

Why we trade: Exchanging goods and services



Primary Lesson Plan

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[Making Choices: Primary](#)

Learning area

Studies of society and environment

Level

Upper primary (Years 6–7)

Description

Students conduct simple bartering and trading activities and consider how product value can be altered by the market.

Purpose

To introduce students to the concept of trade and its place in communities and to have students recognise that they and their families participate in trade.

Duration

3–4 sessions

Possible outcomes

In relation to *Studies of society and environment — a curriculum profile for Australian schools*, work on this activity could lead to the achievement of outcomes in the following strands:

- **Natural and social systems**
Economic systems
- **Resources**
Use of resources

Materials required

Packets of jelly beans for each group

Procedure

1 Barter discovery

As a library activity, students could research how barter took place, and write a report. In their report, students are to recall any occasions on which they have bartered and any disadvantages they can perceive about the barter system.

2 Jelly bean joy

Form the class into groups of six. Randomly distribute the contents of a jelly bean between the members of the group, so that each group has about 10.

Anyone may swap (trade) freely with anyone else. All trades are to be agreed upon by those making the exchange. Each member of the group is to record his/her beans before and after trading. Everyone gets to keep/eat the jelly beans they trade.

For example:

| | Before | After |
|---------------|--------|-------|
| Red | 2 | |
| Blue | 1 | 2 |
| Black | -2 | |
| Green | 12 | |
| Yellow | -2 | |
| Orange | 2 | |

The process may evolve like this:

Person 1: *Who wants two of my beans for a black one?*

Person 2: *OK, as long as I can pick which ones.*

Person 3: *I only want green ones, so who wants to swap?*

Person 4: *I have a green one. Swap you for two blue ones.*

A time limit for trading should be set (for example, 5 to 10 minutes).

When trading has stopped discuss:

- Was everyone better off than before? Why/why not?
- How did trade change what each person had?
- How does the game compare with community practice and experience?

3 Swapping

Have the students list the items they might swap, for example, sport cards, baseball caps, books or magazines. What value do you put on special items?

Begin, by asking students to list five popular and sought-after items, for example:

- 1 Phoenix Suns Cap
- 1 Air Jordan T-Shirt
- 1 Grand Final poster
- 1 Special Edition Barbie Doll

What price would you put on them to swap?

Make an 'equivalent chart', for example:

1 PHOENIX SUNS CAP EQUALS 2 AIR JORDAN T-SHIRTS

Talk about what alters the items worth.

4 Family trading

Ask the students to consider how family members exchange (trade) their time and skills for something they need. Make a class list of family exchanges, for example, washing the car in exchange for a special treat.

Acknowledgments

[Making Choices: Primary](#) was developed jointly by the National Industry Education Forum (NEIF) and [Curriculum Corporation](#).