

Activity #5

Money: What it Costs to Live Here, and How We Make our Living (Focus Topic: Economy)

TEACHERS' CORNER

Activity #5 continues the investigation of living costs, and economic development, and job research. It will require students to investigate further into the community to find answers to their questions. Teachers will need to facilitate this interaction, possibly helping students find people who have jobs the students are interested in learning about. This activity is ideal in integrating with a school Job Fair or Career Day.

Instructional Goals:

- Students will use research skills to gather information about living costs.
- Students will use mathematical skills to collect and average cost data.
- Students will use estimation skills to estimate costs in their sister community.
- Students will use inductive logic to investigate the reasons for cost differences.
- Students will use interviewing skills to learn about jobs in their community.
- Students will develop career goals for themselves, including identifying the educational requirements for these careers.
- Students will understand the difference between a cash and “mixed” economy.

Alaska Content Standards addressed in Activity #5:

Mathematics

- A.** A student should understand mathematical facts, concepts, principles, and theories.
3) Perform basic arithmetic functions, make reasoned estimates, and select and use appropriate methods or tools for computation or estimation
6) Collect, organize, analyze, interpret, represent, and formulate questions about data and make reasonable and useful predictions
- D.** A student should be able to use logic and reason to solve mathematical problems
5) Use inductive reasoning to recognize patterns and form mathematical propositions

Geography

- B.** A student should be able to utilize, analyze, and explain information about the human and physical features of places and regions.
3) Relate how people create similarities and differences among places
- E.** A student should understand and be able to evaluate how humans and physical environments interact.

- 1) Understand how resources have been developed and used

Government and Citizenship

- F.** A student should understand the economics of the United States and the state and their relationships to the global economy
2) Be aware that economic systems determine how resources are used to produce and distribute goods and services
3) Compare alternative economic systems

4) Understand the role of price in resource allocation

Technology

A. A student should be able to operate technology-based tools.

2) Use technological tools for learning, communications, and productivity

Employability

B. A student should be able to identify career interests and plan for career options.

2) Identify possible career options, considering both employment and self employment, and understand how changes in the workplace affect career choice

4) Identify education and/or training needed for career options and advancement, and develop a career plan

Library/Information Literacy

A. A student should understand and use research processes necessary to locate, evaluate and communicate information and ideas

1) State a problem, question or information needed

D. A student should be aware of the freedom to seek information and possess the confidence to pursue information needs beyond immediately available sources

Materials Needed for Activity #5:

- Flip charts or butcher paper and markers
- Copies of the Cost Comparison Chart for all students
- Copies of the Job Charts for all students

Prerequisite Student Skills:

- Basic mathematical skills expected of students at this grade level
- Basic language arts skills necessary to ask questions politely
- Knowledge of and access to community members in a variety of career fields
- Willingness to take risks in guessing and estimating, based on limited prior knowledge

Activities for Research Ambassadors:

- The RA in charge of this topic will plan ways of presenting information about jobs available in the home community to the students in the Sister School. This might include photos of teens and adults at work doing the some of the jobs researched by classmates.
- The RA in charge of this topic will take the average class data from the Cost Comparison chart to the Sister School Community research actual costs there, and report back on the information gathered.

Teachers are to email the completed job information lists to your Sister School and share the Sister School lists with the home class. The Cost Comparison Sheet need not be sent, as it will be completed by the Research Ambassador during the trip.

PLEASE FAX YOUR COMPLETED LESSON ASSESSMENT TO YOUR SISTER SCHOOL COORDINATOR. SEE FOLLOWING PAGE.

Student Activity #5

Money: What it Costs to Live Here, and How We Make our Living (Focus Topic: Economy)

The economics of urban and rural Alaskan communities may differ greatly, depending on many things: the availability and type of work available, differing salaries, differing employers (private or government), investment possibilities, natural resources, cost of living, transportation costs, distance from business centers, health care, etc.

Activity 4 investigated the cost of food. Lodging and transportation are two major expenses every family faces. These types of expenses differ greatly even within the same community and factors in the costs of living may include: the size of homes, insulation, location, and type of vehicles, as well as fuel consumption. There are often even greater differences between these costs in different communities, based on the price of utilities, building materials and surplus of fuel available in the community, as well as their location in relation to major hubs or cities.

You will need the help of your family and other community members to complete this activity. It will help to better understand what the “cost of living” is in your own home, and what you will need to earn when you grow up and start a family of your own.

Step One: Find out what it costs your family for utilities per month. You may buy fuel oil one time a year. If so, take that cost and divide it by twelve to decide the average monthly cost. If you pay monthly gas bills, they will be higher in winter than in summer. In this case, add up the year’s bills and divide by twelve to get the average monthly cost. You may need to call the utility company and give them your address in order to get some help finding this information. Enter the monthly average for each item in the first column of the Cost Comparison Chart. If an item is not available in your community, write “not available” or N/A.

Step Two: Once you have collected the costs of utilities and transportation for your own family, enter in your guess or estimate of what you think these items will cost in your Sister School community under the column, “Sister Community Estimate.”

Step Three: Average the responses from everyone in the class, making a group cost and estimate form. Your RA will take this to your Sister School and look at their form, then fill in the Sister School Actual. Upon their return, they will report back on the cost of living in your Sister School community and, lead the class discussion comparing how costs for food, utilities and transportation compare between urban and rural Alaska and why.

Step Four: As a class, brainstorm some of the jobs available to teens in your community. They may be jobs that students in your class have now or during the summer. Put these on a piece of chart paper. Then brainstorm some of the most common adult jobs in your community and put them on another piece of chart paper. Be sure to include the jobs your family members have, and jobs you are interested in having when you are an adult. Divide the class in two groups, with five students researching teen jobs and the rest researching adult jobs. You may divide by having students choose which they wish to do, or by chance drawing pieces of paper from a hat.

Step Five: Each student selects one job from the chart paper of their category, teen or adult jobs. Their role is to research that job by talking to someone who works in that profession or an employee who hires people who may do a similar job in their category. The student doing the research will need to report back and mark on the chart two pieces of information.

- How much a person will make per month doing that job when they first start the job.
- What training or education is needed in order to get the job, i.e. does it require a high school degree, vocational training, a college degree or specialized post-secondary educational training.

Use the enclosed charts to collect this information.

Step Six: Create a job menu, similar to the food menu you created in the last activity, listing the most common jobs teens in your community do. Place all of the teen jobs on one side of the chart and the most common jobs adults have in another column. List the training or education required after the job, followed by the starting monthly wage the job provides. Type up the results and send it to your Sister School.

Step Seven: As a class, compare the types of jobs available in your community with the jobs available in your Sister School community, and what they pay. Compare the jobs in your community with the cost of living in your community. Discuss the following questions together as a class:

1. Where is it more expensive to live and why? What have you learned about the relative cost of living in the two communities?
2. Compare the cost of living with the variety of job opportunities and salaries available in the two communities.
3. What is your dream job? Is it available in your community?
4. What training and/or education will you will need to have in order to get your dream job?
5. How much do you think you'll have to earn in order to pay for not only the basic costs of food, lodging and transportation, but also have money for clothes, entertainment and recreation?
6. Are you already working and saving money for education and other future needs?
7. Would you describe your community's economy as being a cash or "mixed" economy?

Note: The forms you need to compare the cost of living and to research teen and adult jobs are on the following pages.

Cost Comparison Sheet: Household Utilities & Fuel Consumption Costs

Household Utilities & Fuel Consumption Costs:	Your Home & Community	Sister Community- Estimate	Sister Community Actual <small>(to be completed by Research Ambassador)</small>
Monthly home electric bill			
Monthly home heating bill			
Monthly home water/sewer bill			
Monthly home phone bill			
Monthly rent or mortgage			
Cost per gallon for gasoline			
Cost per gallon for diesel fuel			
Cost per gallon for propane			

Your Home: (All Students)

What is the square footage of your home (approximate)? _____

How many people live in your house? _____

Where does your water come from? (lake, river,
reservoir?) _____

Your Host Family's Home: (Research Ambassadors ONLY)

Square footage of your host family's home (approximate) _____

How many people live in your host family's home? _____

Where does your host family's water come from? (lake, river,
reservoir?) _____

JOBS AVAILABLE FOR YOUTH IN MY COMMUNITY

	Name of Job	Place of Employment	Hourly Wage	Hours worked per week	Training or Education Required
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Instructions for students who selected or drew “teen jobs”

Interview teens from your community who are in high school and currently have a job or who worked last summer doing the job you selected. Enter the name of the job, the place of employment, hourly wages, and number of hours worked per week in *JOBS AVAILABLE FOR YOUTH IN MY COMMUNITY*. You can calculate later what the monthly wage would be for this job if the student worked full-time. If there are no teens in your community who currently have jobs or had summer jobs, enter the word NONE in this chart, in which case you will select only adult jobs to research.

JOBS AVAILABLE FOR ADULTS IN MY COMMUNITY

	Name of Job	Place of Employment	Hourly Wage	Hours worked per week	Training or Education Required
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					

Instructions for students who selected or drew “adult jobs”

Interview employers who hire people for the job you selected for adults in your community. Enter the name of the job, the place they work, hourly wages, and number of hours worked per week in *the provided worksheet*. If the salary is a monthly or yearly job, you can calculate what the hourly wage would be so it is easier to compare with other jobs being researched. If most jobs you research are monthly, you can change the chart to monthly wage and calculate for the teen jobs what the monthly wage would be if the teen worked full-time. The chart is here to help you, not to confine the way you do your research. If the work is subsistence work, it definitely contributes to feeding the family as noted in the prior activity, but it may be more difficult to attach a salary for the costs associated with subsistence activities. In this particular activity we are only focusing on the jobs that provide cash income. The comparisons you find from this activity will be important to include in the final presentation you provide to your classmates after your Sister School exchange site visit!