

The Oakland History Collaborative:
Teaching American History in an Urban School District
A Teaching American History Grant Project
Instructional Services, Oakland Unified School District
Harper Building, Room #5
Oakland, California 94606
www.teachingamericanhistory.us

**From the 2009 Summer Institute –
Economic Concepts, Topics, and Questions Mentioned for Inclusion in this Year’s American
History Curriculum**

At the summer institute we discussed what economic concepts, topics, and questions you will include in your American history curriculum this year. Below are items excerpted from your papers and that discussion that highlight both economic concepts that might span all the grade levels and specific topics mentioned at each grade level. There were, of course, additional concepts and topics mentioned in individual papers.

This list put together as a reminder of some of the big ideas, concepts, and topics we covered last year.

Concepts that spanned the grade levels:

- “How do we think about this economically?” – Economic vantage
- Economics is about power and what society values in terms of people, work, time, etc.
- Economics is good way to teach about unintended consequences of our actions.
- Be conscious of including an economic focus and analysis
- Taxation and the role of government
- Contact zones
 - i.e American Indians with explorers and colonists in the East and in California
- Commodity chains
- Change over time
- Interconnection of economics / politics / culture – multiple causation
- Regulation and deregulation – equality and inequality
- Labor as a basis for wealth
- Distribution of wealth - Winners and losers in historic events – who is left out?
- Wages for work depended on status, supply demand, gender - “winners and losers”
- Currency – what is it?
- Taxes as a necessity
- Economic justice and fairness
- Emphasizing the monetary value of slavery
- Representation of information – use for graphs and charts

Grade Specific Topics

4th Topics:

- Gold Rush and effect on U.S. economy
- Women workers in WWII
- Organization of farm workers
- Labor movements from mission revolts to railroad workers to migrant farmers to women post WWII
- Missions in CA connection to Spanish colonialism in South America

5th Topics:

- Mercantilism, taxation, and the American Revolution (French and Indian War)
- Shay's Rebellion, adoption of the Constitution, and taxation
- Currency standardization
- Funding the Revolution
- Economics of the early republic
- Production of goods during colonial times
- Slavery and wealth

8th Topics:

- Immigration and wages
- Causes of the Civil War – the significance of slavery
- Jackson and the Bank of the United States
- Reconstruction – labor and land
- Economic similarities and differences between the North and the South
- The economic relationship between slavery, class, and racism
- Economic significance of the Gold Rush for individuals and the nation

11th Topics:

- The world of work – who did what, where, why, and how?
- Economics of the Revolutionary and Constitutional Period
- Minority access to housing and property
- Currency – gold vs. silver
- Industrialization – Assembly lines, mergers, labor, wages
- Deregulation predating Reagan
- Local aspect – WPA and New Deal
- Most important causes of the Great Depression
- New Deal funding – taxes, deficit spending
- Economics of racism – New Deal, G.I Bill, slavery, immigration
- Populists – “If you want to shape the economy you must understand it.”