

Boomerang Box – Introduction to Trade

Lesson Plan 1: Why do we Trade?

Appropriate Grade Levels: 2 – 3

Implementation Time: One class period (30 to 45 minutes)

Materials Needed:

- Teaching notes included with “Why do we Trade?” lesson plan
- Photos or slides of people trading or of goods that are traded or access to Boomerang Box web site for these types of photos
- 25 each of five common classroom objects (glue sticks, pencils, markers, erasers, and rulers, for example)
- Writing paper and pencils for student in-class writing exercise

Learner Outcome(s): What will happen for learners as a result of this lesson?

Students will explore the reasons people trade. They will increase their understanding by engaging in a tangible example of trading. They will then summarize what they learned through a short written report or picture (for kindergarteners).

Academic Skills: How will students learn?

- Communication: Students will demonstrate listening and observation skills to gain understanding; they will practice communicating ideas clearly and effectively; and they will demonstrate communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others during the trading exercise.
- Writing: Students will demonstrate writing skills by clearly summarizing their understanding of what they have learned.
- Economics: Through classroom discussion and a hands-on exercise, students will gain a basic understanding of trade, a major economic activity. They will discuss the reasons for trade and observe their own role in trade.

How will this lesson plan prepare students to be assessed? *This lesson plan will help students strengthen their listening and writing skills. The in-class written exercise will permit students to demonstrate their ability to respond to an expository writing prompt.*

Closure/Assessment:

Review students’ written and/or oral work both for basic writing skills, as well as for their ability to explain what they have learned about why people trade.

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TEACHING NOTES for Lesson Plan 1: Why do we Trade?

People have been trading between themselves for thousands of years.

- They've traded to get things they couldn't produce themselves or to get things more cheaply than they could produce them.
- They've traded to get better, newer technology that someone else had developed.
- And they've traded when they themselves had more of something than they could use.

Nearly 2000 years ago, the philosopher Plutarch wrote this about trade:

“...the sea brought the Greeks the vine from India, from Greece transmitted the use of grain across the sea, from Phoenicia imported letters as a memorial against forgetfulness, thus preventing the greater part of mankind from being wineless, grainless, and unlettered.”

We've traded non-stop since then, all over the world.

Today, of course, nearly everything we eat, wear, or use is a product of trade. Most of us don't grow our own cotton, weave our own cloth, and then sew our own clothes; or grow our own crops for food; and we don't build our own radios or toasters or computers. Instead, we buy the goods we need at the store, knowing that some of them are produced in the U.S. and that some of them are produced in other countries, traded for the goods we sell in those countries.

Like nearly everything else in our lives, trade has grown larger and more complex over the last half century. Staff at the World Trade Organization, the organization charged with overseeing world trade, estimate that total world trade in 1997 was 14 times the level of 1950. In addition, the range of things being traded has grown: from basic goods and food to services (such as telecommunications or banking services) to intellectual property. Goods are now traded over the Internet, often in the form of electronic data.

The objective of this lesson plan is to have students understand the general reasons people trade and understand as well that they themselves trade. As they grow older, they will be able to learn more about trade: why it happens, how it works, and what challenges it poses.

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Lesson Plan 1: Why do we Trade?

Begin the lesson by asking students if they have ever traded anything.

Prompt students to share personal experiences of trading – perhaps trading their lunch with a friend to get a better dessert or trading Pokemon cards.

Ask each student who shares an example of trade to explain WHY he or she traded.

What made the student decide to trade?

And how did he or she convince someone else to trade?

Ask them if they can think of other things that are traded.

Build on examples students have already given to ask them about other things they use every day:

What about the food they buy from the grocery store or get at the school cafeteria? Who trades? Talk about the transition from farmer to grocery store to someone buying food with money.

What about the clothes they wear or the video games they play?

Now, show photos or slides of people trading products and explain:

People have been trading for thousands of years for the exact same reasons that you trade. People trade to get things they want from other people who have them. Someone who grows apples might trade some apples for a new pair of shoes. Someone who bakes bread might trade some bread for a new shirt.

Over the years, people have started using money to make trading easier. People can earn money by selling things they make or by working at a job. They can use the money they earn to buy things they need.

Next, prepare the students to begin the trading game by asking:

How many of you think you are good traders?

Get show of hands. Then begin trading game.

TRADING GAME – CLASSROOM EXERCISE

(Designed for a class with 25 students)

- 1. Use the classroom objects called for on the first page of this lesson plan. Give each student five of the same type of classroom object. (For instance, one student should have 5 glue sticks, the next should have 5 pencils, and so on.)*
- 2. Tell students that the object of the game is for each of them to trade what they have so that they end up with a complete set of classroom objects. Each student should end up with 1 glue stick, 1 pencil, 1 marker, 1 eraser, and 1 ruler.*
- 3. Tell students that there won't be any individual winners in this game. Instead, you will be watching the clock to see how long it takes for EVERYONE to finish trading.*
- 4. Give students the signal to start. Let them move about the room as they trade. Ask them to return to their seat when they have finished trading. Note how long it takes for every student to finish trading and write that time on the board. (NOTE: For older students, you can experiment with making the exercise more complex by varying the numbers of things to be traded to make it harder for students to secure a full set of items. What happens? How do they trade?)*

When all students have returned to their seats, debrief the exercise. Ask them what they learned about trading.

Prompt students to talk about how the trading exercise worked. Was it confusing? Or easy? Did they learn any rules about trading, for instance that one pencil could get them one glue stick?

Then ask students to write you a report (2-3 sentences) about what they did and what they learned.

You might want to help students with spelling and help them find ways to describe what they did.

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Lesson Plan 2: How do we Trade?

Appropriate Grade Levels: 2– 3

Implementation Time: One class period (30 to 45 minutes)

Materials Needed:

- Teaching notes included with “How do we Trade?” lesson plan
- Photos or slides of ships, container cranes, and Boomerang Box and/or access to Boomerang Box web site to print out photos from the web
- Approximately 100 marbles
- One paper lunch bag, one shoe box, and packing tape
- Boomerang Box poster
- Build your own Boomerang Box sheet, copied on cardstock for students
- Boomerang Box on truck and train coloring sheets for students (for K-1)

Learner Outcome(s): What will happen for learners as a result of this lesson?

Students will explore how goods are moved around the world. They will increase their understanding by engaging in a simulated example to demonstrate different ways goods can be moved. They will then summarize what they learned through a short in-class exercise.

Academic Skills: How will students learn?

- Communication: Students will demonstrate listening and observation skills to gain understanding; and they will practice communicating ideas clearly and effectively.
- Writing: Students will demonstrate writing skills by clearly summarizing their understanding of what they have learned.
- Social Studies/History: Students will gain an understanding of technological changes in shipping and world trade. They will discuss how trade affects their own lives.

How will this lesson plan prepare students to be assessed? This lesson plan will help students strengthen their listening and writing skills. The in-class writing exercise will permit students to demonstrate their ability to respond to an expository writing prompt.

Closure/Assessment:

Review students’ written and/or oral work both for basic writing skills, as well as for their ability to explain what they have learned about how goods are traded.

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TEACHING NOTES for Lesson Plan 2: How do we Trade?

The first lesson plan explored the reasons people trade. This lesson plan focuses on how goods are moved from place to place so that they can be traded. It focuses in particular on a transportation innovation of the last 50 years that revolutionized the way goods are moved: containerization.

From the early days of sailing until the 1960s and 1970s, cargo was shipped around the world in bulk. Products were held together with a crate, burlap, or rope. Shipping cargo in bulk was a hard and messy job. Bulk cargo was heavy and awkward, difficult to load or unload from a ship. In fact, it took four to five days to unload a conventional ship. Cargo that was protected only with nets or crates could easily be damaged or stolen. And longshore workers were often injured by heavy cargo.

During World War II, the U.S. Government began experimenting with a new way to ship goods: loading them into large metal boxes or containers that could be moved directly from ship to a truck chassis or rail car. The containers were impervious to water damage or theft. With the use of huge gantry cranes to lift containers on and off a ship, a ship could be loaded or unloaded in less than a day with much less risk of injury.

Unfortunately, even though the benefits of containers were immediately apparent, the costs of moving to containers were so high that containerization did not truly take hold until the early 1970s. Shipping companies had to build new ships capable of holding containers. Ports had to build terminals complete with the large cranes needed to lift containers in and out of ships. And in many countries, particularly in Asia, roads and bridges had to be rebuilt to accommodate trucks and trains towing cargo containers.

By the 1970s, however, ports and shipping companies around the world had made the shift to containerization. Now, products from apples to hay to computers to clothing could be loaded into a cargo container, transported to the port by truck or train and then lifted directly onto the ship.

The Boomerang Box project tracks a real cargo container to show how containers are used, where they go, and what they carry.

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Lesson Plan 2: How do we Trade?

Begin the lesson by reminding students of the work they did in lesson plan #1 by talking about why people trade.

Now ask them if they know how the things they trade – such as food or clothing or video games – get to their stores. How are those things moved?

Prompt students to volunteer answers. They may say that goods are moved by trucks or by planes or by ships. Note their answers on the board.

Now ask if anyone knows what a cargo container is.

Write the words “cargo container” on the board. Again, prompt students to volunteer answers. Can any of them describe what a container is and how it is used? Have any of them ever driven by the port and seen containers stacked up or getting loaded onto a ship?

Now, show photos or slides of cargo containers and explain:

A long time ago, people used to move things around just bundled up in ropes. Now, can you imagine how dirty and messy your tennis shoes would have gotten if they came all the way across the Pacific Ocean to you just wrapped up in a net? What a mess!

It was very difficult to move goods this way. Things got damaged by the weather. Or they got stolen. And it was very hard to get goods on and off ships to move them from country to country.

About 30 years ago, people who had products to trade started using something new to protect their goods while they were being moved around. They used something called a cargo container.

A cargo container is just a big box made out of metal. A cargo container can be twenty or forty feet long and is usually about eight or nine feet high. (*Compare this to the size of your classroom.*)

A cargo container keeps goods – such as tennis shoes or video games or apples – out of bad weather. Cargo containers can even be refrigerated to keep food cold while it is moving! Cargo containers are the right size to fit on trucks or trains or ships. Giant cranes lift them on and off ships.

You’ve probably seen cargo containers a lot and just haven’t realized it. Because every time you see a big truck drive by pulling a trailer, that trailer is probably really a cargo container. And who knows... maybe that cargo container just arrived in our country from somewhere across the ocean.

Ask students to reiterate the reasons containers are used: to keep goods safe and dry and to make it easier to move them on trucks, trains, or ships.

Now prepare students for the “container” exercise by showing them the paper lunch bag and the shoe box.

Which of these containers do you think would protect something that was moving from one place to another?

Write “bag” and “box” on the board and let students vote.

Then count the marbles with your students, and place half the marbles in each container. Close the containers securely with packing tape. (Seal just the openings; don’t use tape to reinforce the entire container!)

Pass the two containers around the room. Let students shake them, drop or rock them, even write on them to simulate the wear and tear of a long voyage across the ocean and between cities.

If you want, take the two containers outside during recess. Pass them through several other classrooms. Sprinkle a little water on them for rainfall. In short, make sure they get handled!

Then, collect the two containers and hold them up for the class to inspect. Ask students which container looks like it’s in better shape. Note their answers on the board.

Then, empty the containers and count the marbles. Is there any difference between the marbles that were in the bag and the marbles that were in the box? Did any of the marbles that were in the bag get lost or broken? What about the marbles in the box? Which would students trust their most precious possession to if it had to be moved?

Now, show a slide of the Boomerang Box or show the class the Boomerang Box poster.

Explain that the Boomerang Box is a cargo container that carries goods such as wood, paper, clothes, shoes, and machinery around the world. It was decorated a few years ago by students in the U.S. to make it easier to track. Explain that your class will be following the Boomerang Box during the school year to learn about the places it goes and the things it carries.

Then ask students to write you a report (2-3 sentences) about what they did and what they learned. You might suggest they title their report, “What is a container?”

You might want to help students with spelling and help them find ways to describe what they did. You also might want to let them color and build the Build-Your-Own Boomerang Box included with this lesson plan.

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Lesson Plan 3: Where do we Trade?

Appropriate Grade Levels: 2 – 3

Implementation Time: One class period (30 to 45 minutes)

Materials Needed:

- *Teaching notes included with “Where do we Trade?” lesson plan*
- *A globe or large world map*
- *Paper plus crayons, markers, pencils for students*

Learner Outcome(s): What will happen for learners as a result of this lesson?

Students will explore some of the places around the world where goods are traded. They will increase their understanding of geography by identifying their own town on a map and then expressing information about it in words and pictures.

Academic Skills: How will students learn?

- ***Communication:*** *Students will demonstrate listening and observation skills to gain understanding; and they will practice communicating ideas clearly and effectively.*
- ***Writing:*** *Students will demonstrate writing skills by clearly summarizing their understanding of what they have learned.*
- ***Social Studies/Geography:*** *Students will demonstrate their ability to use maps to gain information. They will then demonstrate their ability to communicate information about their own home to others.*

How will this lesson plan prepare students to be assessed? *This lesson plan will help students strengthen their listening and writing skills. The in-class writing exercise will permit students to demonstrate their ability to respond to an expository writing prompt.*

Closure/Assessment:

Review students’ written and/or oral work both for basic writing skills, as well as for their ability to explain what they have learned about the place they live.

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TEACHING NOTES for Lesson Plan 3: Where do we Trade?

The first lesson plan explored the reasons people trade. The second examined a particular logistical innovation – the use of containers – that helped make trading easier. This lesson plan focuses on where goods are traded and will help students gain practice using maps and globes.

In 1998, California businesses exported over \$100 billion worth of goods and services to other countries. With that total, California continued to hold the position of the nation's largest exporting state. Top goods exported by Californians, in order, included electronics and electrical equipment; industrial machinery and computers; transportation equipment; instruments and related products; and food and related products.

California's top trading partners in 1998 were Japan, Mexico, Canada, and China (Taiwan).

Since 1997, the Boomerang Box has traveled to a number of ports in Asia and the United States. With its new base in Oakland, California, the Boomerang Box will be able to travel to even more ports.

Using an atlas and/or the map on the Boomerang Box poster, locate and mark some or all of these Boomerang Box destinations for your students:

In the United States:

Seattle, Washington
Lewiston, Idaho
Kearny, New Jersey
Oakland, California

In Asia:

Yokohama
Kobe
Hong Kong
Manila
Kaohsiung
Shanghai

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Lesson Plan 3: Where do we Trade?

Begin the lesson by asking students to find the location of your town on a large map or globe or on a small map at their desks.

Prompt students to volunteer the name of their city, state, and country. Then, see how many of them can find their town on a map.

Now, using a map, the Boomerang Box poster, or a globe, show students some of the ports the Boomerang Box has visited. Ask them how they think the Boomerang Box got to some of these places.

For instance, the Boomerang Box traveled around the United States on truck and train. It traveled across the Pacific Ocean to ports in Asia by ship. Once it was in Asia, it traveled from the water's edge by truck to the place – usually a store – where its goods were needed.

Now, using the Boomerang Box poster or a slide of the Boomerang Box, show students the “postage stamp” artwork on the sides of the box.

Explain that this artwork was created by kids in Seattle, Washington. They created the art to say “hello” to people in other countries where the Boomerang Box would travel and to share things about their home, Seattle, with those people.

Ask students what they would want to tell about their hometown or school to share with people in other countries.

Prompt students to explain what they would want to share with other people. Start a list on the board.

Then, hand out drawing paper and ask each student to create a drawing that they would want to share with someone in another country. It can be of anything: a local sports team, weather, a building, their home, food they eat, scenery, anything they feel would show where they live to someone who lives far away.

Ask kindergarten students to explain their pictures to you. You might want to help each of them write a title on their artwork.

Ask first, second, and third grade students to write a several-sentence report summarizing their picture.

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Lesson Plan 4: Using the Boomerang Box Web Site

Appropriate Grade Levels: 2 – 3

Implementation Time: One class period (30 to 45 minutes)

Materials Needed:

- Teaching notes included with “Using the Boomerang Box Web Site” lesson plan
- Access to a computer lab and the Internet OR printouts from the Boomerang Box web site for students to work from
- Copies of the worksheets included in this lesson plan for students

Learner Outcome(s): What will happen for learners as a result of this lesson?

Students will explore the Internet, using a web site to gain information and answer questions they have been asked. Students will apply information they have learned in other lessons and will summarize what they have learned.

Academic Skills: How will students learn?

- Communication: Students will demonstrate listening and observation skills to gain understanding; and they will practice communicating ideas clearly and effectively.
- Writing: Students will demonstrate writing skills by clearly summarizing their understanding of what they have learned.
- Social Studies/Geography: Students will gain practice using maps and other geographic information to gather facts. They will then demonstrate their ability to summarize this information.

How will this lesson plan prepare students to be assessed? *This lesson plan will help students strengthen their listening and writing skills. The worksheets students will complete will permit them to demonstrate their ability to effectively seek, interpret and summarize information.*

Closure/Assessment:

Review students’ worksheets for their ability to incorporate the correct information.

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TEACHING NOTES for Lesson Plan 4:

Using the Boomerang Box Web Site

There are many ways you and your students can follow the Boomerang Box this year: When you log on to the Boomerang Box web site, you will see four logos or “hot buttons” at the top of the page: “Journey Log,” “Trade Topics,” “People Profiles” and “Index.”

Clicking on the “Index” button gives you an overview of all the material on the web site. The index is a great way to explore the Boomerang Box archives, which contain information from previous years’ travels, or to find a specific piece of information about the project.

Clicking on the “Journey Log” button will take you to an update page with the Boomerang Box’s location and contents. The Journey Log also contains a world map and a local map so your students can see exactly where the Boomerang Box is and where it has come from.

By following the Boomerang Box on a map, young students can learn the basic concepts of geography and transportation. Students can research the port or city the Boomerang Box is visiting and write a report about its history, culture, or products. Or they can research the products the Boomerang Box carries.

Clicking on the “Trade Topics” button will take you to a classroom study exercise designed around either the product the Boomerang Box is currently carrying or a related issue in international trade. Want to learn how ships float? Why containers are used? Why hay is shipped to Asia? Or how new airplanes are delivered to their customers? The trade topics answer these questions and many more.

The trade topics are designed for students in grades 4 and 5. Each includes study questions and a written exercise based on academic standards. Younger students can benefit from many of them as well – particularly if the teacher reads the trade topic aloud.

Clicking on the “People Profiles” button will take you to a classroom exercise based on someone who works in international trade, usually someone connected to the Boomerang Box’s current shipment. The people profiles are also designed for slightly older students, but can also be read aloud by the teacher to younger students.

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Lesson Plan 4: Using the Boomerang Box Web Site

Take students to a computer lab where they will have access to the Internet OR provide them with printouts from the Boomerang Box web site. Have students work in small teams of three to four.

Help students log on to the web site (www.apl.com/boomerangbox) OR explain the printouts to them.

Prompt students to tell you what kind of information they would get by clicking on each of the buttons at the top of the home page. What kind of information does the web site give them about the information they will find?

Next, help students enter the “Journey Log” page (or provide them with a printout).

What information did the web site give them about how to find the “Journey Log” page?

Now, have students work in groups on the web or with printouts to complete the attached worksheet. Help them as they work to find the correct information and record it appropriately. Help them find the maps that show where the Boomerang Box is.

Please note that there is no answer key for this assignment as the answers will change depending on when you do the assignment. (The Journey Log is updated each time the Boomerang Box moves.)

The Boomerang Box Journey Log

Name: _____ Date: _____

Where is the Boomerang Box now?

What is the Boomerang Box carrying?

Who is the Boomerang Box carrying this product for?

List at least three other places the Boomerang Box has visited:
