

Lesson 3 Funding Public Goods

Main Idea

Most transportation systems partially utilize public goods. There are multiple ways of funding public goods such as roads. Each way has both benefits and trade-offs.

Key Concepts

- Public goods
- Free-rider problem
- Infrastructure
- Franchise
- Monopoly
- Toll
- Direct government ownership
- Constitutionality of federal funding for internal improvements
- Cumberland Road (National Road)
- Good Roads Movement
- Gasoline tax
- Interstate Highway System
- Amtrak

Digitized Artifacts

from the Collections of **The Henry Ford**

Lesson 3

Funding Public Goods

- Sign Noting Toll Rates for the Detroit and Birmingham Plank Road ID# THF69356
- Poster, "Proclamation of the Route of the Lincoln Highway," 1913 ID# THF68308
- "The Old Pike: A History of The National Road and Incidents, Accidents, and Anecdotes Thereon," 1894 ID# THF68331

Materials

- Student Activity Sheet 3: Graphic Organizer for Public Discourse and Decision Making
- Rubric 3: Persuasive Essay
- Box of tissues
- Computer with access to the Internet, digital projector and screen (preferred) OR printed handouts of digitized artifacts' images and descriptions.

Duration 1-4 periods (45 minutes each)

- Parts 1 and 2: 45 minutes
- Part 3 (optional): total 2.5 hours (research, 45 minutes to 1.5 hours; discussion/debate, 30 minutes; homework persuasive essay and action plans, 30 minutes)

Continued...

Lesson 3 Funding Public Goods Continued

Instructional Sequence

1. Engagement/Relevance – Public Goods

To interest and instruct students about the concept of a public good, perform the vignette that follows:

Choose three students to be “in on it,” while the other students will not know that the vignette is part of the lesson for the day. In advance of the class, give the students a box of tissues to use as a prop. Two of the students should bring the box of tissues into class and place it in a public area. Ask them about the tissues. They should reply that they decided to buy tissues to place in each of their classrooms so a tissue would always be nearby if they needed it. The third student, the free rider, should pretend to sneeze and take a tissue from the box. The first two students should be angry that the free rider is using something he or she did not pay for; they should complain to you about it.

Tell the class that they have just witnessed a classic free-rider problem with a public good. The third student found a way to “free ride” on someone else’s investment -- the tissues. Ask the first two students if they would continue to bring tissues if the free-riding continued. They will likely say no.

With the class, define **public good** and **free-rider problem**. See the Glossary in the Teacher Guide for definitions.

2. Transportation Projects: A Public Good

Tell students that the transportation infrastructure gives us many great examples of the problem of public goods, the changing American attitudes toward them and how they can be addressed. Refer to “Government Role in the Development of American Transportation” in [From the Curators – Transportation: Past, Present and Future](#) for more information. Use the images below from [The Henry Ford’s](#) digitized collections to support your discussion on the selected topics and concepts.

Topics and Concepts

- Transportation infrastructure
- [Artifact Sign Noting Toll Rates for the Detroit and Birmingham Plank Road ID# THF69356](#)
 - Government granting franchises and monopolies to private companies
 - Turnpike
 - Toll
 - Monopoly
 - Franchise
- [Artifact “The Old Pike: A History of The National Road and Incidents, Accidents, and Anecdotes Thereon,” 1894 ID# THF68331](#)
 - Direct government ownership
 - Constitutionality of federal funding for internal improvements
 - Cumberland Road (also known as the National Road)
- Funding urban streets
- Abutters

Continued...

Lesson 3 Funding Public Goods Continued

- Artifact Poster, “Proclamation of the Route of the Lincoln Highway,” 1913 ID# THF68308
 - Good Roads Movement
 - Lincoln Highway
- Gasoline tax
- Use of public roads as a human right
- Interstate Highway System
- Amtrak

3. Optional: Public Discourse and Decision Making

As a class, explore the options for funding a public good, such as a local transportation project. This could be a road improvement, a new road, light rail transit, a bus system or other transportation project that is a public good. If possible, make the topic of the debate an actual project that is going on or being considered in your area.

Use Student Activity Sheet 3: Graphic Organizer for Public Discourse and Decision Making to lead students through the process of defining and clearly stating the issue, researching the issue, generating and evaluating alternative resolutions, and applying core democratic values and constitutional principles. Alternative resolutions should consider the free-rider problem and American attitudes about funding public goods.

Facilitate the sharing of students’ research in group discussions (whole class or small group) or debates.

Next, have students compose persuasive essays that choose a position and justify it with a reasoned argument. Their essays should utilize the historical information they learned about the funding of transportation systems. Use Rubric 3 as a starting point for assessment, and adapt it to fit your class’s needs.

Finally, as individuals or as a class, have students develop an action plan to address or inform others about the issue. This could entail writing a letter to a local newspaper editor or government official, convening a town hall meeting, creating an informational display or a piece of art that increases awareness about the issue, or any other creative ideas that educate citizens.

Assessment

Assess students’ Student Activity Sheet 3: Graphic Organizer for Public Discourse and Decision Making for thoughtful consideration of the issue, resolutions, and applicable core democratic values and constitutional principles.

Assess their persuasive essays using Rubric 3, adapted to fit your needs.

Assess students’ action plans by asking the students’ peers or other community members if the proposed action would reach and educate them.

Name _____

graphic organizer for Public Discourse and Decision Making



What is the issue?															
Origins of the issue?								Data?							
Alternative resolutions?								Possible impacts on different groups?							



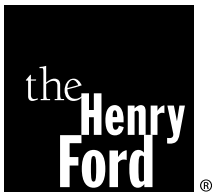
Core democratic values that apply:

Constitutional principles that apply:

Share and discuss your research!

Points to include in persuasive essay:

How I will address or inform others about this issue:



Name _____

persuasive Essay

	Position	Support	Origins	Facts	Data	Core Democratic Values and Constitutional Principles	Alternatives
4	Clearly and eloquently states the position.	The position is supported with well-organized arguments.	Draws on the origins of the issue to support the position.	Effectively uses factual information to support the position.	Effectively uses data to support the position and correctly quotes the source.	Uses multiple CDVs or constitutional principles to support the position.	Acknowledges alternative resolutions and refutes them convincingly.
3	Clearly states the position.	Clearly supports the position.	Explains the origins of the issue.	Uses factual information to support the position.	Uses data to support the position and quotes the source.	Uses a CDV or constitutional principle to support the position.	Acknowledges alternative resolutions and refutes them.
2	States the position with some clarity.	Gives some support for the position.	Mentions the origins of the issue.	Uses information to support the position, but facts may be confused.	Uses some data to support the position but does not quote the source.	Attempts to use a CDV or a constitutional principle, but the choice does not really support the position.	Acknowledges alternative resolutions but does not refute them.
1	The position is unclear.	Little or no support given for the position.	Origins of the issue are not discussed.	Supporting facts, if used, are mostly or totally inaccurate.	Data, if used, are mostly or totally inaccurate.	No use of CDVs or constitutional principles.	Does not acknowledge alternative resolutions.
Student Score							