



Thinking About Trade Economies

Theme

In a trade-based economy, understanding the value of an item and the resources of those living around you are key to creating a good trade.

Grade Level

Grade 4-5

Time/Location

2 class periods

Goals

- Before the creation of a cash economy the value of a traded good was based on the time it took to make the object and the scarcity of that resource.
- Understanding what resources are found near those you are trading with is necessary to create an effective trade.
- Understanding why people trade for goods influences what you are trading.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Articulate how people placed a value on goods before the creation of a cash economy.

Background:

This activity is representative of hunter gather groups living east of the Kennebec River.

Day 1

Engage:

Write the following question on the board and direct students to grab a piece of paper and write down some ideas.

Question: What makes a good trade?

Give students 1-2 minutes after the beginning of class to finish their list.

Go around the room and ask each student for one of their answers and list them on the board under the question. If students have similar answers you might want to place hash marks next to the answer to show how many students had that on their list. Ask students if there is anything on the list they disagree with, or if there is anything they think has been left off the list.

If the students have not already listed the idea that traded objects need to be of similar value try to steer them towards this idea by randomly selecting a student and having them choose an object from their backpack, desk, purse, or pocket. Depending on what object they have chosen choose something of either greater or lesser value and offer to trade them your object for theirs. If the student refuses ask them why?

Explore:

Pose the questions to the students: How do you determine the value of something?

Break the students into 4 equal groups and give them either an actual object or a photo of an object and ask them to determine what they need to know about that object to give it a value.

Students should arrive at these questions:

What is it made out of?

How long does it take to make this object?

How hard are the resources to find?

How hard are the resources to find which make up this object? Suggestions for types of objects to be used

Stone spear point

Birchbark canoe



- List the most common resources available in the home territory of one of the four Wabanaki tribes.
- Articulate three other reasons why people traded other than for survival.

Essential Questions

- What makes a good trade?
- How do you determine the value of an object?
- What are some of the motivations the different tribes have for wanting to trade with each other?

Academic Vocabulary

Trade Good
Resources
Scarcity
Demand
Value
Economy

Materials

Photographs of items which can be used in the trading demo:

Shell beads
Stone arrowheads
Beadwork
Baskets
Snow Shoes

Clay pot
Shell Beads
Utility basket

Give the students 15 minutes to research the answers to these questions. Supply them with websites or books to help support their research. See the recommended references at the end of this lesson for suggestions.

With 15 minutes remaining, have a spokesperson from each group present the groups findings and ask if the other groups have any questions before moving onto the next group. Once all the groups have presented, pose the question: "Do the resources you have available near your home factor into the value of an item?"

Assign the students the homework assignment of researching what resources would have been available to the different Wabanaki tribes. You can assign each of the four groups a tribe to research (Micmac, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, Penobscot) and also have them brainstorm what potential goods can be made from those resources.

Day 2

Engage:

Direct students to gather in their groups from the day before and individually have them answer the question on the board.

Question: What are motivations for the different Wabanaki Nations to want to trade with each other?

Some possible answers might be:

- Trading for resources not found in their territory
- Get things they want
- Things to give as gifts
- Things to use as decoration
- To add variety to their diet
- Replenish food stocks after a hard winter

Create a list on the board of the student's answers. If the idea of people trading to survive comes up, remind students that while yes, there were occasional periods of starvation due to extraordinary circumstances, for the most part people had more than enough resources to live off of because of a deep understanding of their surrounding environment.

Tell the students you will give them a few minutes to compare their lists from last night's homework assignment before selecting a group spokesperson to report what resources are available. After all the groups have reported, give the groups a few minutes to discuss among themselves to see if there are any re-



State Standards

- A1: Students identify and answer research questions related to social studies, by locating and selecting information and presenting findings.
- A2: Students make individual and collaborative decisions on matters related to social studies using relevant information and research and discussion skills.
- B3: Students write to identify and explain a position to an identified audience.
- C1: Students understand personal economics and the basis of the economies of the community, Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world.
- C2: Students understand economic aspects of unity and diversity in the community, Maine, and regions of the United States and the world, including Maine Native American communities.
- D2: Students understand geographic aspects of unity and diversity in the community, Maine, and regions of the United States and the world, including Maine Native American communities.

sources the other groups mentioned that they might want.

Open the floor up to trading have the students record what they got and what they traded for it.

Explain:

After trading has gone on for 5 minutes and if there seems to be some haggling going on, call a halt to trading and ask students:

What challenges they are facing making trades with other groups?

Did the value of goods change or did a bidding war start between groups?

What strategies did you use to get what you wanted?

Explain that another variable which factors into the value of an item is how scarce the resources are which go into making that item, and also how much demand there is. Introduce and explain the idea of supply and demand. (Supply and demand differ greatly between the Eastern and Western Wabanaki groups)

Elaborate:

Throughout the year there were gathering points, such as Mount Desert Island, where the different tribal groups would gather to meet with each other socially, renew friendships, and strengthen tribal alliances. During these gatherings people would trade items with each other to meet family or tribal needs or wants. People also traded for objects they could use as “payment” to someone else. For example, if a Micmac person was making a pair of snow shoes for a Passamaquoddy person and the Passamaquoddy person knew the Micmac person’s wife was well known for making ornately beaded moccasins, the Passamaquoddy person might collect a certain amount of beads during the course of their seasonal travels to eventually trade for the canoe made by the Micmac person.

When the Europeans first arrived in the Americas they traded with the Native peoples around them for things they needed to survive in this new environment, but they also observed what types of trade items the Native people most sought during these trades. Once they realized the types of resources available and wanted to corner the lucrative fur trade, the Europeans sent ships back to specifically gather these desired trade goods. The French also realized that with more modern weaponry the Wabanaki would be able to supply more furs, which were in demand back in Europe.



Evaluate:

Use this scenario as a writing assignment to assess if students grasp the complexities involved in a trade based economy.

Scenario: Imagine tomorrow the world decides we are all returning to a trade based economy and abolishing money. We still have all the same goods for sale, but now instead of using money you have to trade for everything you need.

Questions for students to ponder in their essay:

How would this impact your day to day life?

Do you think it will be easier or harder to get the things you need?

Do you think it would affect your travel outside of the state?

Do you think there would be any negative societal issues which arise from reverting back to a trade based economy?

Students work will be evaluated based on a rubric for group work and also teacher standards for written work.

Extension:

How does a changing climate effect the resources found in Maine and does this have any impact on modern day Wabanaki?

Recommended References:

Stone spear point

Students should research flint knapping

<http://www.wildernesscollege.com/making-arrowheads.html>

<http://video.pbs.org/video/2330302437/>

Birchbark canoe

http://www.abbemuseum.org/education/canoe_build_2013.html

<https://vimeo.com/16573771>

<http://abbemuseum.blogspot.com/2013/08/birchbark-canoe-build-at-abbe-museum.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10201829861893869&set=vb.103011610767&type=2&theater>

<http://www.penobscotculture.com/Joomla3/index.php/reviving-canoe-culture>

Clay pot

Students should research the process of tempering clay and firing clay



without a kiln.

https://www.beloit.edu/logan_online/exhibitions/virtual_exhibitions/north_america/southwest/techniques.php

<https://www.goshen.edu/art/DeptPgs/rework.html>

Shell beads

<http://nmai.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/HaudenosauneeGuide.pdf>
Page 6 only

<http://blog.nmai.si.edu/main/2009/04/swapping-knowledge-about-wampum.html>

Basket—MIBA/Hudson Museum resources

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJ0eoGFTO3I&list=UUMG5Y4CDmcXv_dcT7jogJA&index=9

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8ZoVaujLQI&list=UUMG5Y4CDmcXv_dcT7jogJA&index=10

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5asv3VcA2k&list=UUMG5Y4CDmcXv_dcT7jogJA&index=6

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hwfp32YoLcE&index=11&list=UUMG5Y4CDmcXv_dcT7jogJA



Rubric for Group Work

Category	4	3	2	1
Contribution to group assignment	Actively works toward group goals, accepts and fulfills role within the group.	Works toward group goals without occasional prompting, and fulfills their role within the	Works towards group goals with occasional prompting.	Works towards group goals only when prompted.
Working with others	Actively helps the group identify information for assigned work.	Helps the group identify information for assigned work without prompting.	Helps the group identify information for assigned work with occasional prompting.	Helps the group identify information for assigned work only when prompted.