



The Economics of Rationing during World War II

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2017696750/>

Overview/Prior Knowledge

Scarcity causes people to make decisions about ways to effectively allocate resources. Students will analyze primary sources from World War II (WWII) in order to learn about government intervention in the allocation of resources. Before this lesson is taught, students will have a basic knowledge of WWII and the concepts of scarcity, rationing, supply, and demand.

Objectives

- TSW understand that productive resources are limited. Therefore, people cannot have all the goods and services they want; as a result, they must choose some things and give up others.
- TSW understand different methods can be used to allocate goods and services. People, acting individually or collectively through government, must choose which methods to use to allocate different kinds of goods and services.
- TSW understand prices send signals and provide incentives to buyers and sellers. When supply or demand changes, market prices adjust, affecting incentives.
- TSW understand there is an economic role for government to play in a market economy whenever the benefits of a government policy outweigh its costs. Governments often provide for national defense, address environmental concerns, define and protect property rights, and attempt to make markets more competitive. Most government policies also redistribute income.

Time Required

One 90-minute block or two 50 minute periods

Recommended Grade Range

12

Subject/Sub-Subject

Economics
United States Government
English IV

Standards

Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics (Social Studies)

- 1: Productive resources are limited. Therefore, people cannot have all the goods and services they want; as a result, they must choose some things and give up others.
- 3: Different methods can be used to allocate goods and services. People, acting individually or collectively through government, must choose which methods to use to allocate different kinds of goods and services.
- 8: Prices send signals and provide incentives to buyers and sellers. When supply or demand changes, market prices adjust, affecting incentives.
- 16: There is an economic role for government to play in a market economy whenever the benefits of a government policy outweigh its costs. Governments often provide for national defense, address environmental concerns, define and protect property rights, and attempt to make markets more competitive. Most government policies also redistribute income.

National Standards for Civics and Government

- V. What are the roles of the citizen in the American democracy?
 - B. What are the rights of citizens?
 - C. What are the responsibilities of citizens?

English Language Arts

W.12.1

TSW Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Library of Congress - Teaching with Primary Sources Skills:

- Identify who created the primary source, when, and for what purpose
- Use previous knowledge to place primary sources into historical context
- Examine primary sources closely to form conjectures about their meaning and intent
- Use primary sources that connect to the subject/topic under study
- Provide for students of varying abilities, learning styles and interests to learn with primary sources

Highlighted Strategies:

- *Examining the Evidence*
 - Strategy 1: Determine what you're looking at
 - Strategy 2: Determine the purpose and audience
- *Bringing Learning Alive!*
 - Writing for Understanding

Credits

Janna Paes, Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated School District

Nikki Buss, Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated School District

Materials

- Primary sources from Library of Congress
- Laptops, phone, or iPad
- Projector
- Interactive whiteboard
- Paper
- Writing utensil

Procedures

Introduction

- TTW remind students that humans have unlimited wants for limited resources, so they must decide how to allocate scarce resources on a daily basis.
- TTW pique students' interests by allowing them to taste homemade apple butter that was very popular during WWII.
- TTW ask students if the government has used ration books within their lifetime and will then discuss that ration books have not been used since WWII.
- TTW explain the correlation between WWII, rationing, scarcity, supply, and demand.
- TTW explain the expectations for moving to two stations for two different activities. Each station will last 30 minutes. A timer will be displayed on the interactive whiteboard. When time runs out, the teacher will signal for each group to rotate. Half of the class will work on station one's task while the other works on station two's task.
- TTW explain the directions and expectations for each station, and written directions will be provided in a folder at each group.

During

- **Activity 1: (Independent Assignment)**
 - **RAFT Writing:**
 - TSW will draw the name of a rationed good from a brown paper sack. It will represent the role and perspective from which they will write a ¾ to-one-full page letter.
 - In order to learn more about ways goods were used during WWII, TSW research before writing. Here are some suggest links for this research:
 - <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/students-teachers/student-resources/research-starters/take-closer-look-ration-books>
 - <http://www.ameshistory.org/content/world-war-ii-rationing-us-homefront>
 - <https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/homefront/conservation.html>
 - **Role** (rationed good)
 - **Audience** (American citizens during WWII)
 - **Format** (letter)
 - **Topic** (urge citizens to conserve the drawn rationed good for the war effort and explain the necessity of this good)

- **Activity 2: (Cooperative Learning)**
 - **Primary Source Analysis:**
 - TSW analyze primary sources from the Library of Congress using the two strategies explained on the guided answer sheet:
 - Strategy 1:
 1. Describe the primary source.
 2. Who created it?
 3. When was it created?
 4. Where was it created?

 - Strategy 2:
 1. Who was the intended audience? Who did the person who created it expect would see it?
 2. Why was the material created?
 3. If there is a human subject—as in an image or an interview—what was that person’s participation?
 4. Is there a caption with details about the primary source?
 - Groups will work together to analyze the primary source and will each complete his or her own guided answer sheet.
 - TSW choose one of each of the following types of primary sources to analyze: Song, picture, and text. Each student will analyze three primary sources.
 - The primary sources will be displayed on the interactive white board once everyone is finished. The class will discuss the details of each.

Example Primary Source to Model: (Unrelated to rationing but was taken from *Examining the Evidence* to explain the strategy)

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2003653791/>

Songs:

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2014564430/>

<https://www.loc.gov/item/ftvbib000083/>

Pictures:

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2017696286/>

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2017696750/>

Texts:

Campaign for Rationing Education Under Way

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn84024049/1943-05-29/ed-1/?sp=2&q=rationing+&r=0.417,0.143,0.695,0.34,0>

Food Rationing Starts Here “Immediately”

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn84024756/1943-01-16/ed-1/?sp=6&q=rationing+&r=-0.095,0.466,0.818,0.4,0>

Wrap Up/Closure

Students will play a review game of rock, paper, scissors using questions about the strategies and primary sources. TTW display each question on the board and will include three answer choices. Choice A will represent rock; choice B will represent paper; and choice C will represent scissors. After the teacher reading the question aloud, he or she will ask all standing students for their answers. Those who are incorrect will sit down while the rest will go around the room and play a regular game of rock, paper, scissors until there is only one student left standing. The winner will receive a small reward of the teacher’s choosing. All students will stand back up and the process will be repeated with the next review question.

Example review question:

According to the first song that was analyzed, what did the author hope would never be rationed?

- A. Shoes - Rock
- B. Sugar - Paper
- C. Love – Scissors



Assessment

Formative:

TSW read letters aloud

TTW evaluate the letter to ensure it included each characteristic of RAFT writing

Primary source guided answer sheets

Rock, paper, scissors review game

Differentiation

- Modeling
- Printed directions
- Visual aids
- Cooperative groups

Supplementary Materials

Austin, Hilary Mac & Thompson, Kathleen. (2015) *Examining the evidence: seven strategies for teaching with primary sources*. North Mankato, MN. Maupin House Publishing by Capstone Professional.

Teaching with Primary Sources Resource Guide

The Economics of Rationing during WWII

Primary Source 1:

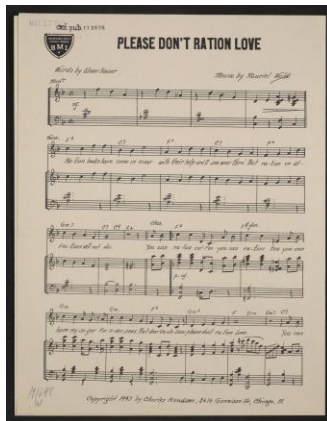


Title: 16-year old Charles Nichols working in shoemaker's shop in Colorado Reform School, ca. 1920

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003653791/>

Purpose: It will be used to model ways to analyze a primary source.

Primary Source 2:



Title: Please Don't Ration Love

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2014564430/>

Purpose: It will serve as a song to analyze.

Primary Source 3:

Title: Obey the Ration Laws

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/ftvbib000083/>

Purpose: It will serve as a song to analyze.

Primary Source 4:



Title: Preparation for point rationing. Buying canned and bottled foods with war ration book two becomes real to pupils in this model store set up in a classroom in the Park View Elementary School, Washington, D.C. Referring to the posted list, pupils learn practical arithmetic when they figure both prices and points

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017696286/>

Purpose: It will serve as a photo to analyze.

Primary Source 5:



Title: Poster. Do with less--so they'll have enough. Poster released by the Office of War Information to bars and taverns, high schools, hotels, libraries, war plants, post offices.

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017696750/>

Purpose: It will serve as a photo of a poster to analyze.

Primary Source 6:



Title: Image 2 of The Minidoka irrigator (Hunt, Idaho), May 29, 1943

“Campaign for Rationing Education Under Way”

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn84024049/1943-05-29/ed-1/?sp=2&q=rationing+&r=0.018,-0.056,1.549,1.462,0>

Purpose: Students will read “Campaign for Rationing Education Under Way” to understand the purpose and implementation of rationing.

Primary Source 7:



Title: Image 6 of Heart Mountain sentinel (Cody, Wyoming), January 16, 1943

“Food Rationing Starts Here ‘Immediately’”

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn84024756/1943-01-16/ed-1/?sp=6&q=rationing+&r=0.095,0.466,0.818,0.4,0>

Purpose: Students will read “Food Rationing Starts Here ‘Immediately’” to understand the purpose and implementation of rationing.

Content created and featured in partnership with the TPS program does not indicate an endorsement by the Library of Congress.