

# Bartering for a Balanced Lunch

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## Standards of Learning

Social Studies 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 3.8, 3.9  
 English 1.1, 2.1, 3.1

## Objective

Students will:

- Barter to exchange goods and resources
- Make economic choices due to scarcity
- Show interdependency in obtaining goods

## Materials

The goal of the activity is for each student to ultimately obtain one of each of the products listed below in order to have a balanced lunch. Prior to the start of the activity gather enough of each of the following items so that you have one per student (1 milk/student, 1 bread/student, etc.)

You may choose to use the actual items or pictures of the items.

- Milk
- Bread
- Turkey
- Cheese
- Apples
- Cookies

## Background Knowledge

Once you have gathered all materials, sort them in the following way:

1. Split the supply of each of the items into six equal groups.

4 milk	4 milk	4 milk	4 milk	4 milk	4 milk
4 bread	4 bread	4 bread	4 bread	4 bread	4 bread
4 turkey	4 turkey	4 turkey	4 turkey	4 turkey	4 turkey
4 cheese	4 cheese	4 cheese	4 cheese	4 cheese	4 cheese
4 apples	4 apples	4 apples	4 apples	4 apples	4 apples
4 cookies	4 cookies	4 cookies	4 cookies	4 cookies	4 cookies

2. Shift the amounts of each product so that each group contains not enough of one item and more than enough of another item.

<b>2 milk</b>	<b>6 milk</b>	4 milk	4 milk	4 milk	4 milk
<b>7 bread</b>	4 bread	4 bread	4 bread	4 bread	<b>1 bread</b>
4 turkey	4 turkey	4 turkey	<b>3 turkey</b>	<b>5 turkey</b>	4 turkey
4 cheese	<b>3 cheese</b>	<b>5 cheese</b>	4 cheese	4 cheese	4 cheese
4 apples	4 apples	4 apples	4 apples	<b>1 apples</b>	<b>7 apples</b>
4 cookies	4 cookies	<b>2 cookies</b>	<b>6 cookies</b>	4 cookies	4 cookies



## **Procedure**

1. Divide the class into 6 equal groups.
2. Distribute the products to the groups. Each group member will get the entire supply of one product. The item they get will represent the product they specialize in.
3. Instruct the students that each person in the group will represent a producer specializing in the production of an item needed to help build a balanced lunch. A balanced lunch includes foods from all of the major food groups. Discuss the five major food groups and what the students will need to build a balanced lunch.
4. Ask the students the following questions:
  - Can you build a balanced lunch with just the product you specialize in producing?
  - How can you get the other goods needed to build a balanced lunch?
5. Discuss with students the ways people get the things they need and want. Compare the process of getting needs and wants today with the process used in the past. Review the concept of specialization and how we depend on the specialties of others to get everything we need or want.
6. Instruct the children that they will need to barter with other members of their group for the items they need to complete a balanced lunch. Allow time for trade.
7. After bartering, ask the students the following questions:
  - Was everyone in your group able to build a balanced lunch?
  - What happened that prevented some people from getting the goods they needed for a balanced lunch? (there was not enough of some items within the group)
  - What term describes a situation where there are limited resources? (scarcity)
8. Discuss events that might lead to the scarcity of a good or service (natural disasters, limited human resources, inadequate growing conditions—climate, topography, soil, etc.—demand being higher than the supply, etc.).
9. Discuss with students how one producer usually can't produce enough of a good to accommodate everyone. Therefore, we rely on producers in other places to help with the production of goods. Discuss how this leads to interdependence and review the meaning of this term.
10. Allow those students who were unable to build a balanced lunch barter with students from other groups.
11. Once everyone has built a balanced lunch, discuss other examples of interdependence between communities, states, countries, continents.

Activity adapted from:  
Lessons In Economics: An Interactive Program for Economics Education  
Ohio Farm Bureau Federation

