

**Social Studies Content Themes for Middle/High School**  
**From**  
***“The Making of Milwaukee Curriculum”***

**Economics:**

**Teaching about Economics in Milwaukee**

The following activities are from “The Making of Milwaukee” on-line curriculum.

- **Taking it to the Streets (Fieldtrip)**
- **Bringing Businesses Into the Classroom (Guest Speaker)**
- **Everyone Works (Discussing Chores and Jobs)**
- **Leading Industries in the City (Research Milwaukee Businesses)**

**TAKING IT TO THE STREETS**

1. Have students study and analyze photographs of Old Milwaukee. Visit websites such as [www.wisconsinhistory.org](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org) and *The Making of Milwaukee* website, [www.themakingofmilwaukee.com](http://www.themakingofmilwaukee.com) to find photos of Milwaukee in its early years. Try to find pictures that show businesses and markets residents used to obtain goods and services (See *Milwaukee Streets: The Stories Behind Their Names* by Carl Baehr, published in 1995 by Cream City Press, as an additional resource for this activity).
2. Encourage students to describe the buildings, people or landscapes in the photographs and discuss the importance of businesses in Milwaukee’s developing years.
3. Plan a trip to downtown Milwaukee. Set an interview with a local business owner. These interviews should focus on the following:
  - Why owners chose to establish businesses
  - The location of the business in the downtown Milwaukee area
  - How its products/services help Milwaukeeans
  - How long its been in operation
  - Revenues and expenses
  - The types of people it serves
4. During the trip, allow students to take photographs of the buildings, bridges and monuments and restaurants located in the downtown area.
5. After photos have been developed, scan or project digital images onto a screen utilizing PowerPoint. Students may also create a picture board. Have students present their photographs and explain how Milwaukee has changed since the early 1800s.
6. Encourage students to analyze the pictures to find comparisons and differences in the buildings, business and landscapes from both eras.

**BRINGING BUSINESSES INTO THE CLASSROOM**

1. Invite a public relations or business representative to your class to speak about their business. Potential businesses should be similar to those discussed in Video Chapters 1-3 (Journal Sentinel, Walker's Point entities, Potawatomi, etc). Before the visit, have students develop questions about the business, its history in Milwaukee, its location and the goods/services it provides to Milwaukeeans.
2. Encourage representatives to bring videos and merchandise related to their business. In turn, have selected students provide a general history and mission of your school for the visiting representative.

## **EVERYONE WORKS**

1. Have students think about their least favorite job, house chore or even school task they have ever had to do. Then ask students to individually write answers to the following questions:
  - Describe your least favorite job, house chore, or even school task?
  - What made this your least favorite?
  - What made you decide to do this task?
  - Did you get any reward for doing it? If so, what was it?
  - Was it worth the reward? If no reward was given, would it have been worth any reward?
  - What would happen if you resisted or refused to do this chore?
  - Are there places where people are paid to do the chores that you do? Explain.
2. Using the think-pair-share teaching strategy, have students share and compare their answers with another student. Then ask some of them to share their answers with the rest of the class.
3. Use their responses to explain to students that many people who came to Milwaukee worked in very challenging jobs with often little pay in return. However, many were forced to do this labor to make a living for themselves and their families. When they refused or resisted, they often faced harsh consequences like getting fired from their jobs or being unable to support themselves or their families. In other words, progress often came with a fair share of struggle.

## **LEADING INDUSTRIES IN THE CITY**

1. Although the manufacturing of a number of goods have left Milwaukee, the headquarters of a number of companies remain. Have students visit websites, write letters or e-mails, or even visit the headquarters of some of these companies (e.g. Milwaukee Tools, A.O. Smith, Falk Company) to gain more detailed histories of these companies.

2. In particular, students should also gather information about why some of the companies no longer make products in Milwaukee and how their absence has affected the city's economy.
3. Students should then create a PowerPoint or write a speech to deliver to the class about the company's contributions to making Milwaukee a "Machine Shop of the World."