

Part B: Writing Prompts

- 1. Provide an overview of the project. Explain how economics was integrated with other curriculum areas.**

Career Explorations grew into a project involving four main components.

1. The students learned about the excellent resources available through the Bureau of Labor Statistics pertaining to career research as they studied a particular career and shared their findings with the class.
2. The students learned how salary negotiations for private school teachers should include an analysis based on the economic perspective. Since the students have been in a classroom situation for years, they are comfortable discussing the salary issues and making salary decisions for this type of career.
3. The students looked at the differences in annual incomes of real people from across the United States. The students analyzed the economic and social factors that affected the annual incomes.
4. The students were required to think analytically and use their communication skills, presentation skills, and cooperative learning skills.

The economics was integrated with psychology by incorporating motivation theories and studying how the theories have evolved over time. We linked the theories of motivation with the behavior of individuals and the behavior of organizational groups. The economics was integrated with mathematics since the students had to determine how much salary should be offered to four teachers while working within a specified budget amount. The students also calculated average salaries.

Part B: Writing Prompts (continued)

2. Describe what you wanted to accomplish.

I attended a summer workshop sponsored by Economics Arkansas in June of 2008 which focused on “Financial Literacy: Life-Changing Education”. This workshop was designed to apply the economic way of thinking to financial topics, particularly personal savings and investing. I realized that students first have to get to the point of having money to save and invest, and realized that many of my students (juniors and seniors) have given little thought as to what careers they might be interested in pursuing. I have always mentioned various types of careers associated with our economic units, but I decided that my students would benefit from activities that were more focused on career opportunities.

One of my primary goals for this project was to help students realize that four of the guiding principles in economics have an immediate impact on their current lives and future career potential. Six core economic principles were identified in the Handy Dandy Guide (Shug and Wentworth, NCEE, 2000), and I particularly wanted the students to recognize the importance of these four principles:

1. People choose.
2. All choices involve costs.
3. People respond to incentives in predictable ways.
4. The consequences of choices lie in the future.

3. Describe your preparation.

The Economics Arkansas summer workshop discussed in the previous section provided the inspiration for the development of this project. The Stock Market Game Extravaganza (sponsored by Economics Arkansas) inspired me to incorporate career information pertaining to the financial and banking service sectors.

The Occupational Outlook Handbook published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics was used to research various career options. This research was used to develop the one of the group activities shared in the Supplemental Materials section of this project report. I read chapters on motivation theories from three college textbooks. This information was used to develop a teaching unit on motivation theories and the impact of motivation in the workplace. This teaching unit was followed by the activity on “Teacher Salaries” described in detail in the Sample Lesson Plan section.

In an effort to include current events, I also developed an activity around the annual feature article “What People Earn” from Parade Magazine. I have saved the Parade Magazine issues for several years, and the students find it interesting to look back at the previous issues to see what had been reported.

Part B: Writing Prompts (continued)

4. Describe what your students learned and how you measured that learning.

The students explored several career opportunities and learned about the nature of the work, qualifications required, earnings potential, and job outlook for each career. The students learned how to identify a problem, collect information, list alternatives, analyze incentives, and compare benefits with costs when making a decision. The students learned how education plays a role in the types of careers that may be pursued. The activities for this project were also designed to hone the communication skills, presentation skills, and cooperative learning skills of the students.

The primary tools used to measure learning were class discussions, group discussions, and group presentations. The students were very interested in hearing the views of their peers.