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# Greedflation

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## **Videos:**

“Is It Inflation? Or Is It Greedflation? | Robert Reich”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gj7WEbh4e0M>

(5:06 minutes)

“Rising Prices Are Caused by Monetary Inflation, Not Greed | Ryan McMaken”

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_0F4yYExnKM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0F4yYExnKM)

(3:37 minutes)

## **Guide:**

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

## **Analysis Questions:**

1. What are the opposing ideas in these two videos?
2. Robert Reich said prices haven't gone down “because corporations have enough monopoly power to keep them high.” What is a monopoly?
3. Ryan McMaken said: "One of the myths being endlessly repeated in this inflationary cycle is the myth that rising prices are caused by greed." Prior to watching these videos, had you heard anyone make this claim?
4. In Robert Reich's video, PepsiCo CEO Hugh Johnston said: “Consumers generally look at our products and say, ‘You know what? They are worth paying a little bit more for.’” What did he mean by this? What do you think of his statement?
5. Ryan McMaken said: "The fact that greed doesn't cause inflation is obvious if we just ask why prices across the board have surged since 2020....Is that all because greed suddenly got worse after 2020 for some unknown reason?" What did he mean by this? How would you answer his question?
6. Robert Reich said: “PepsiCo's only major soda competitor is Coca-Cola, which—surprise, surprise—announced similar price hikes at about the same time as Pepsi.” If greed is the motive behind the price increases, would it be advantageous for PepsiCo or Coca-Cola to lower their prices to get a leg up on the competition? Why/Why not?
7. How did Ryan McMaken define "price inflation"?

8. Robert Reich described the rising prices as “price gouging.” What is price gouging? Does the term apply in this case? Why/Why not?
9. According to Ryan McMaken, what is the only cause of price inflation?
10. Robert Reich said: “If Pepsi and Coca-Cola had lots of competitors, they wouldn’t be able to raise prices so high because someone would make cheaper substitutes and consumers would buy those instead.” Are there cheaper alternatives to Pepsi and Coca-Cola? If so, why do you think they’re not more popular? If there aren’t cheaper alternatives, why not?
11. Ryan McMaken argued that greed didn't suddenly get worse since 2020, and that inflation is caused by an increase in the money supply. But what caused the increase in the money supply since 2020?
12. Robert Reich said: “Just four companies now control processing of 80% of beef, nearly 70% of pork, and almost 60% of poultry.” Reich described this as “near-monopoly power.” Do you agree with this description? Why/Why not?
13. Ryan McMaken said: "Nearly one-quarter of all the dollars that are out there right now were created since [early 2020]." Were you surprised to learn that? Does it impact your view on the money supply? Why/Why not?
14. Robert Reich said the Biden administration is taking on this problem through antitrust laws. What are antitrust laws?
15. Ryan McMaken used the term "quantitative easing." What is quantitative easing?
16. Robert Reich said: “You might not be able to break up big corporations, but you can keep up the pressure on our government to fight corporate monopoly power.” What are some ways that you can pressure the government?
17. Did these two videos share any common ground? Were there any points on which they agreed? If so, what were they?
18. Should one of the arguments we heard carry more weight than the other? If so, which one? Why?
19. Did you have an opinion on this topic before watching these videos? If so, what was it? Has your opinion changed? If so, how? What did you learn from these videos that affects your views on this topic?
20. What else would you like to learn about this topic?
21. For more on this topic, see these Both Sides of the Issue entries:
  - a. [Both Sides: Stimulus and Inflation](#)
  - b. [Both Sides: Inflation Revisited](#)