

State of Texas TEKS/Lesson Plan  
Grade 12 Economics

# FREEDOM MATTERS

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AT THE GEORGE W. BUSH PRESIDENTIAL CENTER

Special Exhibit in the Bradford M. Freeman Exhibition Gallery  
March 2, 2023 through December 31, 2023

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It is recommended that teachers review the entire lesson plan and make any changes as desired. Review the resources. Review the Gallery information with special notice to the highlighted artifacts and experiences that directly link to this lesson. Notify parents of this lesson and the learning that will be assessed. Ensure that all field trip details are completed. Share student evaluation at the conclusion.

**TEKS directly related to the exhibit Freedom Matters:**

**Grade 12**

- 1.A explain why scarcity and choice are basic economic problems faced by every society;
- 1.B describe how societies answer the basic economic questions: what to produce, how to produce, and for whom to produce;
- 1.C describe the economic factors of production: **land, labor, capital,** and **entrepreneurship**; and
- 4.A explain the basic characteristics of economic systems, including **property rights,** incentives, **economic freedom, competition,** and the role of government;
- 4.B contrast current and historic examples of the **free enterprise system, socialism,** and communism using the basic characteristics of economic systems; and
- 5.A explain the benefits of the U.S. free enterprise system, including individual **freedom of consumers and producers,** variety of goods, responsive prices, investment opportunities, and the creation of wealth; and
- 5.B analyze recent changes in the basic characteristics, including private property, incentives, **economic freedom,** competition, and the **limited role of government,** of the

U.S. economy. benefits of the purchase, use, or disposal of personal and business property; and  
6.B identify and evaluate examples of restrictions that the government places on the use of business and individual property.  
8.A describe characteristics and give examples of pure competition, monopolistic competition, oligopoly, and monopoly; and  
13.A describe the role of government in the U.S. free enterprise system and the changes in that role over time; and

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### **Lesson Overview**

The George W. Bush Presidential Center will support student understanding and provide an experiential learning opportunity to transfer their knowledge of economics and history. Students will act as both leader and citizen in discussing what economic rights and freedoms a government supports.

Students will engage in pre-research, explore the museum exhibit Freedom Matters with primary sources of rights and freedoms, and transfer their learning through critical thinking and creative classroom presentations. Students will learn individually, in pairs, in small groups, and present to their peers.

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### **Assessments**

Tasks that can be assessed: research, organizational visual, group visual creation and presentation, leader presentation speech, and citizen presentation speech.

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### **Essential Questions**

What economic freedoms have changed for different groups?  
What freedoms are worth fighting for?

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## Objectives (Students will...)

- **Pre-learning - Acquisition Learning:** Students will determine the meaning and impact of consumer sovereignty (economic freedom).
  - **Application learning:** From their research and museum experience, students will determine what economic freedoms have evolved for the enslaved and women. The class will conduct a gallery walk to compare their conclusions with others.
  - **Transfer learning:** After their museum experience, students will choose or be assigned a group to evaluate the impact one of the economic freedoms of either the abolitionist movement or women's movement found in the exhibit. Students will create a 1 minute historical advertisement to promote the economic impact of their position
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## Pre-learning/Acquisition Learning

### Introduce students to the George W. Bush Presidential Center and specifically the Freedom Matters Exhibit.

Prepare students for their museum experience.

- Remind students that they share the exhibit space with other guests.
- In the exhibit and library only pencils, phones, or tablets can be used for taking notes
- Get close enough to see artifacts, but not lean on cases.
- Running and excitement are not the same thing.
- This is a “classroom on wheels.”

Help them prepare using the following resources:

<https://www.bushcenter.org/events-and-exhibits> and  
You Tube <https://www.cbsnews.com/texas/video/check-out-the-freedom-matters-exhibit-at-the-bush-center/#x>.

### Read the following to think about and answer the questions at the end:

Have you ever watched the second season of a television series and were left confused about the plot and the characters because you had skipped the first season? To fully understand and appreciate the second season, you might have found it necessary to go back and watch the first season.

Students of economics sometimes lack an understanding of Adam Smith’s free market system because they skipped reading his first book, *Moral Sentiments*. If you only read his second book, *The Wealth of Nations*, you might not fully have understood his free-market ideas without understanding his moral beliefs.

Think of the free market as a busy highway. Everyday thousands of motorists enter and exit this highway. Drivers speed up and slow down and they change lanes, yet rarely do they collide. Why is that true? Self-interest! It is mind-boggling when you think about it! Thousands of drivers, individually act in a manner that not only protects their own lives and property, but the lives and property of others. To do otherwise, would be harmful, even deadly!

However, there are some drivers who lack the courteous driving habits needed to keep the highways safe. A proponent of “laissez faire” would argue that drivers could steer clear of reckless drivers, or that drivers confront the perpetrators to voice their concerns about their driving. Some drivers, however, would prefer a “traffic enforcer” to confront their highway nemeses. When drivers refuse to follow the unwritten “rules of the road”, endangered drivers might appeal to governmental authorities to institute rules affecting driving speed or driving impairment. The punishments doled out to these scofflaws would incentivize them to drive

more responsibly. Likewise, drivers who fail to invest in proper vehicle maintenance may find their mode of transportation temporarily or even permanently removed from the busy lanes of traffic unless they make needed improvements to make their vehicles drivable.

This above scenario is a fitting description of a free market system. Buyers and sellers interact in a market—each looking for some benefit. Both buyers and sellers know that unless both parties' benefit, a transaction does not take place. Or as Adam Smith wrote in the opening chapter of *The Wealth of Nations*, "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own self-interest." Market transactions are not charitable acts.

The above-mentioned products are produced only if the producer receives adequate compensation for his/her efforts. The butcher, brewer and baker are either encouraged or discouraged in his/her efforts by the willingness of the consumers to purchase brats, beer, and bread.

But what happens if consumer appetites now favor chicken cordon bleu, champagne, and ciabatta?

Unless the butcher, brewer and the baker adjust their output to meet the latest culinary trends, they will find fewer customers frequenting their shops. They could lower their prices hoping to attract some customers, but is that in their self-interest? If they do not adjust, they will be forced to shutter their doors. Yet, without interference from a governmental authority, producers know to adapt to the latest demand trends in the market. They begin to more efficiently allocate their resources to maximize the enjoyment of their customers, which will also result in financial gain and happiness for the producer.

Adam Smith referred to this phenomenon as the "invisible hand". Buyers and sellers seek to maximize their self-interest. Though unseen, self-interest is always present in the market directing every transaction.

Students of economics sometimes equate Adam Smith's promotion of "self-interest" as "selfishness"

However, if you understand that Smith was a moral economist, you will better understand the symbiotic relationship between the buyer and the seller. This regard for each other's happiness minimizes the need for government regulation.

It is because of "self-interest" that sellers adhere to health and safety protocols that affect their products. It is because of "self-interest" that an employer seeks to adequately compensate employees as not to disrupt productive output.

It is because of "self-interest" that customers purchase from businesses that provide quality products and services. It is because of "self-interest" that workers sell their labor to those employers who provide them the most benefit.

Have you ever participated in a market where the seller maximized his/her self-interests while minimizing yours? How did you respond? If you walked out, you understand free markets.

**Topics to discuss or research before participating in the exhibit:**

1. What is consumer sovereignty (economic freedom)?
  2. How does consumer sovereignty regulate the market?
  3. Describe a situation where you used your “consumer sovereignty”? What was the result?
  4. How does competition regulate the market?
  5. Look up the etymology of the word boycott.
  6. Is there a seller that you presently boycott? Why?
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# Application Learning/Lesson Plan

Students will begin a gallery walk to complete the worksheet provided

## Gallery 2: Defining Freedom

Students will be given different perspectives about where freedom originates. Have students complete the chart below using the examples of personal, political, and economic freedoms as they work through the game using the pucks.

**Question 1:** Complete the chart using the game of personal, political, and economic freedoms.

Economic Freedom
Choose and change your occupation
Sell and buy goods on the open market
Acquire, use, and own property
Have access to reliable currency

## Gallery 3: Securing Freedom

In Gallery 3 students are introduced to authoritarian and democratic forms of government to match how much freedom is provided in different forms. Most significantly, this gallery discussed the concept of the “rule of law” exemplified by the Magna Carta. This artifact would have been carried by property owners, businessmen, lawyers and clergy

### **Question 2:**

Why is economic freedom limited in an authoritarian and a democratic government?

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### **Question 3:**

Why would a copy of the Magna Carta and the Old English Statutes be important to carry?

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## Gallery 4: The American Experiment

In Gallery 4 multiple documents reflect the success and even failures of the American Experiment

### Featured Artifacts:

- *Declaration of Independence* 1831, by Peter Force
- Abolitionist documents (Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin)
- *Emancipation Proclamation*, soldier copy
- *The Revolution*, documents from the Women's Suffrage Association and pendant

### Question 4:

What economic freedom is promised in the Declaration of Independence?

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### Question 5:

What experiences distinguishes \_\_\_\_\_ (choose between the biography of Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, or Uncle Tom's Cabin) from \_\_\_\_\_ (choose between the biography of Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, or Uncle Tom's Cabin) among the abolitionist documents?

### Question 6:

What aspects of the women's suffrage movement have changed over time?

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## Post Assessment/Debriefing

After participating in the Freedom Matters exhibit divide into small groups to create a historical advertisement lasting no more than 1 minute to promote one of the economic freedoms found in the exhibit. Students must consider the economic impact of their position.

Students may use the abolitionist movement to disrupt slavery.

- Attempts to disrupt the slave trade
- Pay slaveholders for release of the enslaved
- Pay the formerly enslaved wages, to prepare for their freedom
- How will new workers replace the enslaved?
- What will happen to the cost of cotton or tobacco?
- Where will the funds originate?

Students may use the women's suffrage movement to consider in impact of women in the market.

- Increase in pay
  - Increase in job and education opportunities
  - Removing the glass ceiling
  - Change in family structure
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### Student Worksheet

**Question 1:** Complete the chart using the game of personal, political, and economic freedoms to separate specific examples of economic freedoms.

Economic Freedoms

**Question 2:**

Why is economic freedom limited in an authoritarian and democratic government?

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**Question 3:**

Why would a copy of the Magna Carta be important to carry?

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**Question 4:**

What economic freedom is promised in the Declaration of Independence?

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**Question 5:**

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**Question 6:**

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