

Show Me the Euro

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Lesson Plan of the Year Contest, 2009

Honorable Mention

LESSON DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this two-day lesson is to give foreign language students an introduction to international trade and foreign exchange markets. A series of hands-on activities allows students to participate in engaging, project-based learning and technology activities that focus on higher-order thinking skills and creativity. The lesson begins with an introduction to foreign currency. Students are then exposed to an overview of international trade and foreign currency through a comic book, *The Story of Foreign Trade and Exchange*. An introduction to the euro is followed by practice in calculating exchange rates. Relevant vocabulary words in French are introduced. Each student creates a design for a euro, participates in a skit on international trade, and conducts online research on the euro to prepare a written report, "Show Me the Euro," that is due two weeks after the lesson.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Before teaching this lesson, check the U.S. dollar/euro exchange rate for each day. This information can be obtained either from the financial section of most newspapers or online at <http://x-rates.com/d/EUR/table.html>.

This lesson was designed for a French class, but it could easily be adapted for use with a different foreign language.

GRADE LEVEL

Grades 9–12, foreign language class

CONCEPTS

- International Trade
- Absolute Advantage
- Comparative Advantage
- Foreign Exchange Market
- Exchange Rates
- Euro
- Tariff
- Quota

CONTENT STANDARDS

National Foreign Language Teaching Standards

Communication Standard

CM-2-E5 describing issues and problems that are of concern to members of the native and target cultures; (1, 2, 3, 5)

CM-3-E3 writing and/or performing original stories, poems, short plays, or skits based on personal experiences or on themes from the target cultures; (1, 4)

CM-3-E6 preparing and/or presenting illustrated stories, skits, posters, or advertisements about activities, events, goods, or services; (1, 2, 3, 4)

Culture Standard

CL-1-E4 identifying and explaining significant factors (historical, geographic, economic, political) that impact cultural practices; (4)

CL-2-E1 identifying, describing, and/or producing symbols and products typical of the target cultures; (1, 3)

CL-2-E3 summarizing the effects of the target cultures' contributions/products on other Societies; (1, 4)

Comparisons Standard

CP-2-D4 comparing the practices and expressive products of the native and target cultures (e.g., historical, business, or scientific contributions, music, works of art, and literature); (1, 4)

CP-2-E3 comparing various institutions of the native and target cultures (e.g., educational, legal, economic, and governmental); (1, 3, 4, 5)

Communities Standard

CT-3-E1 identifying careers or participating in school-to-work projects where proficiency in the target language and knowledge of the culture is required; (5)

CT-3-E2 writing and presenting work-related scenarios which incorporate appropriate vocabulary; (1, 4)

CT-3-E3 reading and writing work-related notes, messages, and letters; (1)

CT-3-E4 interpreting work-related materials, such as graphs and schedules; (2, 3, 4)

CT-3-E5 identifying and using work-place appropriate verbal and nonverbal behaviors; (1, 4, 5)

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

VIII Science, Technology, and Society

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of relationships among science, technology, and society.

IX Global Connections

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.

EDUCATIONAL WORLD STANDARDS

NT.K-12.3 Technology Productivity Tools

Students use technology tools to enhance learning, increase productivity, and promote creativity.

Students use productivity tools to collaborate in constructing technology-enhanced models, prepare publications, and produce other creative works.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Identify the purpose of international trade.
- Explain briefly the nature and history of international trade.
- Incorporate into their French vocabularies selected terms related to trade and exchange.
- Examine the nature of imports and exports.
- Create a design for a euro.
- Calculate U.S. dollar/euro conversions.
- Present in French a verbal explanation of a plan for an international trade deal.
- Conduct online research on international trade.
- Demonstrate in writing knowledge of the development of the euro as the single currency of the European Union.

TIME REQUIRED

Two fifty-minute class periods

MATERIALS

- Comic book: [*The Story of Foreign Trade and Exchange*](#) (2008). The Federal Reserve Bank of New York.
- *Visual 1: Bellringer – Savez-vous?*
- *Visual 2: The Euro Banknotes*
- *Visual 3: The Euro*
- *Visual 4: Comparison of Currency*
- *Visual 5: Bellringer Review*
- *Activity 1: Bellringer 1 Student Worksheet* (1 per student)
- *Activity 2: Vocabulaire* (1 per student)
- *Activity 3: Trade Agreement Skit* (1 per student)
- *Activity 4: Show Me the Euro* (1 per student)
- Wireless computer lab
- Calculators
- Art supplies: markers and posters
- Old magazines

- Optional: Euro “play” money and various prizes are available at www.teachersdiscovery.com.
- Euro candies are available at www.foreign-candy.com/home.html.

PROCEDURE

Introduction

Day 1

1. Place *Visual 1- Bellringer: Savez-vous?* on the overhead but cover the answers. Distribute copies of *Activity 1: Bellringer 1 Student Worksheet*. The purpose of the Bellringer is to stimulate student interest in the lesson. Give students a few minutes to answer the four questions on their sheets. This enables students to immediately begin thinking about the lesson.
2. Give students the correct answers for *Activity 1: Bellringer: Savez-vous?* by uncovering the currencies one by one on the overhead. Tell students that they are about to embark upon a new lesson for the next two days. The purpose of the lesson is to learn about international trade and the euro currency.
3. Distribute copies of *The Story of Foreign Trade and Exchange* to students. Have students read pages 1–2. Ask them to state the two main ideas of mercantilism. (*Precious metals determined a nation's wealth; countries should export more than they import.*) Have students read pages 4–5. Ask them who wrote *The Wealth of Nations*, 1776. (*Adam Smith*) What economic principle was introduced by Adam Smith? (*Absolute advantage*) Review the concept of absolute advantage to make sure students understand that a country has an absolute advantage in producing a good or service if it can produce that output at a lower cost than any other country. Have students read pages 6–9. Ask them what economic principle David Ricardo identified. (*Comparative advantage*) Review pages 6–9 with students to make sure they understand that when all countries exploit their comparative advantages, they will all be better off and enjoy a higher standard of living. This can be measured by gross domestic product (GDP)—the total final value of goods and services produced within a country's borders in a given time period. Have students read pages 10–12. Ask them to name two types of trade barriers. (*Tariffs and quotas*) Reinforce that several groups of countries have tried to lower trade barriers through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), including Canada, Mexico, and the United States. The European Union (EU) countries listed on page 11 have also tried to lower trade barriers. Ask students to cite some reasons why countries might choose not to remove all barriers. (*National security, the protection of new and/or struggling industries, the avoidance of possible job loss*) Ask students to read pages 13–16. What is the foreign exchange market? (*A network of foreign exchange dealers who buy and sell various currencies*) Review the definition of “exchange rate.” (*The rate at which one currency is traded for another*)
4. Display a copy of *Visual 2: The Euro Banknotes*. (Optional: Show students “play” euro money available from www.teachersdiscovery.com.) Point out to students that the visual symbols show architectural details of bridges, windows, and doorways. Ask students what these symbols might represent. (*Openness, communications, joining of forces, etc.*)
5. Display *Visual 3: The Euro*. Review the key points of the euro. (*It became available in 1999 for electronic transactions and has been the currency of a number of European countries since 2002. The number of countries using the Euro continues to grow. The main purpose for the introduction of the Euro was to strengthen the economy of Europe. Euro banknotes vary in size and color. Exchange rates vary on a daily basis.*)
6. Remind students that an exchange rate listed in the United States is usually expressed in terms of how many units of a foreign currency one U.S. dollar can buy.

7. Display *Visual 4: Comparison of Currency*. In a whole class format, have students practice converting U.S. dollars to euros. Use the example given—that if one U.S. dollar equals .77 euros, they should divide 1 by .77 to find out how much one euro is worth in U.S. dollars. Give students today's exchange rate.
8. Divide students into groups of two. Distribute *Activity 2: Vocabulaire*. Review the vocabulary words and have students complete the assignment by listing at least six imported goods that are their personal items or items in their school or at home. Have students share their lists of imported items with the class.
9. Review the key points of the lesson, focusing on the euro and international trade. Remind students to bring a calculator to class tomorrow.
10. Homework assignment: Students should create their own euro currency design to share in class on Day Two.
14. Distribute *Activity 4: Show Me the Euro—Internet Scavenger Hunt*. Review the student directions. Make sure students understand that a final draft of their two-page report, "Show Me the Euro," is due in one week so that you can give them feedback for the final version, due in two weeks. Review the main points that the report should include regarding the history of the euro, which countries use it, why the euro is used, some advantages and disadvantages of the euro, who manages the euro, and how the value of the euro vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar has changed over time.
15. Answer any questions to clarify the assignment and then allow students to begin their Internet research for their reports.

ASSESSMENT

- Oral exam: Students may be graded when they converse orally in the target language to present their skits.
- Students may be graded on their conversions from the U.S. dollar to the euro.
- Students may be graded on their written report, "Show Me the Euro".

Day 2

11. Ask students to show each other their euros. What symbols or designs did students select and why? (If desired, have students vote on the most creative design. An alternative would be to ask an art teacher or another colleague to select a winner.)
12. Display *Visual 5: Bellringer Review*. Tell students the U.S. dollar/euro exchange rate for the day. Ask them to convert the U.S. dollar to euros and allow a few minutes for them to complete the calculations. Check the answers.
13. Distribute *Activity 3: Trade Agreement Skit*. Divide students into teams of two. One person plays the role of CEO for Evian Water in France, and the other person plays the CEO of a U.S. beverage company. The CEO from Evian Water must convince the CEO from the United States to make an international trade agreement to import Evian water into the United States. Have students present skits to the class in French.

SUMMARY OF PRIOR CLASSROOM USE

At the culmination of this lesson, students were cognizant of international trade and the differences between the euro currency and the U.S. dollar. Exposing high school students to this lesson gave them an opportunity to explore possible careers affiliated with international trade. The interdisciplinary instruction afforded students the advantage of being able to communicate in a foreign language while at the same time becoming familiar with some basic economic principles. Students enjoyed designing their own euro. Student euros were displayed on the French bulletin board.

Visual 1



Savez-vous?

What is the currency of the following countries?

1. France
2. Vietnam
3. Switzerland
4. Ivory Coast

Answers:

1. *Euro*
2. *Dông*
3. *Swiss franc*
4. *Franc de la Communauté Financière Africaine*

VISUAL 2

The euro banknotes



Size: 120 x 62 mm
Colour: Grey



Size: 127 x 67 mm
Colour: Red



Size: 133 x 72 mm
Colour: Blue



Size: 140 x 77 mm
Colour: Orange



Size: 147 x 82 mm
Colour: Green



Size: 153 x 82 mm
Colour: Yellow-brown



Size: 160 x 82 mm
Colour: Purple



Visual 3

The Euro

- The euro first became available for electronic transactions in 1999 and has been the currency of France and other European countries since 2002.
- The euro replaced the former French currency, the franc. It also replaced the currency of several other countries, the number of which continues to grow.
- The main purpose of the adoption of the euro was to strengthen the economy of Europe.
- The euro currency varies in size and color, with the higher denomination bills being larger in size. Pictures of architecture, particularly bridges, windows, and doors, are included on the face of the bills.
- Exchange rates change daily.

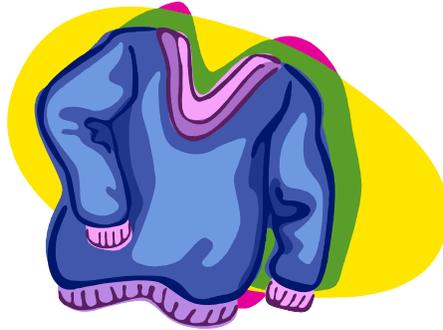
In early 2009, the value of the EURO was

$$\begin{array}{rcl} 1.00 \text{ USD} & = & 0.674222 \text{ EUR} \\ \text{United States Dollars} & & \text{Euro} \\ \mathbf{1 \text{ USD} = 0.674222 \text{ EUR}} & & \mathbf{1 \text{ EUR} = 1.48319 \text{ USD}} \end{array}$$

Retrieved from: XE Currency Site xe.com/currencyconverter/.

Visual 4

Comparison of Currency



Example of a previous rate:

United States

Exchange Rate:

1 USD = 0.77 EURO

France

Exchange Rate:

1 EURO = 1.29 USD (1/.77)

Today's rate:

United States

Exchange Rate:

1 USD = ____ EURO

France

Exchange rate:

1 EURO = ____ EURO

Visual 5



Bellringer Review

Exchange the following currency rates from U.S. dollars to euros. Today's exchange rate is _____.

1. \$5.00 USD
2. \$25.00 USD
3. \$50.00 USD
4. \$100.00 USD

Activity 1

BELLRINGER 1 Student Worksheet



Bellringer

Savez-vous?

What is the currency of the following countries?

1. France _____
2. Vietnam _____
3. Switzerland _____
4. Ivory Coast _____

Activity 2

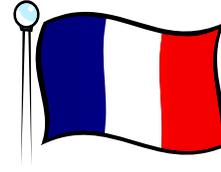
Vocabulaire

1. exchange	échange
2. market	marché
3. foreign exchange	devises
4. international trade	commerce international
5. import	importation
6. export	exportation
7. bank	banque
8. currency	monnaie
9. value	valeur
10. rate	taux
11. depreciation	dépréciation

Assignment: Your assignment is to create a list in French of at least six imported goods used by you, your family, or your school.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Activity 3



Trade Agreement Skit

In teams of two, one student must act the role of the CEO for Evian Water in France, and the other student must act the role of an international business officer from the United States. The Evian CEO must convince the international business officer from the United States to import Evian water into the United States.

Use words from **Activity 1: Vocabulaire**.

Be prepared to share your skits with the class.

Activity 4

Show Me the Euro



Internet Scavenger Hunt

Student directions: Your task is to prepare a two-page report, "Show Me the Euro." A final draft is due in one week, and your final report is due in two weeks. The report should include the following: history of the euro, which countries use the euro today, why do countries use the euro, what are some advantages and disadvantages of the euro, who "manages" the euro, and how has the euro/U.S. dollar exchange rate changed over time. Use the following Web sites to gather information:

Currency information

Exchange rates

<http://x-rates.com/table/?from=EUR>

Euro conversion

<http://dailyfx.com/eur-usd>

How the euro is used

<http://money.howstuffworks.com/euro.htm>

Information on euro currency

<http://xe.com/currency/eur-euro>

Euro currency market

<http://investopedia.com/terms/e/eurocurrencymarket.asp>

Background information

Euro Commission

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/euro/

The European Union at a glance (the Euro)

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/hong_kong/documents/education/education_material/europe_in_12_lessons_booklet_2011.pdf#page=46