


## OVERVIEW

Fairness is a difficult concept as there are often great disparities in the world around us. Too often we think “That’s not fair!” This lesson explores fairness in the global distribution of resources and strategies for making good decisions to increase cooperation.

## MATERIALS

 Fairness Dollar Template for teacher use

- Large envelopes
- 7 pencils
- 4 compasses
- 6 rulers
- 5 protractors
- 4 pairs of scissors
- 60 sheets of paper

**F**rom an early age, people develop strong opinions about what is fair and what isn’t. However, fairness is one of the most difficult Pillars of Character, or core ethical values, to define because it’s often a matter of perception. People tend to view decisions that help them as “fair” and those that don’t as “unfair.”

Although some decisions are clearly unfair, there is often more than one fair choice. To ensure that choices are fair to as many people as possible, rules should be clear to all involved, everyone should abide by them, and everyone must be treated the same under them.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:



In this lesson students will learn fairness by:

- Employing basic geometry skills to create shapes of value
- Learning how to cooperate to gather resources of value
- Learning about natural resources
- Examining what “fairness” and “fair” mean to them
- Developing higher logical thinking patterns to help them understand situations in their community and the world around them

## ACTIVITY:

1. Prepare letter-size envelopes. Each one should contain the following items (you can vary the number of envelopes, but be sure to include at least one of the following set of four):
  - Three pencils, three compasses, one sheet of blank paper, three rulers, three protractors, three pairs of scissors
  - Three pencils, one compass, four sheets of blank paper, one ruler, two protractors, one pair of scissors
  - One pencil, five sheets of blank paper, two rulers
  - 50 sheets of blank paper
4. Divide the class into groups of four or five. Tell each group it will receive one envelope. They are to use only the materials inside the envelopes, not personal items.
5. Explain that each group has the opportunity to make as much money as they can using the materials in the envelopes.
6. Demonstrate how they can make money. Show them that a circle with a 5cm diameter cut out of the paper is worth 500 “fair play” dollars. A square measuring 6cm x 6cm is worth 600 “fair play” dollars. An equilateral triangle (with 60-degree angles) is worth 700 “fair play” dollars.
7. Students may wonder how they’re going to make the shapes if they have no scissors, compasses, ruler, etc. Explain that they need to work this out as part of the activity.
8. Tell them you’ll be the bank. After they cut out their shapes, they will bring them to you for measurement. If they’re incorrect, their money will be worthless. Use the template provided to ensure accuracy.
9. Make sure they understand the requirements of the money and tell them to begin the activity. Give the activity an appropriate time limit for your students to develop their bargaining strategies.
10. If necessary, explain to them that they’ll have to barter items among themselves fairly to make as much money as they can. For example, the group with all the paper will realize their resource is crucial to the other groups and will be able to barter paper for tools. Allow some time for the students to realize this themselves. Only intervene if they become stuck.
11. When time is up, count the money turned in by each group. The winner is the group with the most money.
12. Discuss how each group felt when they opened their envelope and learned the rules of the game. The initial reaction was probably “Unfair!”
13. Ask them to share how and when they decided that bartering their goods would help them and how much value they placed on each tool.
14. Ask the students how this activity represents real life. Guide the discussion to natural resources relating to world economies.
15. Students will realize that life is not always fair, but making the best of bad situations and cooperating are ways unfairness can be addressed.

## FOLLOW-UP IDEAS

- Explore the amount of natural resources in the world, which countries have more and less as key assets, and how this affects their global economic position.
- Study how the location of natural resources has influenced global trade patterns in the past.
- Have students think of ways to protect valuable natural resources and the long-term value of protecting and conserving them.



Teach students to be smart consumers in a global economy.

1. Encourage them to think of different ways their purchases impact others: store employees, manufacturers, taxes to the government, big business. Select a common product (cotton shirts and chocolate) for a lesson on fair trade.
2. Using a world map, labels, and research tools, ask students to plot the locations of manufacturers and/or growers for each commodity.
3. Encourage students to find out more about “Fair Trade” logos on product labels.
4. Discuss how purchasing power can be a tool to promote different labor systems.

## OTHER FAIRNESS ACTIVITIES



Discuss fairness at home with emphasis on showing fairness to others instead of demanding fair treatment for themselves.



List ways people want to be treated fairly. Remind the class that equity is applying the same rules for the same circumstances (like age, responsibilities, maturity, finances, time available). Use similar criteria to make a report card that the students can use to grade themselves on how well they show fairness to others.



Create skits illustrating how fairness comes up in our daily lives at school and at home. Invite parents and other school students to come and watch.



Invite a panel of family members to discuss fairness in the family. Follow it up with a brainstorming session of ways to show fairness to others.

- Have a “table game night.” Review the rules for all the games, then rotate from table to table for 30-minute sessions. Record scores for each game. Reward the highest-scoring player with a yellow ruler for going by the rules and as a reminder to live by the Golden Rule.

- Create “fair-play” cards to distribute at school sporting events. Discuss what is and isn’t fair play in sports.



Invent a new game. Have students write rules and explain why each is important.



Involve students in helping create school policy on a tough issue of distribution (i.e. who should be assigned lockers in the best locations).

## LINKS TO USEFUL WEBSITES

<http://www.themint.org/index.html>

A wealth of ideas on how to make, save, invest, and manage money. For teachers and kids. Includes lesson plans and tips.

<http://www.ncee.net/resources/lessons.php>

Lesson plans and resources for teaching economics.

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/classroom/lp2.html>

PBS lesson plan that explores the role of the WTO in international economics.

<http://youthink.worldbank.org/>

World bank site. Information on international issues as well as projects and ideas for development in schools.

<http://www.worldbank.org/depweb/english/modules/mapglry.html>

Printable world and regional maps showing GNP, population growth, and other teachable areas.

<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CIE/Resources/globalization/globaled.html>

Links for teaching about globalization. Includes lesson plans and news links.

<http://www.charactercounts.org/howto/teaching-tools.htm>

Visit for further ideas and free resources.



## STANDARDS

### ECONOMICS

#### Standard 3

Understands the concept of prices and the interaction of supply and demand in a market economy.

#### LEVEL III [Grade 6-8]

##### Benchmark 4

Understands that scarce goods and services are allocated in a market economy through the influence of prices on production and consumption decisions.

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## V O C A B U L A R Y T E R M S

allocation of goods  
influence of prices  
consumption decision

consistency  
morally right  
allocation of services

production decision  
market economy  
need