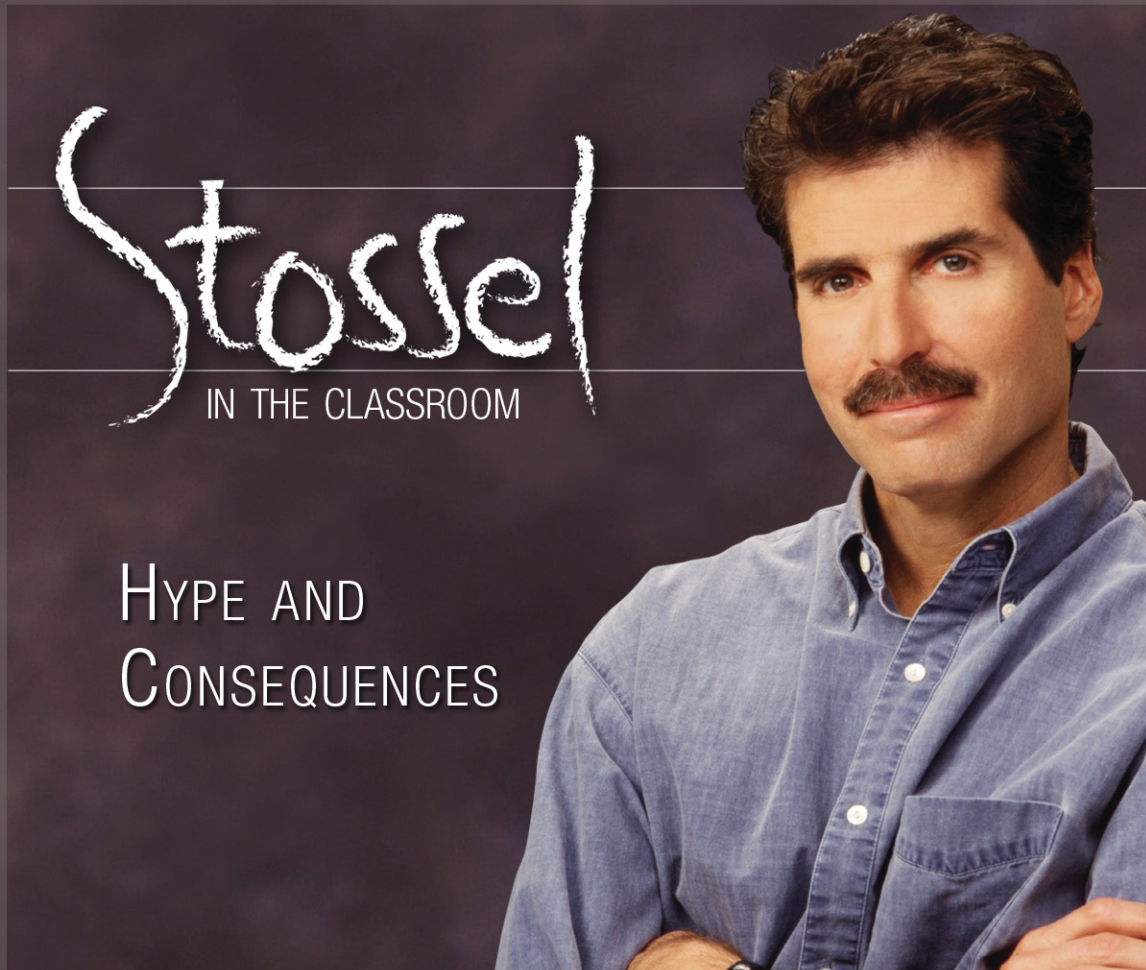




TEACHER'S GUIDE



FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

DEAR **EDUCATOR:**

I am excited to offer you the second edition of Stossel in the Classroom entitled Hype and Consequences. The feedback from teachers is that the product brings lesson plans to life, engages students and encourages them to think and participate, while meeting your curriculum and learning standards requirements.

I hope you'll use the discussion questions and activities in this guide, along with the DVD, to help your students improve their critical thinking skills, while giving them the confidence to express their opinions.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Stossel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Stossel

ABOUT **JOHN STOSSEL**

John Stossel, a graduate of Princeton University, started his journalism career at a Portland, Oregon television station. He joined ABC first as a consumer editor of Good Morning America, then joined ABC News' newsmagazine, 20/20, where he is now co-anchor. He is the author of Give Me A Break and Lies, Myths, and Downright Stupidity. He has received many honors for his work, including 19 Emmy Awards.

<http://www.stosselintheclassroom.org>

<http://abcnews.go.com/2020/Stossel>

<http://www.centerforindependentthought.org/>

HYPE AND CONSEQUENCES

From: JOHN STOSSEL, STOSSEL IN THE CLASSROOM
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL EDITION

Written by: TAWNI HUNT FERRARINI, Northern Michigan University

Grade levels: High School and Advanced Middle School

Subject Areas: Social Studies, Current Events, Civics/Government, Political
Science, Economics, and Journalism

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High-Priced Fashion

Segment Length: 6:49 minutes

Lesson Description: The “High-Priced Fashion” video clip illustrates economic reasoning by featuring how individuals weigh the benefits of making a purchase against its costs. In this piece, the total costs of purchasing sneakers include the retail price plus the opportunity costs of paying rent, buying food, purchasing other necessities, saving and so forth. Finally, this segment illustrates the trade-offs and the unintended consequences of using money to buy “popular” items.

Concepts

Incentives
Needs and Wants
Opportunity Costs
Scarcity
Trade-offs
Unintended Consequences

Objectives

Students will:

1. Identify the benefits and costs of making a purchase.
2. Discuss the opportunity cost of making a purchase.
3. Balance benefits against costs when purchasing something.
4. Explain why they cannot have everything they want because of scarcity.
5. Discuss the unintended consequences of using money to buy something that fills an economic want versus a need.

Preview Questions:

Why do some kids think “they ‘gotta’ have the hottest brands?” When you buy anything is there any other cost than the price of the item and sales tax?

Discussion and Analysis Questions

1. Why do you and others buy “hot” items like the high-priced sneakers featured in this video clip? What benefits do you and others get from high fashion purchases? What are the costs incurred by you and the other people buying them? Think about this carefully. Do the benefits outweigh the costs?
2. Discuss the difference between wants and needs. Use examples from the video clip to create a short list of (i) wants and (ii) needs. Explain why you can not have everything you want or need because of scarcity of money.
3. Economics is about trade-offs. Money is limited and scarce. Use points from the video clip to explain how individuals who buy one good trade-off purchasing or “paying for” something else.
4. Buying a \$150 or \$200 pair of sneakers means you can’t spend in other areas. Money is limited and scarce relative to what we want, need or desire. Based on the concepts of scarcity and opportunity costs, explain why Marbury’s mother would not let him or his siblings buy high-priced sneakers because of their high opportunity costs. That is, describe the things that Marbury and his

siblings would have had to give up if they had purchased the high price sneakers. Explain why the costs of buying popular sneakers were likely greater than the benefits in Marbury's family. Do you think the family made a good decision? Why or why not?

5. A crisis in one area may create an opportunity for success in another. Describe how Marbury used his family struggles and individual experiences as a disadvantaged youth to create an opportunity for personal success in the future. How does Marbury's personal success in responding to his family struggles impact today's youth? In other words, what are the consequences of this situation?

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Scarcity exists because individuals have unlimited wants, needs and desires but the resources needed to address them are relatively limited. Scarcity exists
 - a. in all families.
 - b. only in the homes of disadvantaged youth.
 - c. only in poor families.
 - d. only in wealthy families.

Answer: A

2. Consider the following situation. Joe has \$20,000 in savings and now wants to buy a car to drive to and from work and school. He has narrowed his top choices down to two cars. Joe likes both cars equally as well. One is a \$20,000 new car and the other is a \$15,000 used car. The only meaningful difference to Joe is that used car is one year older than the new car, and it had one owner. What is Joe's opportunity cost of spending \$20,000 on the new car?
 - a. \$0
 - b. \$20,000
 - c. \$15,000
 - d. \$15,000 plus the \$5,000 that could be placed in savings and generate 5% in interest income for other types of spending

Answer: D

3. Assuming that quality does not change, what impact would a decrease in the price of sneakers have?
 - a. It would decrease the number of sneakers sold.
 - b. It would increase the number of sneakers sold.
 - c. It would have no impact.
 - d. It would lead people to stop buying sneakers.

Answer: B

4. In economics, what do unintended consequences refer to?
 - a. The best alternative that must be forgone as the result of a choice.
 - b. The immediate and visible expected consequences of an action.
 - c. The secondary effects of an action that are not immediately identifiable but recognized later or over time.
 - d. The costs of producing a good or service.

Answer: C

Activities

1. Ordinary decision makers “often consider only the immediate direct effects of a change, whereas strategic decision makers also carefully consider indirect effects that may only become observable over time.” Discuss why you should always consider the secondary effects of your actions and the unintended consequences of your choices. Illustrate by citing an example in which, after making plans with a well-intended group of people, something happened at school or home that people did not expect.
2. After viewing the video clip, ask students to write a short essay on the traits held by entrepreneurs such as Marbury. Entrepreneurs are people willing to take strategic risks of success and failure to pursue a dream. Explain what incentives encourage them to take these risks.
3. Research and report on the unintended consequences of dropping out of high school. What is the average amount of income someone can expect if he or she doesn’t earn a high school degree or its equivalent? Discuss what a high school dropout can expect to afford to spend on food, housing, clothing and other items on this average income. You may use <http://themint.org> as a credible resource.



Vaccine Fears

Segment Length: 6:47 minutes

Lesson Description: This video clip features both sides of the vaccine debate. The benefits of getting and not getting vaccines are discussed, and their risks are presented. The unintended consequences of both sides of this debate are also explored.

Concepts

Incentives
Risks
Secondary Effects
Unintended Consequences

Objectives

Students will:

1. Compare the benefits and costs in order to investigate both sides of the vaccine debate.
2. Examine why people take risks and why they do not try to eliminate all risks.
3. Discuss the secondary effects of the vaccine debate on pharmaceutical companies and lawyers.
4. Explain why perceptions and incentives matter.

Preview Questions: Do the benefits of vaccines outweigh the risks? Or is the opposite true? Should you be concerned about whether the person sitting next to you has all of the required vaccines? Explain your answer.

Discussion and Analysis Questions

1. Ask students to explain why there is so much controversy over vaccines.

2. Identify some of the risks associated with (i) getting vaccinated and (ii) not getting vaccinated. People on both sides of the vaccine debate take risks. Explain why they do. Why do they not try to eliminate all risks?
3. Discuss some of the unintended consequences of not getting vaccinated.
 - a. Are there any students with parents who have discussed not getting a child vaccinated?
 - b. Can the decision not to get vaccinated inadvertently impact others if the person without the vaccine contracts a highly contagious but preventable disease? Use a video clip excerpt to answer.
4. What are some of the risks associated with getting vaccinated?
 - a. What benefits do autistic children receive? What benefits do “quirky”, “geeky”, or “nerdy” receive? Explain why they may or may not be treated differently.
 - b. Can you immediately conclude that vaccines cause autism? Explain.
 - c. As reported in the video, on average, the number of reported cases of autistic children is also on the rise and the number of vaccines is on the rise. Can you connect with certainty the rise in the number autistic children to the rise in the number of vaccines? Why or why not?
5. Like individuals, pharmaceutical companies consider the costs and benefits of certain choices before making a decision. If you were a board member of a vaccine-producing company, what might be some of the costs and benefits you would consider with each vaccine? What would be your reasons for developing or not developing safer vaccines?
6. Do some lawyers try to link autism and other medical conditions to vaccines? How can childhood-autism lawsuits impact pharmaceutical companies, parents, and their children? What do you think about this impact? What are the pros and cons of this type of litigation?
7. Explain why perceptions matter using excerpts from the video.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Which of the following will occur if a media scare decreases the demand for whooping cough vaccine?
 - a. A surplus of the vaccine will emerge.
 - b. A shortage of the vaccine will emerge.
 - c. Pharmaceutical companies will have incentive to produce more and more of the vaccine.
 - d. There will be a rise in the number of people getting the vaccine.

Answer: A

2. Why are lawyers willing to file lawsuits against pharmaceutical companies for producing vaccines that may have links to serious side effects?
 - a. The U.S. government requires lawyers to do so.
 - b. Consumers of the vaccines encourage them to file.
 - c. Expected profits from doing so are high.
 - d. Expected profits from doing so are low.

Answer: C

3. Assuming there are no side-effects, who gains from a vaccine given to a child?

- a. The doctor and producer of the vaccine only.
- b. The parent or guardian only.
- c. The child only.
- d. All parties mentioned above gain.

Answer: D

4. Which of the following will most likely result in an increase in the amount of resources pharmaceutical companies invest in developing safer vaccines?
 - a. Higher expected profits in the production of current but not necessarily safer vaccines.
 - b. Higher expected profits in the production of safer vaccines.
 - c. Lower expected profits in the production of safer vaccines.
 - d. Higher expected costs in the production of safer vaccines.

Answer: B

Activities

1. Refer to the current research on the West Nile Virus (WNV) posted by Cornell University at: <http://environmentalrisk.cornell.edu/WNV/> to complete the following tasks. (Note: The purpose of this exercise is not to tell the students that there is a “right” way to complete this activity. It is to help students ask the right questions, seek the well informed answers and present educated opinions.)
 - a. Summarize the current research on the WNV.
 - b. Now, assess the risks and benefits of investing more money in medical research on how to address the current WNV situation.
2. Profits and losses provide producers with incentive to produce more or less, respectively. When supply and demand conditions change, prices change which, in turn, change incentives for producers. Higher prices will generate more revenue and encourage more production while lower prices will generate less revenue and, thus, lower production. Similarly, changes in the costs to production will also impact production. Higher costs translate into increased losses or less profit, which lower production; lower costs mean fewer losses, higher profit and more production. Use this information to answer the following questions:
 - a. How will the producers of pharmaceuticals respond to increased litigation against a specific vaccine? Explain.
 - b. A new vaccine promises to eliminate major diseases at minimal risk. How will the demand for the vaccine be impacted? What will happen to price and how will producers react to this change in price?
 - c. Pharmaceutical companies have the ability to develop safer vaccines but some do not. Explain why.



Ethanol Fuel

Segment Length: 4:40 minutes

Lesson Description: Should we use more ethanol to save the environment? This video clip illustrates the benefits and costs of using ethanol. The unintended consequences of the surge in the political and media interest in ethanol on the corn industry and its secondary markets are presented.

Concepts

Incentives
Government Subsidy
Special-Interest Groups
Unintended Consequences

Objectives

Students will:

1. Use the debate over corn-based ethanol to explain why incentives matter to farmers, politicians and consumers.
2. Explore the opportunity costs of ethanol production.
3. Investigate the impact of increased ethanol production on other markets dependent on corn.

Preview Questions: Why do some people think ethanol is great? Can using more ethanol save the environment? Why do some people think it can not?

Discussion and Analysis Questions

1. Using the information presented in the video clip, list the benefits of using ethanol. Now list the costs. Include the costs of (i) using more fertilizer and other resources to produce corn, (ii) taking farm land out of the production of other crops and (iii) using pesticides. Weigh the benefits against the costs and comment on what you find.
2. In economics, the opportunity cost of a choice is the value of the second best alternative. When farmers produce corn, they sacrifice producing something else.
 - a. According to the video, what must farmers give up in order to increase ethanol production?
 - b. Using the concept of trade-offs and the answer to the previous question, explain why the surge in ethanol production could come at the expense of another part of the economy.
3. Explain how increased ethanol production can benefit you or your parents. How can it hurt all of you? Use these costs and benefits to answer the following question: overall, is corn-based ethanol production good or harmful? Support your position by balancing the benefits against the costs.
4. According to the video, farmers are increasing corn production because of subsidy programs.
 - a. What are subsidy programs and who funds them?
 - b. Who decides which subsidy programs are funded and what are their motives?
 - c. How do eligible producers respond to subsidy programs?
 - d. Explain why this response may be harmful to the environment according to some people.
5. Without subsidy programs, farmers keep track of profits and losses in all areas of production in order to decide what to produce, when to produce it and for whom to produce.
 - a. Is this type of decision-making good or harmful? Explain.
 - b. Compare this type of production to the type of production that takes place under a subsidy program.
 - c. Comment on the differences and form an opinion on which is best.

6. According to the video, list all the reasons why politicians would want to increase ethanol production. Do any items on this list surprise you? Why? How do the processors of ethanol and producers of corn benefit from this political support? How are consumers with or without connections to these politicians or special-interest groups positively and negatively impacted by this activity?
7. Discuss who is helped and who is hurt by the ethanol subsidy. Remember to think about the agriculturalist that has land to farm as well as the corn consumer.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Who receives the ethanol subsidy?
 - a. The corn consumer
 - b. The corn producer
 - c. All voters
 - d. A politician
2. If there is a sharp increase in the production of corn for ethanol use only, which of the following will likely occur if all else is held constant?
 - a. Corn fed cattle will be more costly to feed and this cost increase will be passed onto you and your parents in the form of higher beef and milk prices.
 - b. Well-organized farming groups with interests in corn-based ethanol production will help promote overall progress across all industries in the United States.
 - c. Research on alternative energies other than corn-based ethanol.
 - d. Consumers will purchase more gas guzzling vehicles that do not use ethanol.

Answer: A

3. Economic reasoning implies that personal benefits and costs influence whose actions?
 - a. Consumers but not voters or taxpayers.
 - b. Producers but not politicians.
 - c. Taxpayers but not the recipients of subsidies.
 - d. Everyone.

Answer: D

4. Why will some politicians be able to gain votes from subsidy programs? The subsidy programs created by the politicians will benefit
 - a. all consumer groups.
 - b. all producer groups.
 - c. well organized interest groups whose members will make large contributions to political campaigns.
 - d. foreigners who will, therefore, make large contributions to the politicians' campaigns.

Answer: C

5. What is the most reasonable explanation for why agricultural groups with special-interests lobby for farm subsidies?
 - a. Without these farm subsidies, market shortages necessarily result.
 - b. Subsidies promote the efficient use of agricultural resources.

- c. The interest groups want to use the subsidy programs to redistribute money paid in their favor.
- d. The subsidy programs decrease food prices for all, which helps the poor.

Answer: C

Activities

1. Write an essay describing how government subsidies influence farmers' behaviors. Use research on corn-based ethanol.
2. Research the debate on corn-based ethanol production. Write a position paper that summarizes your findings and clearly answers the following question: overall, is corn-based ethanol production helpful or harmful to our society? Present your position to the class.
3. Use the debate over corn-based ethanol production to explain why students and others should understand and identify secondary effects and possible unintended consequences.



Unintended Consequences

Segment Length: 5:54 minutes

Lesson Description: Through a lively discussion about the debate on bicycle helmets, this lesson explores the benefits, costs and unintended consequences of federal, state and local laws created by well intended people.

Concept

Decision-Making
Incentives
Opportunity Cost
Trade-offs
Unintended Consequences

Objectives

Students will:

1. Understand that people respond predictably to positive and negative incentives.
2. Identify the opportunity cost of and incentives behind a decision.
3. Recognize that laws are created by well-intended people with specific goals in mind.
4. Realize that all decisions have secondary effects and some have unintended consequences.
5. Highlight the importance of integrating secondary effects and unintended consequences into decision-making.

Preview Questions: Why do some state laws require some cyclists to wear bicycle helmets? Does your state have a helmet law? When do you choose to wear a helmet when riding a bike?

Discussion and Analysis Questions

1. We live in a world of trade-offs. When we decide to act in one way, we choose not to act in another. The value of the second best alternative or act when a decision is made is called its opportunity cost. Wearing a helmet while riding a bicycle comes at a cost: the cost of *not* wearing

a helmet while riding a bike. Using this information, identify the opportunity cost of each of the following acts:

- a. Wearing a seat belt.
 - b. Volunteering to work at a community home on a Saturday morning.
 - c. Choosing to buy a \$200 pair of sneakers.
 - d. Studying for a test on a Friday night.
2. How many of you always wear helmets when you ride bikes? Does everyone wear a helmet while riding a bike?
- a. Individuals balance benefits against costs, choosing those acts that promise the highest benefits for them at the lowest costs. People with different preferences and perceptions of benefits and costs will respond to different incentives in different ways, choosing different things. In the video clip, Ian Walker reports that the number of active bicyclists wearing helmets is on the rise while the number of people actually biking is falling. Use a discussion of costs and benefits to explain why wearing helmets for some active bicyclists makes sense while it does not for others.
3. The intended consequences or benefits of safety rules are most often realized right away. However, their unintended consequences are not; they're usually felt over time. Discuss the intended and unintended consequences of each of the following:
- a. The Food and Drug Administration passing a law requiring child safety caps on medications.
 - b. Some parents constantly striving to keep their homes as clean as possible.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Unintended consequences of safety rules are
- a. rare.
 - b. seldom realized.
 - c. common.
 - d. always realized.

Answer: C

2. The effectiveness of well-intended laws may be *reduced* when they
- a. have unintended consequences.
 - b. are followed.
 - c. are enforced through even-handed means.
 - d. are created by well-intended and educated people.

Answer: A

3. Many individuals
- a. rarely consider the immediate and direct consequences of an act.
 - b. always consider the indirect effects of their actions and decisions because they can easily be observed over time.
 - c. often forget or ignore the indirect effects of their actions and decisions because they only become observable over time.
 - d. act on impulse only.

Answer: C

4. What is the opportunity cost of wearing a seat belt?
 - a. The value of not wearing a seat belt.
 - b. The cost of installing a seat belt in a car.
 - c. The future cost of maintaining the seat belt in the car.
 - d. The fine paid for not wearing a seat belt.

Answer: A

Activities

1. Visit the [National Center for Statistics and Analysis \(NCSA\) Home Page](http://www.nhtsa.gov/) at <<http://www.nhtsa.gov/>>. Conduct a search on the words “Motorcycle Helmet Laws.” Describe the benefits as well as the intended and unintended consequences of motorcycle helmet laws. Use your research to explain why some states have repealed their helmet laws, in part, because of the unintended consequences.
2. Some people think that many problems, such as getting medicinal drugs at affordable prices, can be solved only if the government intervenes and sets prices through regulation. Others argue that governments cannot solve such problems; they only make them worse. What is your position on the high price of some pharmaceutical drugs? Consider answering some or all of the following questions to form an educated opinion about both sides of the debate.
 - a. Why was the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) created? What is the FDA’s drug safety initiative? Visit the FDA home page at: <<http://www.fda.gov/>> to find out the answers to these questions.
 - b. How do the FDA’s drug safety regulations influence the drug prices charged by U.S. pharmaceutical companies? The FDA tells consumers that they should think seriously before purchasing drugs in other countries over the Internet regardless of price. Why?
 - c. How does any rise in price influence some people’s decisions to purchase pharmaceutical drugs over the Internet from companies located outside of the U.S.? Why are many people willing to make these purchases in light of the dangers?
 - d. Do the benefits of the FDA’s involvement in the U.S. pharmaceutical drug industry outweigh the costs? Why or why not?
 - e. What do you think? Should the U.S. government intervene and place a cap on the price of pharmaceutical drugs? What are the benefits of this involvement? How will pharmaceutical companies respond to this involvement? What are the unintended consequences? Explain your position by answering these questions and using the answers provided to a through d.



Food Donation

Segment Length: 3:49 minutes

Lesson Description: There are many not-for-profit establishments that provide meals to the poor and other individuals. But health departments across the United States are holding these organizations to the same regulatory standards as profit-driven restaurants. This lesson explains why and explores the unintended consequences of doing so.

Concepts

Incentives
Opportunity Cost
Unintended Consequences

Objectives

Students will:

1. Understand that incentives matter and people respond to incentives.
2. Recognize that decisions have intended and unintended consequences, costs and benefits.
3. Appreciate that laws are created by well-intended people with specific goals in mind.
4. Realize that unintended consequences should be considered when decisions are made even though they can be easily forgotten or ignored.

Preview Questions: Why do people serve community meals to the poor? Should the soup kitchens that provide meals to the poor be required to follow the same health, food and safety standards as restaurants? Should they be closed if they can not meet those standards? Why do you think soup kitchens find it difficult to meet all standards? Where would the poor or distressed people eating there find some meals if the community kitchens closed?

Discussion and Analysis Questions

1. Many individuals across the United States benefit from the work of the volunteers and people working in soup kitchens.
 - a. What needs are members of community- or faith-based organizations trying to meet by offering these meals? What incentive do they have to provide them?
 - b. What costs do these organizations face when supplying these meals?
 - c. How are the costs of providing the meals covered?
 - d. Should not-for-profit organizations and profit-driven restaurants meet the same health, food and safety standards set by local health departments or the U.S. Food and Drug Administration? Explain.
 - e. What are the intended and unintended consequences of closing soup kitchens because they can not meet those standards?
2. Soup kitchens and other community organizations across the U.S. serve free or reasonably priced meals to the poor. They are often staffed by volunteers and organized by not-for-profit organizations such as churches.
 - a. Why do poor and hungry people value community meals?
 - b. Opportunity cost is the value of the benefits of the next best alternative that could have been chosen, but was not. According to the video clip, some of the visitors faced a less than desirable alternative to eating at the community kitchens. What is this alternative?
 - c. Explain why these visitors may want to eat at community kitchens rather than eat at the second-best alternative described in b above even if the kitchens pose some health risks according to the government.
3. The Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, a center within the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and local health departments regulate the activities of people and establishments providing meals to others.
 - a. Why do you think the FDA and health departments came into existence? That is, what were the intentions of those individuals behind their creation? What problem or problems were they trying to solve?
 - b. Some soup kitchens did not meet the FDA's regulations. What were the unintended consequences of creating these regulatory agencies and enforcing their rules? Specifically, what were the unintended consequences on the not-for-profit organizations running the soup kitchens and the people they served?

- c. According to the video, how are these well-intended officials working at these regulatory agencies addressing these unintended consequences?

Multiple Choice Questions

- 1. The decisions of today have
 - a. only intended consequences that lie in the future.
 - b. only unintended consequences that lie in the future.
 - c. intended and unintended consequences that lie in the future.
 - d. no impact on the future.

Answer: C

- 2. Some individuals either eat in the soup kitchens or consume the discarded food found in dumpsters. For these people, what is the opportunity cost of eating a community meal?
 - a. The community meal
 - b. A meal at a fast food restaurant
 - c. A meal at home
 - d. The dumpster meal

Answer: D

- 3. When the perceived benefits of an act are expected to rise above their costs, people will move forward with an activity. When they expect costs to rise above benefits, people will do the opposite and step back. Holding all other factors constant, this explains why:
 - a. Soup kitchens will close when the costs of meeting health codes and food standards rise significantly.
 - b. The poor will eat at soup kitchens when the meals are bad and pose serious health risks.
 - c. Soup kitchens will close when the costs of meeting health codes and food standards fall significantly.
 - d. The poor people lobby and force all soup kitchens to incur all costs associated with following the same federal and state laws concerning health, food and safety as restaurants.

Answer: A

- 4. People make the best decisions when they
 - a. consider the benefits, costs, secondary effects and unintended consequences.
 - b. regularly ignore the opportunity cost of an act and only consider its money cost.
 - c. only consider the benefits and ignore all other factors.
 - d. forget that decisions made today have intended and unintended consequences that lie in the future.

Answer: A

Activities

- 1. Have you ever volunteered in a soup kitchen? Why or why not? Do you think you could work at a restaurant in the future? Whether volunteering your time at a soup kitchen or working at a restaurant, teens should try to be healthy and safe on the “job”. This benefits the worker or volunteer and the person being served. Visit the U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s (OSHA) Teen Safety Website at: <<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/youth/>

[restaurant/index.html](#)>. Describe two hazards you face and explain how to prevent them in the following areas:

- a. Food preparation.
 - b. Serving food.
 - c. Cleaning up.
2. Should health authorities close soup kitchens if they can not meet the same health, safety and food standards as restaurants? Why or why not? Are there special considerations? Explain.
 3. Some churches and community organizations actively encourage their visitors to volunteer in preparing, serving, and cleaning up after meals. If they do, the visitors can take some food home. If they volunteer with regularity and consistency, they may receive some money for their efforts.
 - a. Why would these types of organizations offer this incentive program in addition to providing one meal to each visitor?
 - b. What type of visitor behavior is the organization trying to encourage?
 - c. What incentive do the visitors have to volunteer?
 - d. What incentive do the visitors have to volunteer with regularity and consistency?
 - e. How does this regular volunteer effort benefit the visitor in the active workforce?



Media Scores

Segment Length: 5:49 minutes

Lesson Description: This lesson helps students understand how perceptions of risk can influence behavior. It explores how students can assess risks. It encourages them to research risks in order to shape as well-informed perceptions of these risks as time will allow before acting.

Concepts

Benefits
Risks
Perceptions
Unintended Consequences

Objectives

Students will:

1. Understand that a choice, usually, is not between a high-risk option and a risk-free one. Rather, it is a trade-off among actions, all of which involve some risk.
2. Realize that our perceptions of risks and benefits influence our behavior.
3. Find that analyzing risks can help them make informed decisions and minimize the likelihood of unwanted side effects.
4. Discover that all actions have intended and unintended consequences even if the unintended consequences are forgotten and ignored.

Preview Questions: What are you or someone else you know currently worrying about that is connected to the media? Should you worry about all things or just the right things reported by the media and others?

Discussion and Analysis Questions

1. One suggestion in the video is that “risk matters.” When students perceive an activity as risky, they sometimes respond by adjusting their behavior. Use evidence from the video to answer the following questions:
 - a. Provide two examples from the clip that illustrate that an individual’s perception of the risks associated with an activity matters. Describe how these perceptions influence behavior. What motivates the people in the video to accept the risks of certain activities and reject others?
 - b. When do perceived risks influence your behavior? Explain why you choose to accept some risks or not others.
 - c. Describe a time in which the media shaped people’s perceptions of terrorist risks. How did this media reporting then influence the behaviors of some of the members of the viewing audience? Now describe a time in which the media influenced your behavior or the behavior of someone you know.
2. Our perception of risks without any context can cause us to jump to conclusions without gathering enough information about actual risks within the relative context. Considering the context and its relative risks can lead us to make an informed decision about a situation.
 - a. Consider the bird flu example. Describe how the media influenced the members of the viewing audience’s perceptions about the risks of getting the bird flu. Now explain how these perceptions influenced behavior. Discuss what happened to the demand for the bird flu shot during the media hype.
 - b. Based on the number of reported cases, what was the actual risk of contracting the bird flu in the U.S. at the time of the video’s taping? What do you think about this number? Do you think all the media attention justified? How would the demand for the bird flu shot have changed if individuals had researched this topic and gathered reliable statistics on bird flu in the U.S.? Explain.
 - c. Now compare the risk of contracting the bird flu *relative* to the regular flu using information gathered from the video. With this additional information on relative risks, now describe how you think anyone concerned about getting the flu may have behaved.
 - d. Did the media scare and its reaction to the bird flu scare have any unintended consequences? List them. What was gained and what was lost? Did the gain(s) cover the loss(es)? Explain.
3. Consider the video presentation on a house with a pool or a house with a gun.
 - a. If prior to viewing the video you perceived a house with a gun relatively more dangerous for a child than a house with a pool, raise your hand. If your hand is raised, explain why you continue to think or thought this way. Why do those with hands not raised disagree? As everyone watched the video and paid attention to researched information on the relative risks, did opinions change or stay the same? Why or why not?
 - b. What do the statistics on reported deaths of children associated with guns versus pools suggest? Which is statistically riskier for a child – a house with a pool or one with a gun?
 - c. What do you think about these statistics? Do they give the media reports more credibility? Why or why not?
 - d. Is there a difference between your pre-video perception and what is suggested by the statistics? What about some of your classmates’ perceptions?
 - e. Does any difference matter if parents are concerned about the dangers associated with letting their children play at houses with or without pools or guns? Explain why or why not.
4. Explain why you should worry about the right things and not all things. Describe in your answer what is meant by the right things and what is meant by all things.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. The media has incentive to report on which of the following?
 - a. Anything, without concern for what the majority of viewers value or find interesting.
 - b. Scientific findings, regardless of whether details and statistics attract and keep viewers' interest.
 - c. Subjects related to the dry or routine aspects of the viewers' lives.
 - d. Issues that attract and hold the attention of the majority of viewers.

Answer: D

2. Josephina is concerned about the health risks getting the regular flu and the bird flu, but she has only enough medical coverage and money to get one vaccine. She
 - a. can get both the bird and regular flu vaccine.
 - b. must choose one or the other vaccine.
 - c. must go without both vaccines.
 - d. should choose the vaccine with the highest money cost and lowest risk of contracting the targeted disease.

Answer: B

3. Many personal, business, political and social decisions are based on which expectation(s)?
 - a. Benefits only.
 - b. Costs only.
 - c. Risks only.
 - d. Benefits, costs and risks.

Answer: D

4. Which of the following is true with regards to recent advances in medical technology?
 - a. They only improve the quality of life and they have no health risks.
 - b. They involve little or no risk to the individual's life or health.
 - c. They never fail while under development or when used by individuals.
 - d. They continually involve risks of success and failure over the course of their development and use.

Answer: D

Activities

1. The video clip states: "Visual image is so much more powerful than the percentage. The picture is worth 1,000 ratios." Illustrate what is meant by this statement by applying it to the discussion of the dangers associated with youth drinking and driving.
2. Complete the Science NetLinks® Risks and Benefits: E-sheet posted at: <<http://www.sciencenetlinks.com/Esheet.cfm?DocID=118>>. (Note: This E-sheet, from a Science NetLinks® lesson, guides students through an online exploration of the risks and benefits associated with cell phone use while driving. Instructions for a final writing activity are provided as well.)
3. The Gun Control Debate: Where Do You Stand and Why? Write an essay that takes a position on the gun control debate. This should be a well informed position that is fully researched and not just influenced by the media or others' opinions. Here are some guidelines on steps you can

follow to complete your research and essay:

- a. Before doing any research, answer the following questions after discussing the topics with your classmates: Why do you think gun control prevents or does not prevent gun crime? Why do some individuals believe that more guns lead to more gun violence? Describe how you and others came to form opinions on gun control.
- b. Visit the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Bureau of Justice Statistics' website to view the Key Crime and Justice Facts at a Glance page: <<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/glance.htm#firearm>>. Use the page to research the firearm crime trends. Summarize the DOJ report on the trends.
- c. Expand your search on the topic of gun control and gather more facts. Sum them up.
- d. Do the statistics and facts surprise you? Why or why not? Does the DOJ data change your opinion on the topic? Does the data change the opinions held by some of your classmates? Why or why not?
- e. In a short essay, present both sides of the gun debate. Use the statistics and other facts to form an opinion on which side of the debate has more credibility. Explain why you give more weight to the evidence presented on one side versus the other.

Additional Resources

The Center for Civic Education <<http://www.civiced.org/index.php?page=stds>> posts the national standards for civics and government.

EconEdLink and Thinkfinity <http://www.marcopolosearch.org/MPSearch/Advanced_Search.asp?orgn_id=3> provides online lessons for all social studies and economics standards and concepts.

EconomicsAmerica® < <http://www.ncee.net/ea/standards/>> offers a list and description of each national voluntary standard in economics. Online lessons for each standard and all concepts are offered.

Education World® < http://www.education-world.com/standards/national/soc_sci/index.shtml> posts various links to national standards in social studies, U.S. history, and civics. The site offers various activities that integrate current events into the study of these subjects.

Federal Resources for Educational Excellences <http://www.free.ed.gov/subjects.cfm?subject_id=178> provides links to teaching and learning resources in U.S. history and government created by various U.S. Federal Agencies. All resources are electronic or available to teachers at no money cost.

Smithsonian Education <<http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/index.html>> offers various resources linked to U.S. history, culture and other subjects.

Social Studies in Action: A Teaching Practices Library, K-12 <<http://www.learner.org/resources/series166.html>> hosts a video library for K-12 teachers teaching social studies, history and civics.