

The basics: Needs, wants, scarcity and resources



Secondary Lesson Plan

This lesson plan was developed by Curriculum Corporation.

[Return to lesson plans](#)

[CurriculumPress Catalogue](#)

Source

[Making Choices: Secondary](#), Kit with student activity sheets

Learning area

Studies of society and environment

Level

Lower to middle secondary (Years 7–10)

Description

'The Basics' is the first unit in *Making Choices: Secondary*. In the kit units are accompanied by notes for the teacher and Student Activity Sheets. Students are asked to consider the essential difference between needs and wants in the context of scarcity.

Purpose

To assist students to understand the concept of scarcity and its relation to needs and wants.

Duration

1 x one-hour session with follow-up work at home.

Possible outcomes

As a result of these activities, students will be able to:

- identify decisions which have to be made by groups and individuals about production and scarcity (Level 4 Natural and Social Systems — SOSE Profile)
- describe how limited resources necessitate choice (Level 3 Resources — SOSE Profile)
-

There will also be links with other learning areas such as English.

Materials required

Nil

Procedure

Choose an everyday object from the classroom (for example, a pencil). Offer it free to the class. If more than one person wants the pencil (a resource) it is considered scarce in a similar way that air is scarce to a scuba diver, or clean air can be scarce to people who live in large cities.

Individuals and communities all face scarcities of some sort.

Talk more generally about scarcity in the community. What is scarce and what isn't? Why? What is available in limited quantities? Why? What is available in unlimited quantities? Why? (For example, sunshine may be unlimited. But why are energy and electricity limited?)

To stimulate interest and discussion about scarcity in the classroom and to supplement the activities provided in the student resource material it would be useful to focus on some media items that may be reproduced for students or used as a teacher resource. The media material could be used, for instance, to stimulate and inform discussion on these questions: How do individuals, communities and countries attempt to address the problem of scarcity? How can resources be shared or allocated? How can more resources be produced? Which resources are finite? Why do some people, groups and countries appear to have more resources than others? Does this matter? Why?

Activities

1 People often want (or value) things they don't possess. Make a 'wish list' of ten things you would like to have. Beside each item mark whether you think each one is a need or a want. Compare your list to that of a partner and then of another person. List items you think most members of the class want. Write yes or no next to the items on your list.

2 Imagine you were going to spend three months camping on a tropical island with no services and were allowed to take ten items with you. List the ten items. Compare this list to the list generated in the above activity. Which list has more needs? Can you explain why? Are there any items all members of the class would take?

3 *Extra activity (Homework)*

If you have a part-time job or receive pocket money explain how you prioritise the ways in which you will or would like to spend the money. List the ways in which you spend your money (or intend to spend it) and state whether that expenditure is for a need or a want.

Acknowledgments

Making Choices: Secondary was developed jointly by the National Industry Education Forum (NIEF) and Curriculum Corporation.

Related products

- *Look Global: Upper Primary* (Curriculum Corporation 1999)
- *Go Global: Lower Secondary* (Curriculum Corporation 1996)
- *Approaches to Enterprise Education* (Curriculum Corporation 1996)
- *I can make my robot dance* (Curriculum Corporation 1996)
- [Carrots, Kites and Traffic Lights](#) (Curriculum Corporation 1996)