
Capitalism Myths Part 1

Video Length: 6:08

Lesson Description:

Are billionaires stealing from the rest of us—or building the future? This lesson challenges students to rethink what they know about capitalism, monopolies, and wealth creation. Through a fast-paced video and critical discussion, students will confront economic myths and explore the surprising ways capitalism benefits society—even the poor.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- identify common myths about capitalism presented in the video
- summarize how entrepreneurs generate new wealth
- analyze how the video challenges popular misconceptions
- evaluate the persuasiveness of arguments defending free-market capitalism

Concepts & Key Terms:

Capitalism: An economic system where private individuals (as opposed to government) own and control property and businesses, aiming to generate profit.

Entrepreneur: An individual who creates and manages a business venture, taking on financial risks in the hope of profit.

Monopoly: A market situation where a single company or group exclusively controls the supply or trade of a product or service, often leading to higher prices and reduced competition.

Wealth Redistribution: Taking from one person to give to another — the reallocation of wealth from some individuals to others, typically through taxation and welfare programs, aiming to reduce economic inequality.

Preview Activity:

Use Think, Pair, Share to have students answer and discuss these preview questions: What is capitalism and how does it work? What is a monopoly? How do billionaire entrepreneurs like Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates impact the economy?

OR

Distribute copies of the K-W-L worksheet to the class. Have students fill in the K and W sections. After showing the video, have students complete the L section and answer the questions at the bottom of the worksheet.

Viewing Guide:

We recommend that teachers show the video twice: first to allow students to view the video and focus on the issues presented, and second to allow them time to complete the viewing guide. After they complete the viewing guide, allow students a few minutes to work in pairs to share and verify answers.

Answers to Viewing Guide

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|------------|
| 1. wealth | 4. capitalism | 7. MySpace |
| 2. better | 5. richer | |
| 3. producing | 6. monopoly | |

Capitalism Myths Part 1

Viewing Guide

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Period _____

Teacher _____

Directions: As you watch the video, fill in the blanks with the correct words.

1. Entrepreneurs create new _____.
2. I hope we get a hundred new super billionaires because that means that there's a hundred new people who have figured out ways to make the rest of our lives _____ off.
3. You're going to start consuming instead of saving and _____.
4. For thousands of years, the world had almost no wealth creation, then some countries tried _____.
5. Guess what? The rest of us get _____ as well.
6. In a free market economy, it's impossible to have a _____.
7. Just 14 years ago, people called _____ a monopoly, then Facebook proved them wrong.

Take a few moments to reflect on the video and answer these questions.

How have billionaires like Bill Gates/Jeff Bezos benefited society? _____

How does competition benefit consumers? _____

What does it mean that entrepreneurs will start consuming and stop saving and producing things if their incentives (amount of money they can make) are limited?

Discussion and Analysis

1. What are some myths about capitalism?
2. How do entrepreneurs create new wealth?
3. When Steve Jobs created Apple (or Bezos created Amazon, etc.), what did he provide to society?
4. What are the risks involved in creating a new company like Amazon/Apple/Facebook, etc.? What are the possible rewards?
5. Do rewards (also known as incentives) matter for entrepreneurs (and everyone!)? Why or why not?
6. Should the government be allowed to determine how much money someone can make? Why or why not? Does that apply only to how much someone can earn at the maximum—or also to the minimum? Why?
7. When you purchase a product from a company owned by a “gazillionaire,” is the founder of the company TAKING (as in theft) your money? Why or why not?
8. Why are monopolies often created by government intervention?
9. How does competition benefit consumers?
10. How does a capitalistic economy provide choice and freedom for people?
11. In what ways has capitalism improved your daily life?
12. How do these arguments compare with what you previously thought about capitalism?
13. What role do banks play in a capitalist economy?
14. Evaluate the effectiveness of the arguments debunking common misconceptions about monopolies. Are there any potential flaws or biases in these arguments?
15. How might myths about capitalism impact public policy and opinion?
16. How would you defend or criticize the view on the role of billionaires in society?

Discuss These Lines from the Video:

No system has redistributed wealth from the poor to the rich as effectively as our own.

Capitalists get rich by taking money from others.

Entrepreneurs create new wealth.

I'm not giving Jeff Bezos any money unless he's selling something that I value more than that money.

If you put a cap on how much money someone can make, are they going to continue innovating?

Monopolies are almost always a creation of government intervention.

We are much richer than our grandparents and our grandparents were much richer than their grandparents.

The middle class is in decline because more and more people are moving into those upper income quintiles.

None of these zillionaires needs that much money.

Quotes for Discussion:

Capitalism is a social system based on the exploitation of the majority by a minority for their private profit.

– Karl Marx

Under capitalism, man exploits man. Under communism, it's just the opposite.

– John Kenneth Galbraith

The inherent vice of capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings; the inherent virtue of socialism is the equal sharing of miseries.

– Winston Churchill

Socialism states that you owe me something simply because I exist. Capitalism, by contrast, results in a sort of reality-forced altruism: I may not want to help you, I may dislike you, but if I don't give you a product or service you want, I will starve. Voluntary exchange is more moral than forced redistribution.

– Ben Shapiro

Indeed, a major source of objection to a free economy is precisely that it...gives people what they want instead of what a particular group thinks they ought to want. Underlying most arguments against the free market is a lack of belief in freedom itself.

– Milton Friedman

Capitalism has proven to be the only system that works, but the problem with capitalism is that extreme wealth ends up in the hands of a few people, and therefore extreme responsibility goes with that wealth.

– Richard Branson

This American system of ours, call it Americanism, call it capitalism, call it what you will, gives each and every one of us a great opportunity if we only seize it with both hands and make the most of it.

– Al Capone

Activities:

1. Have students complete the K-W-L chart in class or for homework. (Recall that the K and W sections are to be completed before watching the video and the L section after watching the video.)
2. Have students complete the political cartoon activity in class or for homework.
3. Have students complete the PMI chart in class or for homework.
4. Have students complete and submit the Exit Ticket as they leave class.
5. Conduct a poll to gauge students' opinions on the myths **before and after** watching the video. Discuss any changes in opinions and what information influenced these changes.
6. Have students complete the crossword puzzle in class or for homework. Differentiation can be provided by using either the version with the words provided in a word box, or the more challenging version which, like a standard crossword puzzle, doesn't provide words from which to choose. An answer key is provided, which applies to both versions of the puzzle.
7. For a fascinating comparison of a free market economy vs. a controlled economy in the same culture, have students watch *Life Behind the Berlin Wall*. (19:38) <https://youtu.be/JZNSL9fT74Q> After watching and discussing, have students create a Venn Diagram comparing life in East Germany vs. life in West Germany, **OR** have them write about which side of Berlin they would have wanted to live on and why.
8. Individually, students will write a one-page summary of the video, highlighting the three myths and the arguments presented against them.
9. Have a class debate. Divide the class into two groups. One group will argue that billionaires are harmful to the economy, while the other will argue that they are beneficial. Students will use evidence from the video and other sources to support their arguments.
10. Students will write a two-page essay (or create a slide presentation or video) explaining how entrepreneurs create new wealth. Encourage them to use specific examples from the video to support their arguments.
11. Have students write an essay evaluating the effectiveness of the video's arguments in debunking common misconceptions about monopolies. They should analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments presented.
12. Entrepreneur Biography – Have students research and write a short biography of a famous entrepreneur. Encourage them to include the hurdles each entrepreneur had to overcome as well as point out the benefits to society that the entrepreneur and his/her creation provided. izzit.org hosts a short video series on real entrepreneurs that makes a great primer before students research or write about one themselves: <https://www.izzit.org/forbes/>

13. In groups, have students role-play a town hall meeting where they debate whether or not to cap individual wealth. Each student takes on a role (e.g., entrepreneur, politician, citizen) and argues from that perspective.

Name _____
Class _____ Period _____

Date _____
Teacher _____

Capitalism Myths Part 1

K-W-L Chart

Directions: Complete the **K** and **W** sections prior to watching the video. After you have seen the video, complete the **L** section and answer the questions below the K-W-L chart.

K		W	L
What I know about capitalism...		What I want to know about capitalism...	What I've learned about capitalism...

Did your mindset/beliefs/understanding about capitalism change after watching this video? If so, how? _____

How does capitalism improve your daily life? _____

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Capitalism Myths Part 1
PMI Chart

P = Plus: What might be some positive effects of capitalism?
M = Minus: What might be some negative effects of capitalism?
I = Interesting: What is interesting about capitalism?

+ Plusses +	- Minuses -	I

In a capitalist society, what happens if a business stops serving its customers well? _____

What is a monopoly and why is bad for consumers? _____

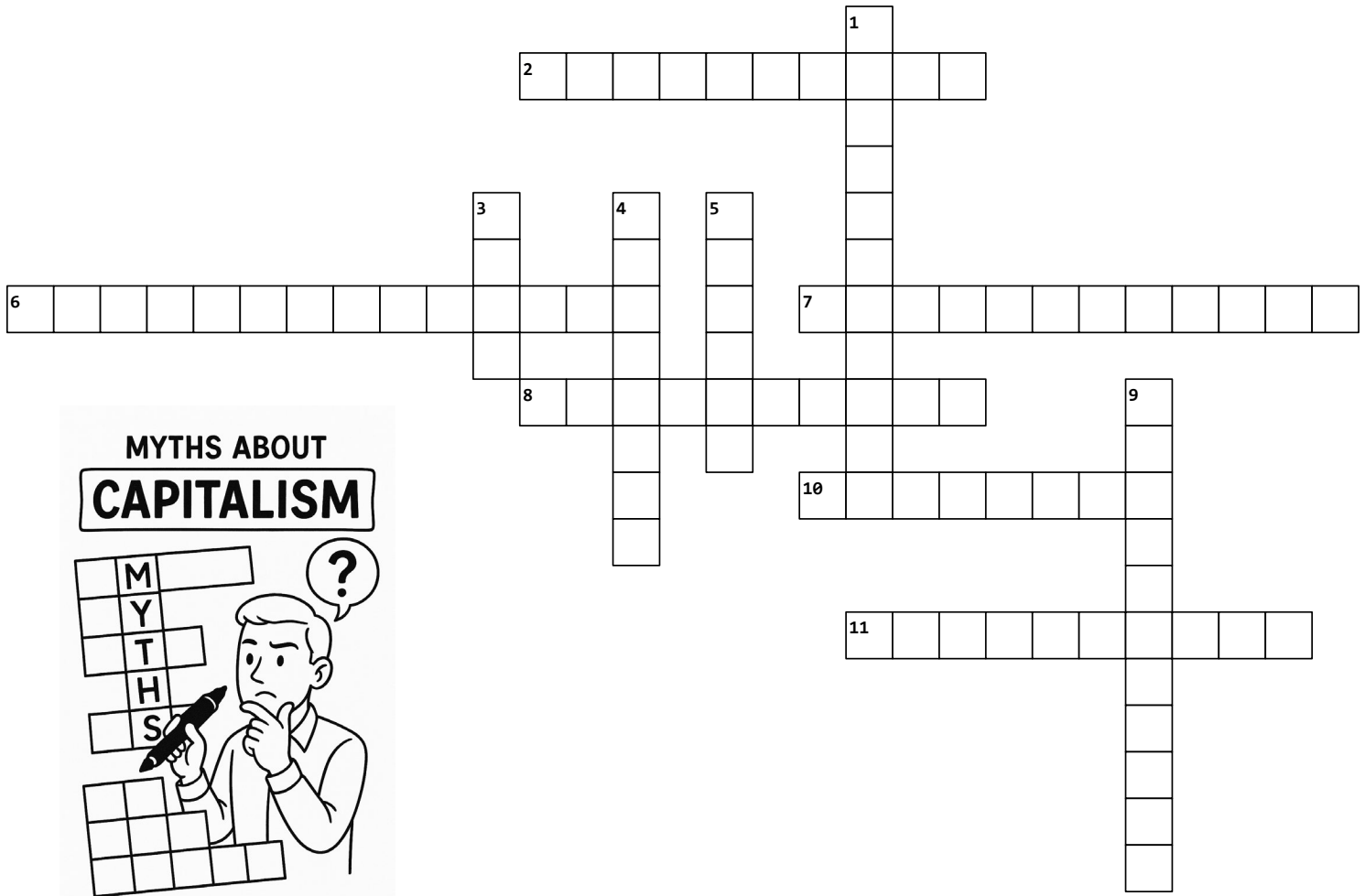
Name _____

Date _____

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Capitalism Myths Part 1



Across

- 2.** Rules or directives made and maintained by an authority to control or manage activities
- 6.** The reallocation of wealth from some individuals to others, typically through taxation and welfare
- 7.** A person who starts and manages a business venture
- 8.** An economic system where private individuals own and control property and businesses
- 10.** A situation in which one party's gain is exactly balanced by another party's loss
- 11.** The act of introducing new ideas, products, or methods

Down

- 1.** A person with wealth valued at over a billion dollars
- 3.** A widely held but false belief or idea
- 4.** A market situation where one company exclusively controls the supply or trade of a product or service
- 5.** The abundance of valuable resources or material possessions
- 9.** Rivalry among businesses to attract customers and increase sales

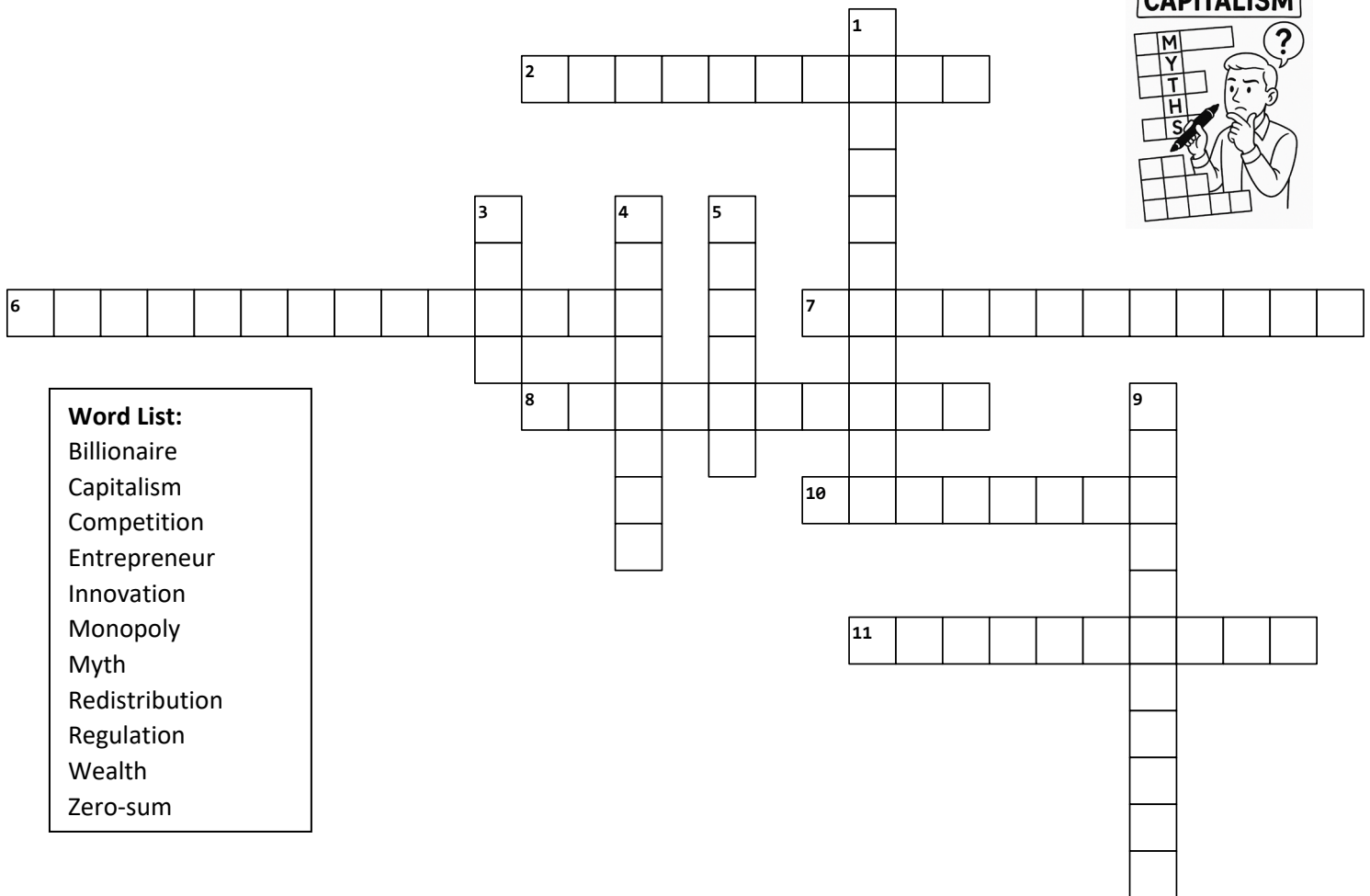
Name _____

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Capitalism Myths Part 1



Word List:

Billionaire
Capitalism
Competition
Entrepreneur
Innovation
Monopoly
Myth
Redistribution
Regulation
Wealth
Zero-sum

Across

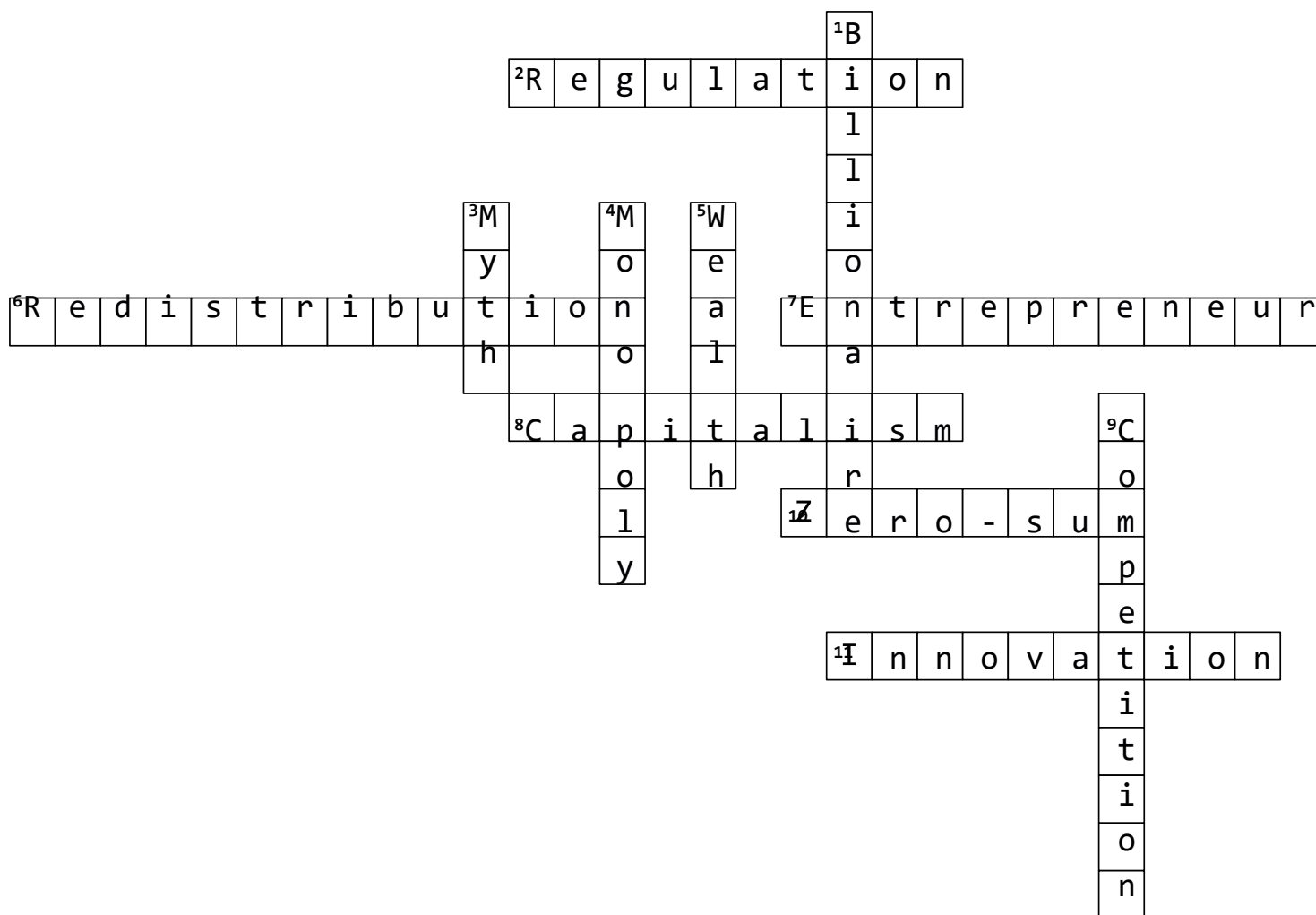
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ANSWER KEY

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Political Cartoon Activity

Directions: Use the political cartoon to answer the questions.



Briefly describe what is happening in the cartoon. _____

What is the irony presented in this cartoon and how does it relate to the myths about capitalism discussed in the video? _____

How does the act of selling "Capitalism Sux" T-shirts exemplify entrepreneurial behavior mentioned in the video? _____

Is the seller "taking" money away from the buyers? Explain. _____

Name

Admit One

What has society gained from mega-entrepreneurs like Bezos, Gates, Musk, etc.?

Admit One

EXIT TICKET

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