

Marketing Class

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Suggested Grade Levels: 7th - 10th grades

Suggested Subject Area: Social Studies, Civics

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will be introduced to the concepts of role, status, and social class in America.
2. They will be able to use various criteria devised by sociologists for determining class ranking and discuss the validity and appropriateness of these criteria.
3. Students will be able to discuss role, status, and social class and apply these terms to their surroundings.
4. Students will practice research, questioning, discussion, and writing skills.

Standards List:

This activity addresses the following national content standards as outlined in the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (NCSS):

Topic: Social Groupings: Function and Influence on Behavior: Apply concepts such as role, status, and social class in describing the connections and interactions of individuals, groups, and institutions in society.

It also addresses the following national content standards as outlined by McREL, accessible at <http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>:

Behavioral Studies. Standard: 1. Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8). Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12). Understands that group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity, and behavior.

Behavioral Studies. Standard: 2. Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8). Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12). Understands various meanings of social group, general implications of group membership, and different ways that groups function.

Language Arts. Standard: 8. Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8). Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12). Demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning.

Tools and Materials:

- 1.Students will need internet access.
- 2.The teacher should provide magazines which contain a variety of pictures of houses, cars, clothing, in contemporary America.
- 3.Students will need scissors, paste, poster board or a large classroom bulletin board.

Time Needed:

Two 45 minute class periods should be allotted for the activities. One 45 minute class period should be allotted for the final presentations.

Strategy:

- 1.To introduce the lesson, the teacher should cut out four "face" pictures from a magazine. The pictures should represent men, women, African-American, European, young, old. These pictures would then be posted on the board. Students would be asked to guess whether the person was rich, poor, what kind of job they have, what kind of house each person might live in. Time permitting, the teacher could make this a matching game by cutting out pictures of cars, houses, clothing etc. and ask that students match the object with person. Students should record their observations and the reasons for their choices in their journals. The teacher should be ready to introduce the concept of stereotyping as students share their observations with the class.
- 2.Students should play the game "Chintz or Shag" found at <http://www.pbs.org/classinamerica/games>
- 3.After playing the game students should be divided into small groups in order to discuss the outcome of the game. Were the results a surprise? Students should speculate on the criteria used in the game. What was its basis? Do they agree with the results? Why or why not? What does it mean to be "middle middle" class or "nouveau riche?" Who is the term "old money" referring to? Do the students think they can tell what class somebody is by looking at him or by looking at his living room? Where might Americans in the uppermost classes live? People in the lowest classes? To what extent is class in America defined by what you own? Students may record their reactions in journals.
- 4.Students should then work in small groups to prepare a list of criteria for the "middle middle" class of their community. Are people in their community judged by what cars they drive, which sports they play, or what sorts of clothes they wear? The teacher may wish to prompt students with questions such as: What is typical behavior in the community? Is there a kind of car that most families drive? Are there certain stores that most people go to? Are there particular sports that many people play? Is there are difference between the richest people and the poorest

people in their community in terms of what they own (types of cars, houses and clothes)? The students should work together to come up with agreed upon criteria. The teacher may want the class to discuss to what extent the criteria are stereotypical or determined by advertising. Students should follow up their own thoughts about class in their community by visiting Claritas at the Prizm web site (<http://yawl.claritas.com>) , which allows them to type in their zip code and see data about their community. Students can have a discussion comparing their perceptions with the real data.

5. After looking at the PRIZM zip code data, the teacher should encourage group discussion about how advertising companies might use this type of information to create ads that target specific audiences. For example, the site gives a list of things people in certain clusters are likely to do, such as “watch Nightline” or “drink Pepsi Free.” How would knowing about these consumption patterns change the marketing strategies of advertising companies? If advertisers know that a certain community is likely to “shop at T.J. Max” or “read Gourmet,” how might it affect what products they market to that community, or where they put their advertisements? Students should also be encouraged to talk about how consumption patterns relate to class – are there certain magazines, cars, foods or clothes that are considered more upper or lower class than others? Why do they think this might be so? Do advertisements reinforce the social class status quo, change it, or have no affect at all? Can they think of examples?

6. Working in small groups, students should pick one of the clusters in their zip code, as described on the PRIZM site, and develop an ad that targets that community (the clusters have names like “Young Literati” and “Hard Scrabble”). They should pick an item such as basketball shoes or a brand of soft drink, and plan a campaign around the product. Students should use the criteria they established in step 4 and the information the PRIZM site provides about income levels, professions, and consumption patterns as they decide what product people in their selected cluster might buy. They should also consider the PRIZM information as they decide how to pitch their product to the cluster, considering things like the price of the merchandise, a good setting for the ad, and what language to write the advertisement in. When they finish, they should be ready to explain how they integrated the criteria established in step 4 and the PRIZM data into their plan.

7. The results of this activity would be reported to the whole class.

#### Assessment Recommendation:

1. The teacher may choose to evaluate the students on their responses in their journals.
2. The lists prepared by students and the quality of their presentations may also be evaluated.
3. Student presentations may be evaluated on how well they integrated the

criteria into their advertising campaign.

Extensions:

1. The teacher might direct students to the Claritas web site at <http://www.claritas.com/>. This is the company that sponsors PRIZM, and it provides marketing information to businesses. Students could discuss what the company does and why.
2. Introduce the concept of capitalism as an economic system. Have students research the difference between a market system (as found in the USA) and a command system (as found in the former Soviet Union). Explain that the American economic system is a market system and that stimulating demand through advertising is a fundamental part of the way the American economy works. Students can further explore how forces of supply and demand in a market system answer basic economic questions, such as what to produce; how to produce; and for whom to produce through a lesson on demand at supply, found at [http://ecedweb.unomaha.edu/Dem\\_Sup/demand.htm](http://ecedweb.unomaha.edu/Dem_Sup/demand.htm)
3. Students might want to take a look at various web sites and attempt to determine what is being marketed to who and why. They might also tape TV commercials and look at the same thing, or use magazine ads.
4. The issues discussed in this lesson are addressed in a slightly different but fascinating manner at [www.pbs.org/kcts/affluenza/diag/diag.html](http://www.pbs.org/kcts/affluenza/diag/diag.html) The site has very well done chronology of consumption issues in western society.
5. Students could check out the phone book for advertising departments of local newspapers, radio, and television stations. A guest speaker could be invited to the class in order to discuss the targeting of media in the students' locale.
6. The teacher can explore the web site, "Great Ideas for Teaching Marketing," at <http://www.swcollege.com/marketing/gitm/gitm.html> for further extension activities