

Lesson Plan: Money in the Marketplace

Best done after the lessons Identify Jobs and Math with Money

Objective:

Students put their knowledge of 18th century jobs and money to the test by interacting with each other in a roleplaying environment.

Outcomes: Students will...

- Think creatively about the jobs and items available in the 1700s.
- Add and subtract in the currency system of the 1700s.
- Read advertisements of the 1700s and create their own.

Common Core Standards Addressed:

4th Grade Standards

Mathematics → Measurement & Data

- CCSS.Math.Content.4.MD.A.2
Use the four operations to solve word problems involving distances, intervals of time, liquid volumes, masses of objects, and money, including problems involving simple fractions or decimals, and problems that require expressing measurements given in a larger unit in terms of a smaller unit. Represent measurement quantities using diagrams such as number line diagrams that feature a measurement scale.

English Language Arts → Reading Informational Text

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.7
Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.
- (Optional) CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.9
Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

English Language Arts → Writing

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2.D
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

5th Grade Standards

Mathematics → Number & Operations: Fractions

- CCSS.Math.Content.5.NFA.1
Add and subtract fractions with unlike denominators (including mixed numbers) by replacing given fractions with equivalent fractions in such a way as to produce an equivalent sum or difference of fractions with like denominators.

English Language Arts → Reading Informational Text

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.9
Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or present about the subject knowledgeably.
- *(Optional)* CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.7
Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question or to solve a problem efficiently.

English Language Arts → Writing

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2.D
Use precise language and domain specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic

Items Used:

- Job Cards
- Plastic coins
- Money Chart (on disk)
- Paper money (on disk)
- Advertisements from 1700s newspapers (on disk)
- Paper and drawing utensils (not included in this lesson)

Preparation

- Print and cut out the paper money on the disk.
- Divide the money, both paper and plastic, between students (*see further instructions below*)
- Print the money chart and display for reference
- Print or display the advertisements for reference
- Provide paper and drawing utensils to students

Lesson:

1. Students choose a job.
2. Students create an advertisement for their goods or services. Use the advertisements included on the disk as examples. (Remind students that not all jobs sold directly to customers; many sold wholesale to stores, or were employed by others such as sailors. But, for the purposes of this activity, all sales are direct to the consumer.)
3. *Option for advanced students:* Students research how much certain items cost during the 1700s using primary source documents, and base the items they are selling on those prices. We recommend the following sources:
 - a. *The Virginia Gazette*, an 18th century American newspaper that has been digitized by Colonial Williamsburg. It is searchable by index, so students can search for specific items or jobs. However, some of the pages are difficult to read because the original document was in poor condition, and students may have difficulty reading the older typeset (where the “s” often looks like “f”).
<https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/>

- b. Probate inventories. When a person died, everything they owned had to be officially counted and appraised so that the will could be carried out accurately. Here are two online probate inventories that contain information from the 1700s. This information has been transcribed so it will be easier for students to read, although they still contain the archaic spellings and it is not possible to search by individual items. A pound sterling is sometimes indicated by l. and sometimes by £., or the price is written out in three columns indicating pounds, shillings, and pence.
- York County, Virginia:
<https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/inventories/>
 - Salem, Massachusetts:
<https://www.americanancestors.org/databases/essex-county-ma-probate-file-papers-1638-1881/image?pageName=1:1&volumeId=13744>
4. Students draw pictures of at least two items that they would sell, on separate pieces of paper. (If it is a job with a limited scope, such as saddler, it could be a large saddle and a small saddle. A service is an acceptable item, for example, a sailor could offer the shipment of goods or a trip to another location, or a wigmaker could offer a shave and haircut.) Students may make multiple copies of each item, but put each item on a separate piece of paper so it can be “sold.”
 5. Students assign prices to each item using 1700s currency. You may want to set an upper limit on the prices to correspond with the amount of money you give them to spend. Remind students that if the items are too expensive, few people will buy them. Their prices can go down to ½ of a penny, as that corresponds to the halfpenny coin.
 6. Hand out paper bills and coins to each student who will shop, while making the remainder of the bills and coins available to the students selling so they can make change. A suggested amount to give each student to spend is one of each paper bill, which totals 142 shillings (5 pounds, 2 shillings), plus a few coins. Or, if you would like to try to represent all levels of society, hand out a random number of bills and coins to each student, so that some will have more than others. That choice is entirely up to you, as you know your own class best.

7. The plastic coins represent halfpence (copper) and shillings (silver). They do not actually look and feel like real coins of the 1700s. For reference, students may examine the reproduction coins included in the program, but they are not intended for use during this exercise.
8. Divide the class up so that half will shop while half sell, and then switch. Students purchase items from their classmates, based on the amount of money they have.