

# Interdependence



Artist: Jack Massie • 3rd Grade • Rappahannock Elementary School • Rappahannock County

## INTERDEPENDENCE

Interdependence occurs when people and countries depend on one another to provide the goods and services they want.

## INTERDEPENDENCE

### Definition/Background

Interdependence occurs when people and countries depend on others to produce some of the goods and services they want. When individuals, regions, and nations specialize in what they can produce at the lowest cost and then trade with others, both production and consumption increase. Greater specialization leads to increased interdependence among producers and consumers. The teacher is dependent on the grocer to bring food to the market; the grocer is dependent on the mechanic to fix his car; the mechanic is dependent on the doctor for medical care. Imagine a world with no interdependence where you had to build your own house, cut your own hair and do your own heart surgery!

Specialization, and thus interdependence, can also occur in production processes. For example, in assembly line production, each person depends on others to do his or her specific part.

### Teaching Ideas

1. Have students suggest ways in which they experience interdependence throughout the course of an ordinary day – at school and at home. (e.g. depending on the school cafeteria for lunch; a parent driving the student to ball practice)
2. Create an assembly line of students to create some type of paper product (bookmarks, greeting card, etc.) and discuss the interdependence that transpired.
3. Discuss why it is necessary for most people to “specialize” in a specific job. How does this specialization benefit the community?
4. Using the local newspaper’s classified section as a resource, have the students create a list of the current jobs available. Ask students to identify at least one other person on whom each job depends (truck drivers depend on mechanics). Discuss qualifications necessary for each job.

### Lessons & Resources

#### Print Lessons

*Around the World the Econ Way*, Chapter 7: The Interdependent States of America (elementary)

*Choices and Changes: Grades 2-4*, Lesson 16: Entrepreneurs and the Interdependence of Buyers and Sellers (elementary)

*The Wide World of Trade*, Lesson 3: Everyone Is Interdependent (middle)

#### Online Lessons

**Colonial Workers Web** (elementary)

[http://econ-fun.com/pdf\\_Files/lesson.pdf](http://econ-fun.com/pdf_Files/lesson.pdf)

**Around the World in a Hershey’s Kiss** (middle)

<http://www.powellcenter.org/uploads/KissesU.pdf>

#### Literature

- *An Orange in January* by Dianna Hutts Aston. Dial Books for Young Readers, 2007. The story illustrates **interdependence** and specialization as it explains the process of getting an orange from the tree to the truck to the store and finally into the hands of an appreciative boy. [Grades K-3]
- *Blood on the River: James Town 1607* by Elisa Carbone. Viking, 2006. The **interdependence** of two cultures is chronicled by the page of Captain John Smith, 12-year-old Samuel Collier. [Grades 4-7]
- *Princess Academy* by Shannon Hale. Bloomsbury Children’s Books, 2005. Fourteen-year-old Miri is aware of the **interdependence** of her homeland in the mountains and the more “cultured” lowlanders but apparently the two societies do not appreciate their connections. [Grades 5-8]

## VIRGINIA COUNCIL ON ECONOMIC EDUCATION

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