

Government & Economics: The Ties that Bind

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Appropriate for grades 11-12.

OVERVIEW: During their senior year our students take back to back courses in government and economics. In order to show them that these concepts are interrelated and constantly changing we use the book *The Worldly Philosophers* by Robert Heilbroner as a supplementary source over the course of two semesters.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this activity is to expand the understanding of students in the areas of both economics and government. It is to also show the relationship between these two subjects and how, over the course of time, our views regarding these two subjects has changed. Its third purpose is to show the relationship of these ideas to current political and economic issues.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

1. Explain and present to their classmates the concepts explained by economists since the time of Adam Smith, put these concepts into historical perspective and, where applicable, relate these ideas to current issues.
2. Understand that both political and economic systems are ever changing and that a change in either one of these systems may cause a change in the other as well.
3. Sort out those economists that have contributed lasting achievements in their field and those that may have been of only passing importance or a novelty of their times.

ACTIVITIES: Over the course of the year, once each semester, the students are divided into five groups and asked to present a chapter from *The Worldly Philosophers*. Each of the groups is given some general requirements expected for all of the chapters and some specific requirements for the particular economist(s) talked about in their assigned chapter.

At the assigned time each group presents their project to the class. The following requirements must be included in each of these reports:

1. The report must be oral.
2. There must be some type of visual aide to accompany the presentation.
3. The presentation must have originality and creativity. Just reading a report is not acceptable.

After the report has been presented the class has the opportunity to ask questions of the presenters concerning any material that was not clearly explained.

RESOURCES/MATERIALS NEEDED: The Worldly Philosopher by Robert Heilbroner.

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER:

Evaluation: At the end of each of the presentations all of the students are given a written test over the material. Those students who are responsible for the presentation are also given a grade for the presentation.

General Comments: Over the course of the year as the ideas of the various economists are studied, students are (through directed questions) led to an understanding of how the ideas about both government and economics have changed and how interrelated these two concepts are. This is a difficult concept for some students to understand but one that is necessary if students are to truly understand the basis for our government and economic systems and why we, as a nation are constantly re-evaluating and refining them.