasia, including the introduction of Buddhism into ancient China.

- **Supply** — A stock of a resource from which a person or place can be provided with the necessary amount of that resource.
- **Demand** — An insistent and peremptory request, made as if by right.
- **Barter Economy** — A cashless economic system in which services and goods are traded at negotiated rates.
- **City-state** — A city that with its surrounding territory forms an independent state.
- **Commodity** — A raw material or primary agricultural product that can be bought and sold, such as copper or coffee.
- **Currency** — A system of money in general use in a particular country.
- **Trade Route** — A route followed by traders (as in caravans).

MERCHANTS & TRADERS

End of Game Questions

1. What was your strategy for buying and selling?
2. Did this change during the game?
3. What happened to the price of commodities when the currency or commodity supply was increased or decreased?
4. Did prices increase or decrease at the end? Why or why not?
5. Who was your best customer and why?
6. How did you decide whether or not to make a deal?
7. Did it help to be able to visit different merchants before deciding which deal to take?
8. Was it hard having to stay in one place and wait for traders to visit you?
9. Which scenario most affected supply or demand for commodities or currency for you? Explain

Merchants and Traders
A Game of Supply and Demand

Supplemental
Material

Name: _____		Occupation: _____	
Commodities / Money Received at Start:			
Round	Traded with:	What was traded and amount/commodity received in transaction.	Scenario and Gain/Loss Amount:
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Merchants and Traders

A Game of Supply and Demand

Supplemental Material

<p>While traveling the Silk road, your camel caravan was attacked by nomads in the desert and all your trade goods were stolen. It costs you 4 commodities to bring another shipment and raises the cost of the remaining commodities. Pay 4 commodities/currency.</p>		<p>You decided to take a shortcut from India over the Himalayas and encountered a blizzard. Half of your pack animals froze and you had to leave the goods they were carrying. You lose 2 commodities/currency.</p>
<p>Instead of going by land route to India, you purchase a new sailing ship and can make the trip in half the time with double the amount of goods. You receive 6 commodities/currency.</p>		<p>A new canal was just completed along the Tigris River and you have more goods for market. Collect 4 commodities/currency.</p>
<p>The Roman government has constructed a new road that makes travel between markets easier. Collect 5 commodities/currency.</p>		<p>Your merchant ship was attacked and raided by pirates. You lose 4 commodities/currency.</p>

<p>The warring African tribes have just made peace and the trade route is safe again. Collect 5 commodities/currency.</p>		<p>Famine and floods have destroyed tea crops in China. You lose ½ of your tea commodities. (If you only have 1 tea you lose it.)</p>
<p>The feudal lord controlling parts of the trade route raises road tolls. Pay 2 commodities/currency.</p>		<p>The Roman Emperor raises taxes to pay for ongoing wars. Pay 3 commodities/currency.</p>
<p>While in Sumner you were able to trade for a cart and can now haul double the goods. Collect 6 commodities/currency</p>		<p>You've taken a chance and safely navigated the cataracts along the Nile River, arriving at the city of Kush. You were able to trade for highly valued commodities. Collect 1 commodity/currency of your choice.</p>
<p>Because the emperor Shi Huangdi standardized China's currency, you can trade with merchants easier knowing the value (weight) of gold and copper coins. Collect 2 commodities/currency.</p>		<p>While traveling to Cyrene, Egypt, you stay in a Greek colony and arrive while a cargo ship is unloaded. You get first trade on fresh olive oil. Collect 4 commodities/currency.</p>

<p>Cotton bollworms have swept through Egypt and decimated your crops. You lose $\frac{1}{2}$ your cotton commodities.</p> <p>(If you do not have any cotton do not do anything. If you only have 1 cotton you lose it.)</p>		<p>A wildfire has burned a forest in Britain leaving a shortage of lumber for trade. You lose 2 lumber commodities.</p> <p>(If you do not have lumber, do not do anything. If you only have 1 lumber you lose it.)</p>
<p>A disease has spread though your heard of sheep and you were only able to save half of them. You lose $\frac{1}{2}$ your sheep commodities.</p>		<p>You were able to trade for salt to help preserve your food supply, enabling you to travel farther for trade. Collect 2 commodities/currency.</p>