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Comparing Economic Systems



Strategies toward achievement of:

SS7E1, E4, E7: Analyze different economic systems.

- a. Compare how traditional, command, and market economies answer the economic questions of 1-what to produce, 2-how to produce, and 3-for whom to produce.
- b. Explain that countries have a mixed economic system located on a continuum between pure market and pure command.

This classroom simulation strategy is designed to target 7th-grade social studies standard E1 Analyze different economic systems. This strategy may be used to introduce the standard or to reinforce student understanding after the lesson. To simulate command, market, and mixed economies, students will pretend they are the teacher's employees working on an assembly line. This simulation works best with at least three groups with five to ten students in each group, however, it can be modified to meet the specific needs of the class. Students' desks or tables should be arranged so that they are sitting close to all group members. If the teacher is instructing in an online format, students can collaborate on digital whiteboards like Jamboard. Each student will receive a number to correspond with their assigned job on the assembly line. During the introduction of the activity, it is best to display the drawing on the board and go over each part with students to make sure they understand what their job entails. In this particular simulation, the students draw puppies for the teacher's company, "Precious Pups", however, this can be modified based on the teacher's and students' interests. See the accompanying image to see how the drawing is divided for the assembly line.

There are three rounds for this simulation to represent the command, market, and mixed economic systems. In round one, students are instructed that they will be making three Precious Pups. The product will then be inspected by their boss (the teacher), and they will receive a paycheck for their work. The paycheck can be candy, a school currency, or another reward system that the teacher has in place. It is important to emphasize during round one that the students are not racing to finish. The boss simply wants the product. When the students finish round one, the teacher will record on the board the amount of time it took to complete the task and provide the students with their paycheck.

To begin round two, the teacher will explain that round one was just too slow, and the product is in high demand. Therefore, round two will be a competition, and only the winning team will receive a bonus. When the first group of students finish the product, the teacher will record the time for round two on the board and provide them with their bonus. The teacher will then inspect the product and comment on its overall quality. In comparison to round one, there should be a considerable decline in the quality of the product in round two. The

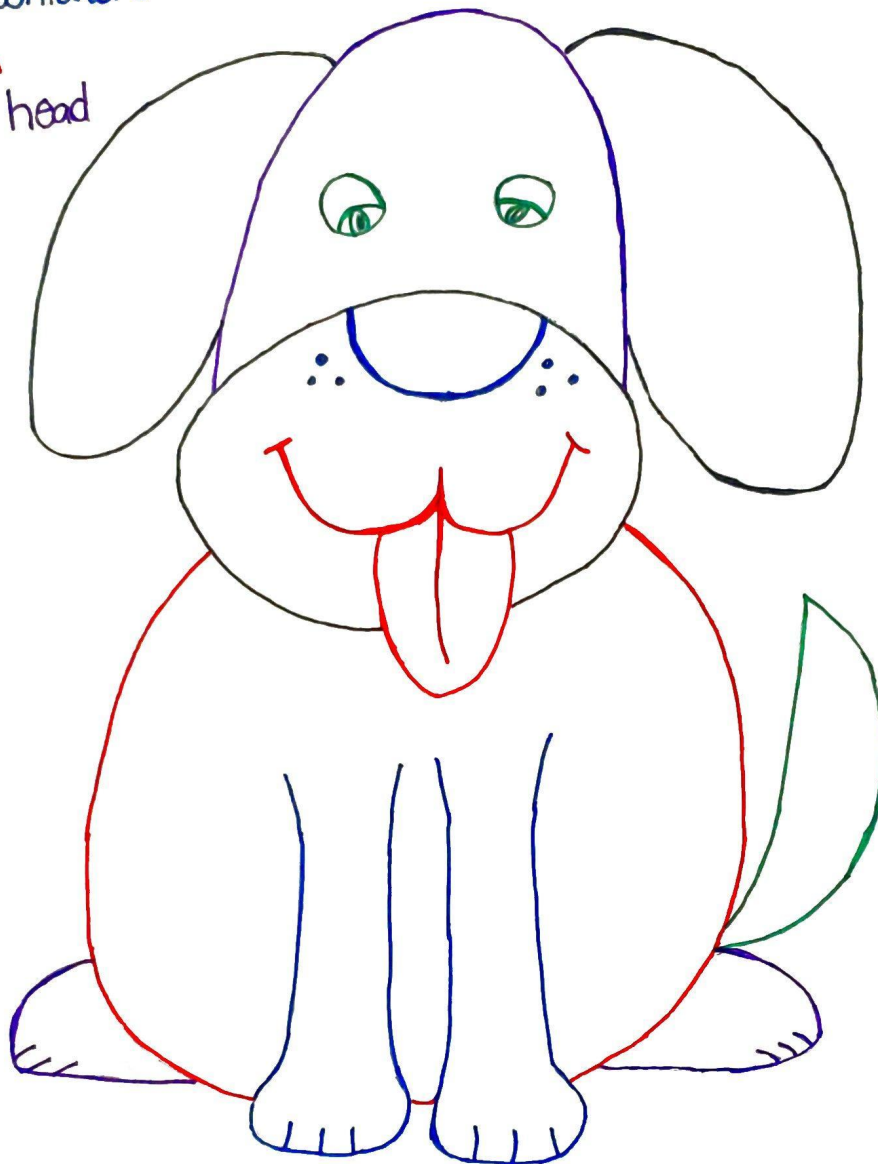
teacher can make the inspections quite humorous and memorable for students. As this standard is repeated in SS7E4 and SS7E7, this can help with student recall of information later in the school year.

In round three, the teacher will combine aspects of both rounds one and two. The students must create a quality product while also paying attention to the amount of time it is taking them to complete the task. Even if the students do not finish first, the teacher needs to encourage them to keep working because they can still win the round. The teacher will document the times of all groups as they complete the task and inspect their work, making comments on the overall quality and performance of each group. After careful consideration of each group's products, the teacher will announce a winner of round three and award them with a bonus.

If the teacher is using this simulation as an introduction to the standard, this would be the point where he or she leads a discussion about each round and the type of economic system that was modeled. The teacher should explain that in a command economy, all economic decisions of what, how, and for whom to produce are made by the government. There is no incentive to work harder; the workers simply do their job and get paid. After describing a command economy, the students would then decide which round of the simulation was modeling that system. In this simulation, round one was a command economy. The teacher would also describe the decision-making of market and mixed economies and have students decide which round modeled those systems. In round two, the students modeled a market economy because the decisions were based on trade and competition. The boss needed the product quickly to keep up with the increase in demand. In round three, the students modeled a mixed economy because it was a combination of providing the product efficiently while also maintaining product quality.

If the teacher is using this simulation to reinforce student understanding after a lesson, students could discuss as a group and complete a written reflection about each round. Students should be able to determine which round simulated each economic system. The teacher can also conduct an anonymous poll as a formative assessment and discuss based on the results.

- 1- Oval for face
- 2- Nose/whiskers
- 3- mouth
- 4- Top of head
- 5- Eyes
- 6- Ears
- 7- Front legs
- 8- Body
- 9- Back legs
- 10- Tail



References