

# LESSON PLAN

*Where Culture, History & Education are woven together.*

**GRADES 1-12**

**DURATION: 1-2 hours**

**PROJECT: Talkin' Trading Tokens**

J. L. Hubbell and other traders used tin money and trading to facilitate the transition of the formerly hostile Navajo culture to a peaceful and productive coexistence with other people while helping develop understanding of a value system accepted in the industrialized world economy.



**GOALS:**

- ◆ To promote the use of Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site as a partner in teaching state standards relating to social studies.
- ◆ Provide examples of how to present classroom instruction before visiting Hubbell Trading Post in order to increase student understanding of trading.
- ◆ Teachers will encourage students to develop a marketable product to bring to the Trading Post to trade with the trader.
- ◆ Transform a tangible historical object into an understanding of a concept that applies to current educational standards.

**OBJECTIVES:**

Participants will role play the problem of wanting things and needing things and not having a viable method to attain these items.

Participants will be able to demonstrate a bartering economy where goods and services are traded for something of value to the trader.

Participants will “sell” goods and/or services for a trading token that will demonstrate a defined value.

Participants will be able to develop a system for the classroom that will include the use of tokens to demonstrate economy and values.

**STANDARDS:**

**Social studies skills:** The student will use problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, to identify a situation



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that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences, and take action to implement a decision.

**Culture.** The student understands how families meet basic human needs. The student is expected to describe similarities and differences in ways families meet basic human needs.

**Economics.** The student understands the value of work and how specialized jobs contribute to the production of goods and services.

**Government.** The student understands the purpose of rules and laws. The student is expected to: (A) explain the need for rules and laws in the community; and (B) give examples of rules or laws that establish order, provide security, and manage conflict.

**Geography.** The student understands various physical and human characteristics of the environment. The student is expected to identify and describe the human characteristics of places such as ways of earning a living.

**Economics.** The student understands the concepts of goods and services. The student is expected to: (A) identify examples of goods and services in the home, school, and community; (B) identify ways people exchange goods and services; and (C) identify the role of markets in the exchange of goods and services.

**Economics.** The student understands the condition of not being able to have all the goods and services one wants. The student is expected to: (A) identify examples of people wanting more than they can have; (B) explain why wanting more than they can have requires that people make choices; and (C) identify examples of choices families make when buying goods and services.

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Pass out a trading token and ask students to please handle this token carefully and remember to take turns.

Look at the token today as a symbol of a developing economy and a developing nation. Called "Seco" or "Pesh-tai" (dry money), aluminum, tin or brass coins appeared on the frontier in the late 1800s because US currency was scarce or nonexistent. 40 to 50 trading posts printed up tokens. Tokens made for J.L. Hubbell and C.N. Cotton differed from most in that they had a serial number. Hubbell also had "bit" pieces (nickels and dimes), that closely resembled real money. Workers were paid with these tokens and they were used for change in trading post transactions.

This token would have been honored at Hubbell Trading Posts and only a few other locations, such as Mr. Day's post in St. Michael's. This encouraged the people to return to the same trader. In some instances this placed the



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Indian at a disadvantage, such as, if the trader was dishonest, charged too much, or carried a poor line of goods. However, there was the advantage that a trader was more likely to be more liberal in giving change with seco than he would have been with silver. The traders did not use paper money or checks in trading with the Navajo, who regarded those as having doubtful value.

Although they were patterned after tokens used by fort sutlers, the tokens were never favored by the government. It was against the law to print any kind of money. Use of trader tokens was officially abolished in the early 1930s when the Indian Office and the United Traders Association agreed to prohibit its use on the reservation. By that time it was not needed because US currency was available.

The use of trader tokens served as a transitional tool helping the Navajo to learn about the value of money and wages.

## **ACTIVITIES:**

1. Label: A hostile people

Role play with one person just taking things from others, saying, "I think I need this. I could use this too. Oh, I want that. Thank you."

Question? How does that feel? There is no system to help me get what I want or need, so I just take it.

2. Straight barter

Use trading cards (Whatcha Trading Cards). Pass out to students and have them trade for things they need. What constitutes a good trade? Don't give any cards to some students. What if you have nothing to trade? Could you work for your supper, etc.?

3. List problems in living without some form of currency.

4. Introduce idea of token system using buttons of different colors or sizes. Students could be paid for work or could trade art supplies and such. Suggest that students could design a system for your classroom.

5. Challenge the class or individual students to create a product that could be traded at Hubbell Trading Post for a token that would be good for purchasing something the class might want.

6. How is this like shopping in a store with money?

## **CONCLUSION:**

Hubbell Trading Post helped develop an economy system. The Navajo had to develop goods and services that would provide the things they wanted and needed. The use of trader tokens helped the Navajo learn how the economic system worked and helped them to develop trust in the trader and in

# Hubbell Trading Post

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE Ganado, AZ



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US currency. These principles of trust and integrity are still used today.

Demand, quality and good workmanship increase the value of your product or service in any marketplace.

## **EVALUATION:**

Write about trading tokens.

Design your own monetary system.

## **RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Trading token from Hubbell Trading Post NHS

Trading Cards from Whatcha Gonna Trade?

Follow up lesson plan from HUTR: Whatcha Gonna Trade?

Buttons or poker chips (to use as tokens)



## **ADAPTATIONS:**

This lesson can be adapted for use in any locale because the concept of trading or bartering is universal. All cultures have a value system that began with bartering before the introduction of some type of currency. Use this lesson before you begin a unit on money, goods and services, exchange, etc. Discuss what kinds of trading were used in your area by the early settlers.

Discuss how we determine values of goods and services.

Are there examples of trading or barter that exist in your community today?

For additional information, Fieldtrips, Traveling trunks and support materials, Contact Director of Interpretation, Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site, PO Box 150 Ganado, AZ 86505 **928-755-3475**

**NPS.GOV/HUTR** for additional info and resources.

Please email your lesson plans and finished designs to [hutr\\_ranger\\_activities@nps.gov](mailto:hutr_ranger_activities@nps.gov)

**nps.gov/hutr**