

Urbana Money:
The Urbana Plan for Dealing with the Bank Crisis of 1933
Strategic Lesson Plan
Don Owen
NCHE Conference April 21, 2005

Enduring Understandings/Essential Question:

Content: Students will be able to explain the basic causes of the bank crisis of the 1930s and the impact it had on people, businesses, and the country.

Why does paper currency work as a means of exchange?

Process: Analyzing primary documents to create a historical context.

Illinois Learning Standards:

16.A Apply the skills of historical analysis and interpretation.

16.B. Understand the development of significant political events.

15.E. Understand the impact of government policies and decisions on production and consumption in the economy.

14.D. Understand the roles and influences of individuals and interest groups in the political systems of Illinois, the United States and other nations.

Assessment:

Content: Students will research the impact of the bank crisis on the nation and their local community and write an evaluation of the Urbana Plan for dealing with the bank crisis.

Process: Students will organize information using graphic organizers and problem solution notes as pre-writing tools. Students may use a RAFT as the format for their essay.

Content:

- [The Bank Crisis Fireside Chat](#), in Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Great Speeches. Ed. John Grafton (1999).
- Examining Issues through Political Cartoons: The Great Depression. Ed. William Dudley (2004).
- Lives in Crisis: The Great Depression. R.G. Grant (2002).

Preparing for Understanding:

- [Double Entry Reflective Journal](#): Words and images from the Great Depression

Engaging with Primary Sources:

- [Urbana Money](#) (finding new value in the Orange and Blue)
- Context of Document Graphic Organizer

Classroom Discussions/Activities:

1. Hand out copies of [different denominations of Urbana Money](#) to each student. Ask the students to analyze the documents using the following questions as a guide: What is it? (currency, money) How is it similar to U.S. currency? (same denominations, shape, signatures) How is it different? (color - the

Urbana Money is orange and blue, size, local vs. national, some denominations take the place of coins, i.e. bills with denominations of less than \$1.00).

2. Ask students if they would/could use this Urbana Money? Why or why not? (answers will vary widely depending on age and prior knowledge) What guarantees would you want to have before you started using this money? (a guarantee that it is worth something, that stores will accept it, and that people will have faith in it). What would give you confidence in Urbana Money?
3. Have students create hypotheses about when and why Urbana would print its own money. Use newspaper sources included to test the hypotheses. Hand out copies of the [advertisement](#) from the Bank Emergency Committee. Why was the Urbana Money created? How was it guaranteed? How was Urbana Money different from scrip or credit? Discuss the reasons for the financial panic of the 1930s.
4. Challenge students to design a series of bills to be used as Urbana Money in 1933. Before they begin, brainstorm what factors must be considered when designing currency (counterfeiting, readability, common denominations, size, guarantees).
5. After students have submitted their designs, hand out copies of Urbana Money. Discuss how it is similar to U.S. currency? (same denominations, shape, signatures) How is it different? (color - the Urbana Money was orange and blue, size, local vs. national, some denominations take the place of coins, i.e. bills with denominations of less than \$1.00).
6. Have students vote on best design and create a display that includes best student design compared with Urbana Money and U.S. currency.

[Teacher Background Information](#)

[Extended Lesson Activities](#)

[Chronology of Events Leading to the Depression](#)