wetheeconomy
20 SHORT FILMS YOU CAN’T AFFORD TO MISS
CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS
This lesson fits in perfectly with units that address curriculum standards in economics, thinking and reasoning, math, business, social studies, civics, government, language arts, and finance.

SAMPLE STANDARDS ALIGNMENTS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.5 Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3 Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.7.SP.A.1 Understand that statistics can be used to gain information about a population by examining a sample of the population; generalizations about a population from a sample are valid only if the sample is representative of that population. Understand that random sampling tends to produce representative samples and support valid inferences.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSS.MD.B.5 Weigh the possible outcomes of a decision by assigning probabilities to payoff values and finding expected values.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSS.MD.B.5.B Evaluate and compare strategies on the basis of expected values.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSF.IF.C.8.B Use the properties of exponents to interpret expressions for exponential functions. For example, identify percent rate of change in functions and classify them as representing exponential growth or decay.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSF.IF.C.9 Compare properties of two functions each represented in a different way (algebraically, graphically, numerically in tables, or by verbal descriptions).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.B Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
SAMPLE STANDARDS ALIGNMENTS CONTINUED

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D  Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8  Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1  Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.A  Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.9-10.8  Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author’s claim or a recommendation for solving a scientific or technical problem.
LESSON PREPARATION

- Prepare a monitor with Internet access to screen “Lemonade War” at www.wetheeconomy.com/films (TRT 7:55)

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

Regulation, regulatory capture, Sherman Anti Trust Act, free market, metaphor, personification

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn what government regulation is, and what role it plays in the economy.
- Students will explore the importance, benefits, and shortcomings of governmental regulation.
- Students will work in groups to discuss, negotiate, and establish positions on the role that government and private industry should have in a free market economy.
- Students will analyze the various pros and cons of governmental regulation.
- Students will develop their own opinions on the role that the government should play in the free market.
- Students will analyze the use of literary devices such as personification and metaphor in film and whether or not they are effective tools to communicate an idea.

REQUIREMENTS

MATERIALS

- Monitor/projector, and computer with Internet access
- Blackboard, whiteboard, or chart paper

TIME:

- 1 class period

TECHNIQUES AND SKILLS

Vocabulary building, large group discussion, problem solving, critical and analytical thinking, cinematic analysis, weighing pros and cons, listening skills, creating solutions, considering abstract consequences, expository writing and research
PROCEDURES

1. Divide the class into 2 groups. Tell the class that for the purposes of the following activity, Group #1 is a small business: a mom and pop café. Group #2 is a franchise of a large national chain restaurant. Tell the class that the small café has $10,000 to spend on overhead and expenses each month. The national chain has $100,000.

2. Give the groups a few minutes to work independently to come up with the following details about their restaurants. Encourage them to have fun and be as creative as they wish.
   - Name of your restaurant
   - Tagline
   - 3 items on the menu with prices
   - Any other details about the restaurant or its food (optional)

3. While students are creating their brands and identities, write the following on the chalkboard, whiteboard, or on chart paper in the front of the room:

   **RESTAURANT BUDGET**
   Food and Supplies – 30%
   Salaries and Staff – 30%
   Advertising – 10%
   Rent – 10%
   Miscellaneous – 10%
   Profit – 10% (plus any surplus left over from the other categories)

4. Instruct students to do the math and figure out the dollar amounts they have allotted for each budget line item at their restaurants. Remind them that the independent café has $10,000 to spend, and the franchise has $100,000 to spend, so the dollar amounts that correlate to each percentage will be different. Allow 10 minutes.

5. Now remove 1/3 of Group #1 and 1/3 of Group #2 in order to create a 3rd group. Tell this 3rd group that they are going to be customers. They have a collective total of $200,000 to spend on eating out this month.

6. Ask the students how they know that the restaurants they eat in are clean. Ask, “How do you know that the milk you get in your latte at Starbucks is fresh? Who checks to make sure businesses are run fairly and well and don’t pose a health threat to their customers or an unfair advantage over their competitors?”

7. Tell the class that there is something called GOVERNMENT REGULATION. Ask the class what they think this means. Prompt them with examples of regulations they might be familiar with, such as the letter grades given by some local health departments to restaurants, or regulated fire exits, or accessibility for people with disabilities.

8. Ask the class if they think government regulation is a good thing or a bad thing. Allow 2-3 minutes for an informal discussion.
9. Explain that, just like with any rule or law, there can be positives and negatives.

10. Tell the class that in the next activity, you will be playing the role of government regulator, and the restaurants will be competing for customers. They will have 4 opportunities to present to the customers to try to win dollars, one for each week of one month. After each presentation, the customers will decide how much money they want to spend at each establishment for the week. At any given time, a “Regulation Wild Card” will be called, and may affect the outcome for all 3 groups.

11. Tell the class they are starting on the first of the month. Allow 3 minutes for the first group to present their restaurant to the customers for Week 1. They should try to sell their restaurant to the customers, making it sound as appealing as possible. They should consider variables like cost, accessibility, value, reputation, and dependability, as well as quality. Then, allow 3 minutes for the second group to do the same.

12. After both restaurants have presented, the customer group should decide how much money they’d like to spend in the first week on eating out, and how much of that money should go to each restaurant.

13. After the customers have spoken, the restaurants present again. Perhaps they cut prices, offer a special, buy an ad, to attract more customers. This repeats four times.

14. During the presentations at multiple points, call out “Regulation Wild Card!” Then, choose some or all of the following scenarios to read aloud, or create new ones based on individual classroom dynamics:

   • Government regulator finds a leaky refrigerator in Group 1’s restaurant. Fine $500 and give the restaurant a “B” rating.
   • Government regulator fines Group 2 for opening a second location right next to Group 1’s restaurant, citing anti-competitive practices.
   • Group 1’s Food and Supplies line item is higher because they don’t buy enough to get a quantity discount – take $300 off Group 1’s Food and Supplies line item.
   • Group 2’s salaries go up because they have franchise employment benefits they have to provide – add $1,000 to the Salaries and Staff line item.
   • Group 1 is forced to adhere to a new state standard, put into place by Big Business lobbyists – costs $200.
   • Group 1 gets a “small business tax incentive” – add $1000 to their budget.
   • Group 2 sues Group 1 for copyright infringement – stealing an idea for their menu – fine $500.
   • As part of a local business bureau, Group 1 teams up with local farmers to get a better price on organic produce – add $200 to their budget.
PROCEDURES CONTINUED

15. After the 4 rounds have been implemented, ask the students what they noticed. What are some of the pluses of being a franchise of a big chain? What are the minuses? What are the benefits of being a small local business? What role did the government regulator play in the free market economy they had created? What role did the customer play?

16. Direct the students’ attention to the monitor or screen. Tell them that they will be watching a short film that dramatizes the impact that government regulation can have on businesses – both big and small. Play the film “Lemonade War” (TRT 7:55).

17. Conduct a whole-group discussion about the film and its relationship to the previous activity. Use some or all of the following questions as a guide:

- Why does Jerry want Addie to close down her lemonade stand at the beginning of the video?
- How does regulation protect Addie from having to close up shop?
- How does Addie use regulation to her benefit at the start? Why does she call the government regulator?
- What do you notice about the regulator when she first arrives? Why is she so friendly with Jerry? What is this meant to represent in terms of the relationship between government and big business?
- What impact might a “D” rating have on a business?
- Why would Jerry suggest a government-imposed first aid kit for every lemonade stand?
- What is regulatory capture and why is it illegal?
- Why does Jerry lower his prices to $.10? What is he trying to accomplish?
- What is the Sherman Anti Trust Act? What does it do?
- In the film, how does Jerry, as big business, use copyright regulation to try to put Addie out of business?
- What does the mysterious customer represent? How would you describe this character?
- In the credits, that character is listed as “Neighborhood Hero.” Why do you think the filmmakers gave him that name?
- If the Neighborhood Hero character was meant to be a personification of an idea or theory, what might it be? Explain.
- Explain the metaphor his character uses to describe the state of the American Dream – comparing it to the plants and animals in a jungle. Is this an accurate representation? How does he support it with examples?
- What does Addie mean when she says “that’s good regulation” at the end?
- How does regulation work in this film? How should it work in a perfect world?
- How is the story depicted in the film similar to what you discovered in your role-play earlier? How is it different?
- Who do you think benefits more from government regulation – big business or small?
- How might regulation be better implemented to protect all members of society?
- Why is government regulation important?

18. For homework, students should write two paragraphs: one in favor of government regulation, and one against it. Students should conduct research to add to their own findings from today’s class, and should cite specific examples, case studies, laws, etc. in their writing. Note: Students may watch the film again at home by going to www.wetheeconomy/films/, and can incorporate data or information from other sources including films, books, articles, etc.