



Resources, Efficiency, Supply and Demand

Objective: In this activity, students will explore the concepts of resources, efficiency, supply and demand, and trade.

Materials: Playdough (various colors), pens/pencils, a timer

Procedure: This activity consists of seven rounds* each lasting one minute. In each round, students will be using the Playdough to create hot dogs, which must be roughly the size of a pen or pencil, and bagels, which are complete hotdogs, connected to make a circle.

Round 1: Each student works independently. Instruct them to make as many hotdogs and bagels as they can in one minute. Hotdogs are worth \$1 and bagels are worth \$2. Have them total the amount of money they earned.

Round 2: Each student works independently. Instruct them to make as many hotdogs and bagels as they can in one minute. Hotdogs are worth \$1 and bagels are worth \$5. Have them total the amount of money they earned.

Round 3: Each student works independently. Instruct them to make as many hotdogs and bagels as they can in one minute. **Take half of their playdough away.** Hotdogs are worth \$1 and bagels are worth \$5. Have them total the amount of money they earned.

Round 4: Each student works with a partner. Instruct them to make as many hotdogs and bagels as they can in one minute. Hotdogs are worth \$1 and bagels are worth \$5. Have them total the amount of money they earned.

Round 5: Each student works in a small group (3-4). Instruct them to make as many hotdogs and bagels as they can in one minute. Hotdogs are worth \$1 and bagels are worth \$5. Have them total the amount of money they earned.

Round 6: Each student works independently. **Choose one color of playdough** and tell them hotdogs of that color are worth \$10 and bagels of that color are worth \$50. For all other colors, hotdogs are still worth \$1 and bagels are still worth \$5. **Give them one minute to trade playdough.** They may trade all, some, or none of their Playdough. Once trading has ended, instruct them to make as many hotdogs and bagels as they can in one minute.

Round 7: Each student works with a partner. **Choose one color of playdough** and tell them hotdogs of that color are worth \$10 and bagels of that color are worth \$50. For all other colors, hotdogs are still worth \$1 and bagels are still worth \$5. **Give them one minute to trade playdough.** They may trade all, some, or none of their Playdough. Once trading has ended, instruct them to make as many hotdogs and bagels as they can in one minute.

*If necessary, pause the game and repeat any round until students understand the concept.

Discussion Questions:

1. Round 1 – Discuss the successes and failures of hotdog and bagel production.
2. Round 2 – Discuss the increased value of bagels and the shift in production from hotdogs to bagels.
3. Round 3 – Discuss difficulties in producing hotdogs and bagels with less resources, and how their production techniques changed.
4. Round 4 – Discuss how more labor (workers) increased hotdog and bagel production.
5. Round 5 – Discuss how increasing the size of the labor force increased production. Also discuss how they could organize their labor to be even more productive (assemble line, specialization, etc.)
6. Round 6 – Discuss how trading impacted production and value.
7. Round 7 – Discuss how trading impacted production and value.