

Introducing Spotting Economics

The authors of this book of lessons see economics all around in nearly everything that people do. Since most children's literature is about life, economics concepts are likely present in most of the storybooks used in classrooms every day.

To help teachers and their students spot the economics in children's literature, we have put together a list of questions that one might ask after having read a story. This *Master Question List* can be found on the next page with the key words underlined. Even as experienced economic educators, we have found this *Master Question List* a helpful tool for bringing out economics concepts in almost any story.

These "yes" or "no" questions are designed only to help the reader *notice* the economic activity. The lessons are designed to carry the questions one step further; they use activities related to the story to help students develop the economic way of thinking. Notice that in the lessons, the questions have been reworded for the students to avoid simple "yes" or "no" answers. When teachers are using the *Master Question List* to find the economics in other books, they will also need to reword the questions for students.

In the first 14 lessons in this book, the basic economics concepts have been introduced in hands-on, fun activities related to children's literature, in topics ranging all the way from Africa to ice cream, but still within the framework of the *Spotting Economics Master Question List*. In the *Procedure* section of each lesson you will find the following:

- An introduction to the related story and a debriefing activity to bring out the economics concepts. Here the students first become acquainted with some of the questions from the *Master Question List*.
- Many exciting activities and simulations are introduced to help students understand the concepts and how they relate to everyday life. All lessons include multiple activities, some designed for younger students, and some for upper elementary students. Because of this, we have not tried to put a time frame on these lessons. The teacher's choice of activities will dictate the amount of time needed for each lesson.
- At the end of each lesson there is a closure section in two parts. In the first part (part "a") students again encounter recall questions based on the *Master Question List*. The second part of the closure (part "b") includes questions that require higher-order thinking and relate to what was learned in the activities.

In Lesson 15, the *Spotting Economics* idea is used as a culminating activity that introduces the entire question list to elementary school students, in hopes that they will soon become spotters of economics, both in the stories they read and in their own daily lives.

An Appendix has been added at the end of this book with five more examples of using the *Master Question List* to find and debrief basic economics concepts in more stories related to Africa or ice cream. These examples also include brief ideas for lesson activities.

It is our hope that this volume will help both teachers and their students develop a heightened awareness of the economics in the world around them. We want them to become eager, enthusiastic economics spotters!