



Textiles and Economics Secondary



Historic Homes • Gardens • Artifacts • Costumed Crafts People
Boat Tours • Gift Shop • Restaurant



Standards

Standards as developed by the Louisiana Department of Education. Available online at <http://www.vermilionville.org/vermilionville/educate/lesson-plans>.

Grade 8

Social Studies

Fundamental Economic Concepts

- **GLE #42:** Analyze situations involving scarcity (limited resources) at the individual, group, and societal levels to determine the need for choices or what is gained/lost by a decision (E-1A-M1)
- **GLE #44:** Explain choice/trade-offs, cost/benefits, and opportunity costs related to making personal economic decisions (E-1A-M3)
- **GLE #45:** Analyze the role of specialization in Louisiana's economy (E-1A-M4)

Individuals, Households, Businesses, and Governments

- **GLE #52:** Explain how supply and demand affect prices (E-1B-M1)
- **GLE #53:** Explain and analyze factors affecting production and allocation of goods/services in Louisiana and the United States (E-1B-M2)
- **GLE #58:** Describe historical and economic factors influencing the economic growth, interdependence, and development of Louisiana and the nation (e.g. mass production, oil boom and decline) (E-1B-M7)

Historical Thinking Skills

- **GLE #64:** Compare and contrast events and ideas from Louisiana's past and present, explaining political, social, or economic contexts (H-1A-M2)

Objectives

1. Students will describe what they give up and what they gain from making decisions on goods.
2. Students will describe how the opportunity cost affects decisions.
3. Students will be able to compare making/buying clothes in the past and present Louisiana.
4. Students will have a better understanding of opportunity costs.

Pre-Visit Activity

Teachers. We have made two introduction documents available to you on our website – a word document as well as a PowerPoint with pictures depicting the cultures that we represent. Please take some time to review these two documents with your class prior to your visit here. You can access them [here](#), by clicking on

- Introduction to Vermilionville and
- Vermilionville PowerPoint



Describe to students the situation of farmers and their families in the 1800s in Louisiana and the choices they had to make (see Economic History section below)

Explain the long process of having to grow, harvest, and process the cotton in order to make one single shirt (see Economic History section below).

Explain the difference between the brown and white cotton and how it shows economic status by making comparisons between now and then and explaining opportunity cost.

Anchor Lesson

Materials needed: paper, crayons or markers, t-shirt template

Introduction

Bienvenue à la Maison Beau Bassin. This house was built in 1840 by the Arceneaux family in Carencro. The house is called Beau Bassin because at one point, Carencro was named Beau Bassin after the Beau Bassin region in Nova Scotia.

This is the quilting room (room to the left). Women would gather in a room like this one and sew quilts. The device above your head would hold a quilt. Quilts are made out of small pieces of fabric, pieces too small to use to sew clothes for the family. Quilts were important in those days as they told stories about the family. If a quilt was hung on the porch railing, it told people passing by that the family in the house had some important news to share. Maybe someone was getting married, someone had died, a new baby was born, and maybe they were having a special dinner and wanted to invite their neighbors.

Teacher will ask students where their clothes were made. Let them look at the tags. We do not make a lot of clothing in Louisiana or in the United States, and to find out where the clothes were made, we need to look at the tag. When we want or need clothes, we go to the store and find what we want. The want or need for a piece of clothing is known as a demand. Demand is what people want or need. So, we go to the store and we look through the clothes. When we do that, we are looking through the supply. Supply is the amount of something that a company or person produces for sale. Some things are in a greater supply than others.

What does Louisiana produce in a large supply? (Oil, cotton, sugar cane, tobacco, rice)

Louisiana supplies a lot of these goods to the rest of the country and the world.

Teacher will tell students that today, they will be designing a shirt. "If you could create your perfect shirt, what would it look like?" Take a few minutes to create your own shirt (document #1). It can have anything on it that they would like. After students are done coloring, ask them what they would think if this was the only shirt that they could wear until they grew out of it. They had to be careful not to dirty their clothes or to rip them. If they ripped them, they would have to repair them. Explain to them that the reason for such minimum clothing was due to economic situations.

This activity helps students realize how the people of the 1800s in Louisiana had to make difficult choices whether to have money to buy food and other necessary items or to be able to have better clothes on their back.

Invite students to go into the loom room to see and discuss why people used to own minimal amount of clothes.



Economic History

In Louisiana, the Acadians used cotton instead of wool to make clothing. In the 1800s, people who lived in houses like this one, would probably only own two shirts; one for the week and one for Sunday. That is because they only had a certain amount of cotton to use. They would use the cotton to make their own clothes but they also needed the cotton to sell or trade for other things they wanted or needed. A shirt used a lot of cotton. It also took a lot of time. You have to harvest the cotton, pick the seeds out, make the yarn with the spinning wheel, make the cloth, cut it, sew it by hand, and then you would finally have a shirt.

The woman of the house and her girls did not have to make a shirt for everyone, because they would use old clothes, or what they called hand-me downs. When an older child outgrew their clothing, it was passed down and the oldest got a new shirt. They usually made the shirts out of brown cotton which does not hold color well. If a family was affluent, it would use the white cotton.

In those days, people had to make the best decision of what to give up. Would they give up money from selling a shirt and the time to make the shirt? Things they would give up to make the shirt are known as their opportunity cost. Opportunity cost is the best thing you give up in order to get something you want or need.

"Pretend you have a test tomorrow. Tonight, you could go home and study, or you could go home and play video games. What would you rather do?" Allow for student responses. "If you study for your test instead of playing, the fun times that you are giving up is your opportunity cost. The benefit though, is that you will get a better grade on your test."

Question #1

Ben decides to study for his test instead of playing video games. What is the time Ben gives up playing video games called?

- a) demand
- b) supply
- c) benefit
- d) opportunity cost

Answer: d

Question #2

Compare and contrast the opportunity costs a person living in the 1800s and a person living in 2014 have to consider when making a decision about acquiring new clothing.

Possible answers: 1800: time and cost. 2014: time and cost

Ask the following questions to the students to generate thinking.

Was this lesson an eye opener for you?

Do you have a better understanding of opportunity cost now that I have explained it to you in a situation that you can relate to?



Post-Visit Activity

Students will discuss the following questions with the teacher.

- What are some things that are in high demand?
- High supply?
- Low demand?
- Low supply?
- What are some opportunity costs?

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated verbally during discussion and on group participation.

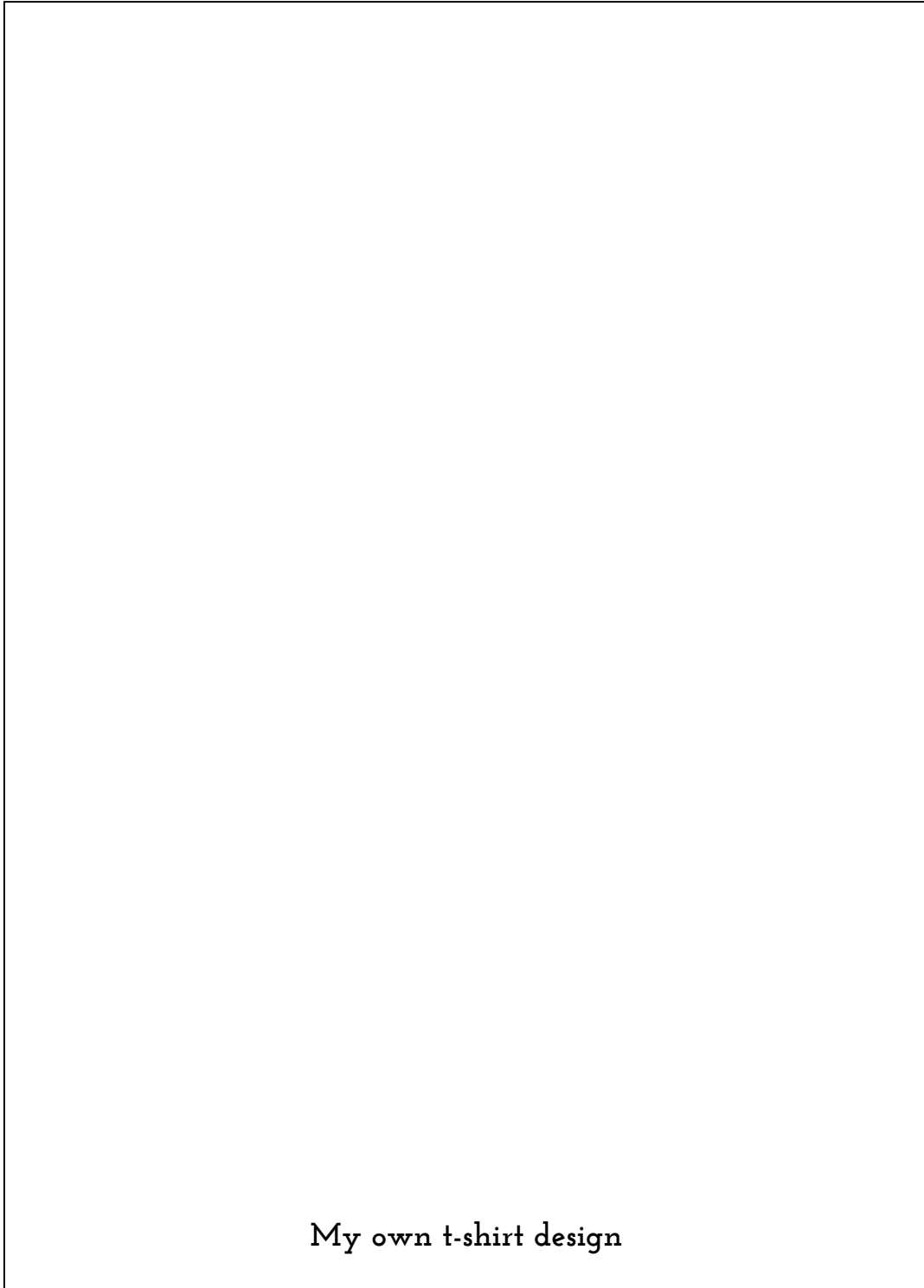
Differentiation of Instruction

Review with students with disabilities and do 1-on-1 instruction if necessary.



Document #1 - Create your own shirt

Use the box below to draw your design for your own custom shirt.



My own t-shirt design



