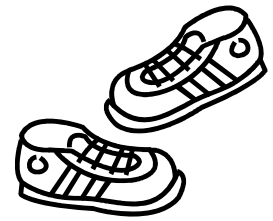


## Stepping Into Economics: A Perfect Fit



### OVERVIEW

In an average lifetime, our feet carry us over 65,000 miles, more than two and a half times around the world. Composed of 26 bones, 107 ligaments, and 18 muscles, the foot is a marvel. Therefore, the shoes that “fit” these wonderful feet must also be special. Shoes have a basic function of protecting feet but also indicate social and economic status, fashion statements, suitability for special jobs, and the personality of the owner.

What better way to teach economics than to “step into” an essential part of students’ wardrobes, dress code at school, and extracurricular activities? Lessons for *Stepping into Economics: A Perfect Fit* were developed to align with Arkansas standards in all core content subjects. A variety of activities were incorporated to address the learning styles of all students. Teaching was supplemented with children’s literature, large and small group activities, a field trip, and home connections. An assessment for each concept taught was given and placed in the students’ shoe journal. A giant shoe shaped bulletin board display kept the school informed about our study by posting pictures, samples of work, etc. for everyone to view.

The concepts of economic wants, scarcity, producer, goods, services, consumer, market, price, productive resources, human resources, natural resources, capital goods, entrepreneur, specialists, interdependence, choice, decision making, opportunity cost, imports, exports, and technology and technological change were the focus of the lessons in the project.

The project began as students were asked to list all the shoes they could think of, explain why there are so many types of shoes, and where shoes are produced. “If the Shoe Fits” activity, had students scurrying around to classmates to see if shoe phrases fit them.

The project began by addressing the universal question of economic wants. Diving into economics “feet” first inspired the students to create scarcity stories to share with the class. The producer rotation stations incorporated literature selections, a science related lesson on recycling, and an opportunity to experience being a producer of a good and service. A newspaper scavenger hunt allowed students to search for public goods and services and learn about current events at the same time. Shopping at Buck’s Store allowed students to experience a market and put their math thinking skills to work. “Stepping Stones on a Shoestring Budget” was a natural way to teach productive resources, provide students an art lesson on design layout, and help students learn about the states of matter. A search of closets for imported shoes provided a unique graphing activity. Students studied about the history of shoes while creating a timeline with economic “tie ins”.

Next on the agenda was “The Amazing Shoe Race”. Students were advised to wear comfortable shoes as they saw an economic shoe connection all around town. Their field trip assignment assured listening skills and observation techniques as they had economic clues to solve on each stop of the race. Decision-making, choices, and opportunity cost were explored as students made a very important decision-“What shoes will I wear for the entire weekend?” The students now have the valuable tools to identify the problem, evaluate the criteria, and reach wise decisions.

An economic portfolio shaped like a shoe was developed for each student. Each concept was assessed and placed in his/her shoe. We agree with Dorothy that “There’s No Place Like Home”, so we sent a home connection explaining the economic concepts we studied and provided the family with a great opportunity to apply those concepts through fun activities. The average score on the pretest was 45% with an amazing 83% average on the posttest. Students put their best feet forward as they began this economic journey, one step at a time, and they crossed the finish line “winners”.