

Barter Day

Utah Social Studies



Materials

- ◆ One possession from each child's desk
- ◆ Tables or desks to display the items available for trade

Background

As we know, early people did not have a system of money. Because of this, people had to barter. Bartering is the direct exchange of goods or services without the use of money. Native Americans would use hides and fur to barter with the colonists to get items such as food, cloth, glass beads, guns, gun powder, and metal goods. Through bartering, people learned that almost everyone would accept certain goods in exchange for a certain product or service.

By the mid-1800s, trading posts were developed throughout North America. A trading post is like a marketplace where people bring products to sell or barter for other goods. Today, bartering still exists throughout the world. Some people in developing countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America barely produce enough to get by. They must barter to get things they need or want.

This activity will give students the opportunity to learn about the exchange of goods in the process of bartering. Students will learn about the bartering process used by Native Americans and early colonists. The focus of the lesson will point to the need for the goods being exchanged between the persons, rather than its present known monetary worth. It is to be stressed to children that at the end of today's activity, all materials will be returned to the original owners.

Activity Procedures

1. Discuss with the students the meaning of trade and bartering. Compare and contrast the trade conducted by the Native Americans and colonists to the trade nowadays between the United States and other countries.
2. Have students select an item out of their desk to offer for trade to other students. Students may want to choose an item known to be unique and admired by others or just something all students would need. Make sure that all students know that they will get their item back at the end of the activity.
3. Divide the students into two groups. Each group will represent a country. Group A will go to Group B, which remains stationary, to find an individual he/she would like to make a trade with for an item. If a student cannot make a barter or a trade with one student then the student should go to an other student to attempt a new barter. (Make sure that the students know they can only trade with someone from the other group.)

Additional Activities, What's Next?

1. Allow children to dress as Pilgrims and Native Americans and trade items of the time period: trinkets, furs, corn, pumpkins.

Time: 45 minutes

Grade Level: 4

Social Studies, Standard 2

Students will understand how Utah's history has been shaped by many diverse people, events and ideas.

Objective 3

Investigate the development of the economy in Utah.


- d. Research the development of Utah's economy over time.



Bartering for goods brought many new foods to America and Utah

2. Allow students to use the same activity format, but form groups to trade for items all could use.

Materials adapted from the Illinois Farm Bureau.



Ag Journal Questions:

1. Were you able to make a trade with another student?
2. Was it easy to make a trade?
3. Which type of trade is similar to what you just did today — is it the trading of the Native Americans and the colonists or the trading that occurs between countries today? Why?
4. What types of things did the Native Americans and colonists trade for?
5. Why is trade conducted today between various countries?