

Title: The value of a nation's currency goes beyond its price

A nation's currency is a reflection of its country's values. Analyzing American dollars and coins, French francs and the Euro will help us understand both countries' cultural values as well as gain insight into what France gained and lost by adopting the Euro. *This lesson can be adapted for any of the participating EU countries.*

Grade: 6th or can be adapted for middle school to high school French classes

Description: If you had the task of creating a new currency, what symbols, designs and colors would you use? How would you feel if our government decided to change the look of the American dollar? What does our currency mean to you and to us as a nation? In the last few years, twelve countries within the European Union gave up their currencies to adopt the Euro in order to remove trade and traveling barriers and to stimulate an economic boom.

By analyzing the American dollar and the French franc, students will learn that America and France have many similar values that were shaped by historical events. However, when France adopted the Euro many national symbols, mottoes and stories were omitted for the common good of the participating countries. Students will reflect on their personal values as well as group values to design a currency that is acceptable by all group members; therefore, recreating the basic steps the European Union followed in designing a new currency for participating countries.

Time: 2-3 class periods depending on length of class discussions

Objectives: The students will understand that...

- the mottoes, portraits and designs on the American dollar are a reflection of our heritage as well as our cultural values
- the mottoes, portraits and designs on the French franc are a reflection of France's heritage as well as its cultural values.
- the designs and symbols on the Euro reflect a common goal toward integration and cooperation
- designing a new currency requires thoughtful reflection of personal and group values
- discontinuing a national currency has its pros and cons
- adopting the Euro has been a positive step forward for increasing trade and tourism

Materials:

American dollars and coins (nickels), French francs (or pictures online) and Euros (or pictures online). Computer, newsprint, white paper, and markers.

Procedure:

Planning – create groups of 4-5 students. When assigning students, make sure there is an “artist” in each group, a student from another country and someone who will take the role

as “researcher.” Every person in the group should rotate through the leadership role for each step and be prepared to present in front of the class.

Step 1- Analysis/Discussion of American currency. Pass out American dollars and a few coins. Have students work in pairs to record what they see on the dollar – portraits, mottoes, symbols, designs. Have them do a coin rub and describe in paragraph form what they see and what they think it means. Discuss their observations in the small group and compare notes. Have the group answer the following questions on newsprint and choose a spokesperson to present these answers to the class:

1. Whose portraits are on the different dollar denominations? What historical events do these leaders represent? What inferences can you make regarding American values after analyzing these portraits?
2. On the nickel, what does “E pluribus Unum” mean? Why is this motto important to our American heritage? What are the other mottoes/phrases written on the dollar bill? Which phrase might be the most controversial and why? What do you think someone from another country would think about America when they see these phrases written on our currency?
3. What is the national bird? Why do you think this bird was chosen? Would your group prefer a different symbol for our currency? What would it be?
4. After using the websites listed below, what new insights have you learned about American currency?

Resources:

Portraits on American bills:

<http://www.frbsf.org/currency/iconography/features.html>

<http://www.frbsf.org/currency/iconography/portraits.html>

Shields:

<http://www.frbsf.org/currency/iconography/shields.html>

Mottoes:

<http://www.frbsf.org/currency/iconography/mottos.html>

National Bird

<http://www.frbsf.org/currency/iconography/eagles.html>

Step 2- Analysis/Discussion of French franc (or another country’s former currency). Pass out French francs or pictures from the internet. Students will follow the same process for this currency as they did the dollars, noting symbols, portraits, mottos and designs. Students will do a coin rub (if possible) and translate the phrase: liberté, égalité, fraternité. They will draw the “semeuse” and write an imaginative/descriptive paragraph as to her identity and significance to French culture and heritage. The students will analyze the bills and coins in pairs and share their discoveries with their group. The

group will then answer the following questions on newsprint and appoint a different spokesperson for the class discussion:

1. Whose portraits are on the French franc? Identify the different banknotes, their denominations and whose portrait is displayed. What inferences can you make regarding French culture? How are these inferences similar or different for American currency?
2. How is the motto **liberté, égalité, fraternité** a reflection of French heritage and values? Is it possible that this motto could be found on an American dollar? Why or why not? What connection does this motto have to the French Revolution?
3. What other symbols or designs did you notice? Choose four and tell us what your group thinks about each of these and how they are a reflection of France's values. Who is "la semeuse" and what does she represent?
4. After using the websites listed below, what new insights have you gathered regarding the French franc? Which bill is your group favorite and why.

Resources:

French franc:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_franc

The new Franc- history

European Monetary Union

Portraits: identify whose portrait is on each banknote and list denominations

Images on each banknote:

<http://www.ecb.int/bc/exchange/fr/html/index.en.html>

To download images:

<http://www.ecb.int/bc/html/hires.en.html>

Step 3-Analysis/Discussion of Euro. The Euro is a brand new currency that has replaced the national currencies of twelve countries in Europe. Keep in mind what has been "lost" when France's as well as other participating country's former currencies such as the franc were replaced by the Euro. What has been gained? We will first analyze the symbols, designs and mottos on the Euro bills and coins to understand what values the European Union wanted to convey. We will then discuss the advantages of adopting this currency as well as the sacrifices made by retiring the former French franc. Finally, you will design your own currency and bring that design to your group to be developed into a currency that reflects the values of all your group members.

Pass out Euros or copies from the internet and follow the same process as the dollar and French franc. Make coin rubs if possible and have pairs share their observations with their small group. After spending sufficient time analyzing the bills and coins and writing down their observations, the students will answer the following questions as a group. The group needs to appoint a different spokesperson for the class.

(Adaptation for a French class: These questions can be translated into French and only the French websites could be used – follow-up discussions would be in French)

1. How are these bills different from the American dollar and French franc? How are they similar?
2. Why do you think the European Union chose these symbols (doors, windows, bridges) for the Euro? How do these symbols reflect the goals and values of the European Union? Why are they different sizes?
3. The coins have a common side and a national side. What is depicted on the French side of the coin? Why? What is on the common side? Why?
4. Of the three currencies we analyzed, which one does your group prefer? Why?
5. Imagine your 80-year-old French grandmother started using the Euro in 2002 when the national currencies were discontinued. How do you think she felt using this new currency and what might be some of the challenges she encountered?
6. As a young business person, it is your job to convince your grandmother that adopting the Euro was a very positive step. What would you say?
7. What countries in the European Union have adopted the Euro? List the countries in English and French.
8. What new insights have you gained after researching the Euro using these websites?

Resources:

Euro:

Images-(in English)

<http://www.ecb.int/bc/banknotes/looks/html/index.en.html>

Images (in French)

<http://www.ecb.int/bc/banknotes/looks/html/index.fr.html>

Euro coins (in French)

<http://www.ecb.int/bc/coins/html/index.fr.html>

Common sides of Euro coins (in English)

<http://www.ecb.int/bc/coins/common/html/index.en.html>

Common sides of Euro coins (in French)

<http://www.ecb.int/bc/coins/common/html/index.fr.html>

National side of French Euro coins (in English)

<http://www.ecb.int/bc/coins/national/html/fr.en.html>

National side of French Euro coins (in French)

<http://www.ecb.int/bc/coins/national/html/fr.fr.html>

Map of countries using the Euro (in English):

<http://www.ecb.int/bc/intro/html/map.en.html>

Map of countries using the Euro (in French)

<http://www.ecb.int/bc/intro/html/map.fr.html>

Step 4- Homework assignment: List 5-8 of your personal values and design by hand or on computer a currency that would be an accurate reflection of what is important to you. Be sure to add a motto.

Step 5- Group members share personal currency designs with their small group and have members figure out what the symbols and mottos mean. After everyone shares his/her designs, the group will design a single currency reflecting their collective values. When the group finishes, these group designs will be shared with the class.

Step 6- Students will write a reflective paragraph on what they learned regarding a currency's being more valuable than just its price, the acceptance of a new currency for the common good and what it was like to design a personal as well as a group currency.

Assessment:

Task	Excellent	Bien	Pas Mal	Pas du Tout
Group collaboration/participation (15p)	15	10	5	2
Step 1: observations, written answers, presentation (20p)	20	15	10	5
Step 2: observations, written answers, descriptive paragraph, presentation (20p)	20	15	10	5
Step 3: observations, written answers, presentation (20p)	20	15	10	5
Homework-currency design (10p)	10	8	6	4
Homework- reflective paragraph (10p)	10	8	6	4
Research (5p)	5			
French component: new vocabulary; paragraphs in French				

For enrichment and depth, students could do the following:

- Research the former currencies of several countries and prepare a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting symbols, mottoes and portraits.
- Use only French websites or sites in the target language to generate a vocabulary list and have a follow-up discussion in the target language

- Write to French-speaking pen pals asking them to discuss the challenges and advantages of changing to the Euro. Make sure they include multiple perspectives; for example, ask for comments from older family members.
- Create a Euro game that reinforces what we learned and adds in new information using these websites:

Additional information:

<http://www.ecb.int/bc/faqbc/design/html/index.en.html>

Euro games in French and in English

<http://www.ecb.int/bc/children/html/index.fr.html>

- Research why the United Kingdom and Switzerland did not adopt the Euro and prepare a debate between participating and non-participating countries.

Standard Course of Study:

6th grade Social Studies:

5.04 Describe the relationship between specialization and interdependence, and analyze its influence on the development of regional and global trade patterns.

7.01 Identify historical events such as invasions, conquests, and migrations and evaluate their relationship to current issues.

8.01 Describe the role of key historical figures and evaluate their impact on past and present societies in South America and Europe.

8.03 Identify major discoveries, innovations, and inventions, and assess their influence on societies past and present

10.03 Describe rights and responsibilities of citizens in selected contemporary societies in South America and Europe, comparing them to each other and to the United States.

12.02 Describe the relationship between cultural values of selected societies of South America and Europe and their art, architecture, music and literature, and assess their significance in contemporary culture.

French: This lesson covers multiple goals of the 7C's and can be adapted for any level of language ability

Teacher: Robin McMahon

Smith Middle School

Chapel Hill, North Carolina