



COUNCIL FOR
**Economic
Education**

Teaching Opportunity[®]

This lesson plan is from the Council for Economic Education's publication:

The Great Economic Mysteries Book: A Guide to Teaching Economic Reasoning - Grades 4-8

To purchase ***The Great Economic Mysteries Book: A Guide to Teaching Economic Reasoning - Grades 4-8***, visit:

<http://store.councilforeconed.org/greatecmysbo.html>

Or, use the [order form](#) at the end of the lesson.

For more economic and personal finance lesson plans, visit:

<http://store.councilforeconed.org>

To learn more about the Council for Economic Education, visit:

<http://www.councilforeconed.org>

You have permission to use and share this lesson plan, as long as you make no changes or edits to its contents or digital format.

You can post this, email this, print this, share with your colleagues and pass it along for free to anyone you like.

If you post it to a website or intranet, please provide the following attribution:

Courtesy of the Council for Economic Education. For more economic and personal finance lesson plans, visit <http://store.councilforeconed.org>

Visual 4 The Homework Mystery

Everyone knows that doing homework helps students learn better in school and get better grades.

But Louisa consistently refuses to do her homework. She says she wants to earn good grades in school; still, she never turns in her homework on time. Her teacher wants Louisa to learn, but she can't do Louisa's homework for her.

Why does Louisa not do her homework when she knows that doing it would help her get better grades?

Handy Dandy Guide

1. People *choose* to do the things they think are best for them.
2. People's choices have *costs*.
3. People choose to do things for which they are *rewarded*.
4. People create *rules* that affect our choices and how we act.
5. People gain when they freely decide to *trade* with one another.
6. People's choices today have *future results*.

Activity 4 The Homework Mystery

Directions. Read the *Handy Dandy Guide* and the mystery. For help in solving the mystery, read the clues and decide whether each statement is true or false. Use the clues and ideas from the *Handy Dandy Guide* to figure out a solution to the mystery. Write your solution in the space provided.

Handy Dandy Guide

1. People *choose* to do the things they think are best for them.
2. People's choices have *costs*.
3. People choose to do things for which they are *rewarded*.
4. People create *rules* that affect our choices and how we act.
5. People gain when they freely decide to *trade* with one another.
6. People's choices today have *future results*.

The Mystery

Everyone knows that doing homework helps students learn better in school and get better grades. But Louisa consistently refuses to do her homework. She says she wants to earn good grades in school; still, she never turns in her homework on time. Her teacher wants Louisa to learn, but she can't do Louisa's homework for her.

Why does Louisa not do her homework when she knows that doing it would help her get better grades?

True or False Clues

Read each statement below and mark it true (T) or false (F). Check with your teacher to find out if your responses are correct.

1. Louisa likes not doing well in school. _____
2. Students like Louisa have nothing to do after school—no chance to watch TV or play video games or play with their friends. _____
3. Doing homework seems more like a punishment than a reward. _____
4. Watching TV seems more like a reward than a punishment. _____

The Solution

Solve the mystery, using the clues and ideas from the *Handy Dandy Guide*. Record your solution here and explain it briefly:

LESSON 4

The Homework Mystery

Everyone knows that doing homework helps students learn better in school and get better grades. But Louisa consistently refuses to do her homework. She says she wants to earn good grades in school; still, she never turns in her homework on time. Her teacher wants Louisa to learn, but she can't do Louisa's homework for her.

Why does Louisa not do her homework when she knows that doing it would help her get better grades?

Answers to the True or False Clues

1. Louisa likes not doing well in school. (False)
2. Students like Louisa have nothing to do after school—no chance to watch TV or play video games or play with their friends. (False)
3. Doing homework seems more like a punishment than a reward. (True)
4. Watching TV seems more like a reward than a punishment. (True)

Solution and Explanation

To Louisa, the cost of not doing homework is worth the reward of being able to do other things with her time.

While several *Handy Dandy Guide* principles apply here, the solution as stated draws primarily on principles 1, 2 and 3. (Just for fun, discuss with the students how the rewards in question might be restructured to encourage doing more homework. What might happen, for example, if Louisa could not move from grade five to grade six if she failed to complete her assignments? How might this action reorder the value she attaches to television viewing?)

LESSON 5

Could Buying Trees at Christmas Be Forest-friendly?

Every year during the winter holiday season, some environmentalists say that people who celebrate Christmas should buy artificial Christmas trees rather than real spruce trees, balsams, or pines. They think that

shifting over to artificial trees would save real trees from being cut down. Then we would have more trees in our wood lots and forests.

You live in a state that has many Christmas tree farms. An environmental group has proposed that all Christmas trees sold in the state must be artificial. Grizzly Jack Crosscut objects to this proposal. "If you're a friend of the forests," he says, "buy a spruce tree, a balsam, or a pine at Christmas time."

Could Grizzly Jack be right? What would happen if people were not permitted to buy or sell real trees at Christmas time?

Answers to the True or False Clues

1. Many families choose to purchase real Christmas trees. (True)
2. Christmas tree farmers produce many thousands of Christmas trees every year. (True)
3. Land used to grow Christmas trees has no other use. (False)
4. Christmas tree farmers grow Christmas trees because they are required to do so. (False)
5. Christmas trees cannot be traded or exchanged. (False)
6. Christmas trees are planted by farmers who hope to sell the trees in the future. (True)

Solution and Explanation

Grizzly Jack could be right. If people could not buy and sell real trees at Christmas time, your state would soon have fewer trees. Profits (the money left after all the expenses have been paid) are rewards tree farmers hope to earn by growing Christmas trees and selling them. The new rule prohibiting the sale of real trees would take away the rewards farmers hope to gain by growing and selling trees. It would create an incentive for them to use their farmland for other things, or perhaps to sell it to a developer in the future.

This solution draws on all six *Handy Dandy Guide* principles.



COUNCIL FOR
**Economic
Education**

Teaching Opportunity

Order Form

Council for Economic Education
Attn: Order Department
122 E 42nd Street, Suite 2600
New York, NY 10168

Phone: 800-338-1192
Fax: 212-730-1793
www.councilforeconed.org/store
Federal ID No.: **13-1623848**

Three easy ways to order!

1. Online – *pay with your credit card* -- www.councilforeconed.org/store
2. Fax – **(212) 730-1793**
3. Mail – *use the address above*

Order No.	Copies	Title	Price	Total

*(Order No. is **bold 3-digit** part of ISBN number. Ex: Order No. with ISBN# of 1-56183-471-8 is **471**)*

Coupon or Discount Code (if applicable): _____

Subtotal:

Payment enclosed (Make check payable to
Council for Economic Education)

Shipping:
Less than \$30, add 25%
More than \$30, add 10%

Discounts:

Shipping:

Purchase order enclosed

Total:

Credit card:

MasterCard Number: _____

Exp. _____

Visa

AmEx Authorized signature: _____

SHIP TO:

Name: _____ School/Organization: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Would you like to receive e-mail updates from the Council for Economic Education Yes No
(Privacy: We don't rent or sell your name.)

BILL TO: same as **SHIP TO**

Name: _____ School/Organization: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____