

Your 2009 Action Plan for Teaching Economics in High School

Ready to teach Economics? Okay, maybe you *have* to teach economics and personal finance, either in your high school economics course or as part of a business, marketing or family and consumer science course.

Or, let's say you've already got a solid economics program in place, but you're looking for new resources, new techniques, new lesson plans.

Here is a list of tips and resources to help make 2009 the year Economics is front-and-center in your curriculum...

(Tip: You may want to print out this guide; it will save time and you can easily refer to it in the future).

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Action Step #1: Training, It's Good for You

Top performers -- athletes, business professionals, artists -- are always improving their skills, so they can reach their peak potential.

Teaching is no different.

Make it a goal to attend an economics and personal finance professional development workshop in 2009. You'll not only expand your knowledge of economics and personal finance, but you'll also network with your peers and return to your classroom with new-found energy and enthusiasm.

Where to Find Training

Not sure where to begin?

Why not ask your department chair, principal, district curriculum director... a fellow teacher? Most likely, they will have advice on local, national and even online training opportunities.

Don't forget you can find economic and personal finance workshops through the Council for Economic Education's university-based network of [Centers for Economic Education](#). Just click on your state, find your nearest Center and contact them to get a list of upcoming workshops in your area.

Can't attend face-to-face training? With budget cuts and time constraints, it's definitely a challenge today.

You can also find [online teacher training](#) through the Council for Economic Education. These online training modules take you behind-the-scenes of the Council's most popular programs. You'll explore content and find out how to teach it to your high school students. You'll watch videos of teachers using the lessons with their students. Plus, seasoned economic educators will show you how to deliver the lesson plans for maximum impact with high school students.

Call us toll-free at 800-338-1192 and our friendly staff will help you find the economic and personal finance training you need.

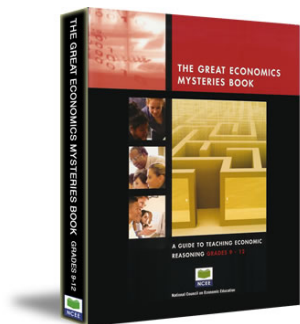
Action Step #2: Get (Even More) Comfortable with Economics

After you've received training, it's time to expand your knowledge base and keep your skills sharp.

Pay close attention to the economics in your daily life -- in the news, discussions among your students and friends, in your own household.

Teach the World Around You

Economics is, literally, all around you, isn't it? Look at the daily news: economics dominates the headlines, day after day. And I'll bet *your students* are even talking about economics... and their parents... and your fellow teachers... well, you get the picture.



How can you use these headlines and once-in-lifetime events as teachable moments? [The Handy Dandy Guide to Economic Reasoning](#), from the [Great Economic Mysteries](#) series, is a quick and easy way to introduce your students to economics.

With only 15-30 minutes of effort and using common "mysteries," you'll start building an economic foundation that helps your students see the role economics plays in their daily lives.

There's even a 'Guide to Writing Your Own Mysteries,' which shows you how to monitor headlines and craft your own economic mysteries. It's pretty simple, give it a try.

Strategy: Think Like An Economist (It's Okay, Really)

Resource: [The Great Economic Mysteries Book: A Guide to Teaching Economic Reasoning, Grades 9-12](#)

Background Reading: [The Handy Dandy Guide to Economic Reasoning](#)

Sample Lesson: [The Mystery of the Greedy Teenagers](#)

What It Does: Uses a labor and employment mystery -- babysitting -- to introduce students to economic reasoning.

What Makes It Unique: Your students **work together** in groups to **analyze** data, **discuss** alternatives and **defend** answers to common, everyday mysteries; you're introducing them to economics, in a fun context.

Action Step #3: If You Buy One Resource, Make It Virtual Economics

How would you like to have your own economics and personal finance coach on call, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week?



[Virtual Economics](#) is your private tutor -- mentor, coach, confidant, call it what you will -- for teaching economics and personal finance.

This CD-ROM (you didn't think it was an actual person, did you?) helps you understand how to:

- teach 51 economic and personal finance **concepts**
- build your **vocabulary** (which you can also use with your students)
- find **activity-based lesson plans** to demonstrate the concepts to your students, and
- correlate lessons to your **state economic standards**

Activity-based Lessons, From Planning to Delivery

Imagine if you could attend a seminar or teacher workshop and discover the latest strategies and techniques for teaching economics and personal finance to high school students. [Virtual Economics](#) gives you on-going training, support and -- most importantly -- the tools to confidently teach economics and personal finance in your classroom.

You'll also leverage technology to make your lesson planning easier. [Virtual Economics](#) makes it easy to plan, find and deliver a memorable lesson for your students.

Strategy: Be the Economics and Personal Finance Ace in Your School

Resource: [Virtual Economics](#) CD-ROM

Video Demonstration: How a teacher uses [Virtual Economics](#) for lesson planning -- [Watch Video](#)

What It Does: [Virtual Economics](#) helps you plan, find and deliver economic or personal finance lessons.

What Makes It Unique: You use technology to build your economic and personal finance knowledge base, and search a database of lesson plans by keyword, publication and state content standard.

Action Step #4: Leverage the Great High School Economics Package

So far you've introduced your students to economics using mysteries, and you have a tool that helps you plan, find and deliver lesson plans.

How do you make economics the cornerstone of your social studies or business courses?

Start thinking beyond the usual textbook-lecture approach and concentrate on supplemental materials that include activity-based lesson plans, visuals and ready to use worksheets and handouts.

Wouldn't it be nice to *increase student participation* and an *understanding of economics principles* at the same time? With interactive exercises like simulations, classroom projects and in-class discussions and debates, you'll be amazed at how easy it is to capture -- and hold -- the attention of your students.



A great resource to help you kick-start your economics curriculum is [The Great High School Economics Package](#). It's an easy and affordable way to add economics to your curriculum, regardless of what courses you teach.

From simple introductory lessons to in-depth activities, simulations and projects, this package is anchored by three popular print-based

programs:

1. [Capstone: Exemplary Lessons for High School Economics](#)
2. [Economics In Action: 14 Greatest Hits for High School Economics](#)
3. [Focus: High School Economics](#)

Each year hundreds of thousands of students learn high school economics from these three resources.

Remember, these aren't textbooks: these are supplements to your primary instruction, lesson plans that help you demonstrate and apply economic and personal finance concepts.

Your Students Learn by Doing

These trusted resources use activity-based lesson plans, simulations, projects and worksheets to give your students a thorough understanding of economics. Whether your students need a detailed knowledge economics, or just a basic foundation in the terminology and principles that pop up in their other courses, this hands-on approach means your students are actively *applying* economics to the world around them.



[Capstone: Exemplary Lessons for High School Economics](#) is the most comprehensive set of high school lesson plans developed by the Council for Economic Education.

There are 45 supplemental lessons and 62 student activities that cover fundamental economics, microeconomics, macroeconomics, global economics, personal finance and entrepreneurship principles

in-depth.

These lessons will strengthen your regular economic course, and help you cover the free market principles -- pricing, taxation and more -- your students need to know in their business and marketing courses.

Think of [Capstone](#) as a cookbook: when you need to make an economic dish your students will enjoy, you pull it off the shelf, find a recipe and follow the step-by-step instructions.

Strategy: Make Your Classroom Sizzle with Capstone

Resource: [Capstone: Exemplary Lessons for High School Economics](#)

Sample Lesson: [Equilibrium Prices and Equilibrium Quantities](#) (PDF)

What It Does: Demonstrates how the invisible hand of the marketplace is accomplished through mutual accommodation of sellers and buyers.

What Makes It Unique: Your students **analyze** data, **plot** supply and demand curves and **answer** a series of questions.



[Economics In Action: 14 Greatest Hits for High School Economics](#) uses fun, activity-based lessons to ease your students into the world of economics.

It's ideal as an introduction to economic reasoning, common terminology and need-to-know concepts, using an active-learning approach.

Light on math and quantitative data analysis, these lessons can be used in any course where you need to expose your students to core concepts like markets, property rights and more.

Strategy: Activity-based Lessons Make Your Life A Whole Lot Easier

Resource: [Economics In Action: 14 Greatest Hits for High School Economics](#)

Sample Lesson: [A Market in Wheat](#) (PDF)

What It Does: Demonstrates how supply and demand works in a marketplace.

What Makes It Unique: Your students **simulate** an open cry market, **plot** their demand schedules and **determine** how prices are set.



[Focus: High School Economics](#) is the original "Silver Bullet" curriculum guide for teaching high school economics. It contains tried-and-true lessons that help you cover introductory economics, microeconomics, macroeconomics and global economics principles in your classroom.

Again, it's a supplement, and includes tips on how to teach economics in high school.

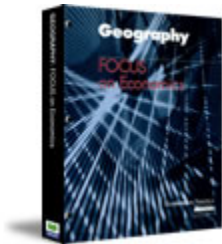
Action Step #5: Focus on Infusing Economics Into Other Subject Areas

You're probably under a time crunch, right?

Lesson prep. Your administration wants this and that... and more of that.

Oh, and who can forget: you've got teach to the standards.

So how can you cover more content, without dedicating more time and effort?



Focus on Economics series illustrates the role economics plays in the social sciences, such as [Geography](#), [World History](#), and [Global Economics](#).

Focus on More Content, with Less Work

These supplemental lessons help you cover two important social studies topics, with one simple lesson. The *Focus* series includes:

- [Focus on Economics: Geography](#)
- [Focus: International Economics](#)
- [Focus: Economic Systems](#)
- [Focus on Economics: World History](#)
- [Focus: Globalization](#)

Strategy: Why Do Twice the Work? Cover Multiple Disciplines with One Lesson

Resource: [Focus on Economics: Geography](#)

Sample Lesson: [Why Nations Trade](#) (PDF)

What It Does: Introduces your students to comparative advantage, specialization and decision-making.

What Makes It Unique: Your students **read and discuss** a narrative, **simulate** a country's capital structure and **discuss** the rationale for their decisions.

Action Step #6: Explore U.S. History and Civics and Government with an Eye on Economics

Do history courses have to be out of sync with current events? Despite our best efforts, history can seem... well, like a distant, abstract thing of the past.

But historical events are brimming with economics. After all, history is about individuals making choices, *at that point in time*, by weighing the costs and benefits of their actions.

So, if you frame historical events in the context of costs vs. benefits, you can help your students be "present-minded" about the past.

Watch a slide show of [How Economics Can Strengthen the Teaching of History](#).

You can take the same approach with Civics and Government: how does economics influence political choices? By understanding the costs and benefits, you'll show your students how citizenship is relevant to their daily lives.

Give New Meaning to History, Civics and Government



Focus: Understanding Economics in US History is one way to put current economics events in perspective by relating them to past events. You'll use mystery-based activities -- What caused the Great Depression? Would you sell yourself into indentured servitude? -- to weigh the historical costs and benefits of taking one course of action over another.

You can then ask your students to think about a present-day scenario, where they apply the same reasoning and analysis as they did for a past event.

Strategy: Be Honest -- Would You Sell Yourself Into Bondage?

Resource: [Focus: Understanding Economics in US History](#)

Sample Lesson: [Indentured Servitude: Why Sell Yourself into Bondage?](#) (PDF)

What It Does: Shows your students the role that cost-benefit analysis plays in life-changing decisions.

What Makes It Unique: Your students **work together** in groups to **analyze** indentured contracts, **identify** costs and benefits and **discuss** whether they would exchange their labor for future benefits.



Focus: [Understanding Economics in Civics and Government](#) looks at the role economics plays in the functioning of government, citizenship and rules and regulations.

Is there a relationship between economics freedom and political freedom? What is the role of government in the economy? What about health care? Unemployment?

You'll explore how economics influenced the United States Constitution, look at key economic cases before the United States Supreme Court, the purpose (and kinds) of taxes and much more.

Strategy: Want to Predict the Next Presidential Election Winner?

Resource: [Focus: Understanding Economics in Civics and Government](#)

Sample Lesson: [To What Extent Do Economic Conditions Influence Election Outcomes?](#)
(PDF)

What It Does: Illustrates how economic indicators influence who wins elections.

What Makes It Unique: Your students **analyze** economic data, **compare** year-to-year changes and **predict** the chances of an incumbent winning an election.

Action Step #7: Avoid the Financial Mistakes of the Past

Let's not forget personal finance.

What if your students left high school with the skills, confidence and knowledge to make wise financial decisions? manage a budget? understand credit? save their earnings?

They would have a big financial advantage in the future, wouldn't they?

From Money Basics to Advanced Wealth-Building Strategies



Financial Fitness for Life is a complete personal finance program that covers:

- Earning an Income
- Saving and Investing
- Credit and Spending, and
- Money Management and Budgeting

You can use all the lessons as an integrated curriculum, or pick-and-choose the individual lessons that meet your teaching goals.

[Financing Your Future](#) and [Risky Business](#) are two DVD-based resources that use 15-minute videos to introduce core personal finance content, then reinforce the content with listening guides and activity-based lessons.

[Watch a Financing Your Future Video Clip](#)

[Watch a Risky Business Video Clip](#)

Let's face it: your students are about to be bombarded with credit card offers, complicated insurance policies and other mind-boggling financial decisions...

... will they make wise decisions? With your help, they can.

Strategy: Don't Just Invest in the Market, Invest in Student Success

Resource: [Financial Fitness for Life Teacher's Package, Grades 9-12](#)

Sample Lesson, Teacher Guide: [There Is No Free Lunch In Investing](#) (PDF)

Sample Lesson, Student Worksheet #1: [Types of Investment Risk](#) (PDF)

Sample Lesson, Student Worksheet #2: [The Pyramid of Risk and Reward](#) (PDF)

Sample Lesson, Parent Activity: [Be An Investment Guru](#) (PDF)

What It Does: Combines a brief introductory teacher lesson, two student worksheets to reinforce the content, and an at-home activity with parents to introduce students to the basic principles of investing.

What Makes It Unique: Your students **read** background material on types of investments, **defend** their responses to a series of questions, and **pick stocks** at home with their parents.

Action Step #8: Ace the AP[®] Economics Exams

If you're teaching AP Economics, make sure you use the [Advanced Placement Economics](#) program.



[Advanced Placement Economics](#) is packed with teacher-planning resources, as well as supplemental lesson plans to reinforce the college-level economic content your students need to know to tackle the exams with confidence.

Buy a workbook for each of your students. That way, they'll have rigorous exercises, activities, worksheets and practice exams at their fingertips, plus key readings that help them master those sometimes tough-to-understand textbook readings.

10 Tips for Teaching AP Economics

For additional tips on teaching AP Economics, read [10 Tips for Teaching an Effective AP Course](#).

Strategy: The Key to Scoring a 5? Practice, Practice, Practice... and MORE Practice

Resource: [Advanced Placement Economics](#)

Sample Lesson: [The Economic Way of Thinking](#) (PDF)

What It Does: Regardless of what questions are asked on the AP Exams, if your

students understand how to apply economic reasoning to the test questions, they'll have a big, confidence-boosting advantage. This lesson shows them how to think like an economist.

What Makes It Unique: You use planning resources and supplemental lessons to make sure your students know the content, inside and out. Your students **read** background content, and complete **exercises and worksheets**. Gives you a rigorous, methodical way to introduce, reinforce and assess your students' knowledge of college-level economics

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Action Step #9: Grab Some Face Time in the Computer Lab

Okay, so far you've used technology to plan, find and deliver in-class lessons (with [Virtual Economics](#)), and you've looked at a number of supplemental, print-based lesson plans (everything from [The Great High School Economics Package](#) to the *Focus* series to [Financial Fitness for Life](#)).

But your students are pretty "wired," aren't they? Chances are they spend a lot of time online. Here's your opportunity to supplement your print-based lessons with computer-based activities...

Find Free Lessons at EconEdLink.org



With [EconEdLink.org](#), you'll have access to over 135 **free** high school economic and personal finance lesson plans.

And your students will always be "doing" things, like:

- Reading articles
- Analyzing online data sources
- Listening to audio
- Watching video

Some teacher highlights you'll find on [EconEdLink.org](#) include:

- [Find lessons](#) by keyword or [state content standard](#)
- Stay on top of [current events](#) with lessons that help you teach the latest news headlines
- Use fun [interactives](#) to keep your students involved

These lessons will not only give you practical, interactive online lessons, they will also help your students build and fine-tune their computer-literacy skills. And because the students are working at their own pace, EconEdLink.org gives you a chance to spend

one-on-one time with your students... not to mention stake your claim in the computer lab.

You don't need to use all of these resources, just find the one -- or ones -- that fit your teaching style and meet your instructional goals.

If you have any questions about these resources, give us a call and we'll explain them in more detail: 800-338-1192.

Good luck, here's to making 2009 your best teaching year ever!

About the author:

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