



Working for an Employer vs. Working for Yourself

Utah Core: Post-Statehood (1896-1999) Standard 4.4.4

Objective

Students will understand the difference between working for an employer and working for themselves (entrepreneurship) by participating in role-play, group challenges, and discussion.

Materials

- “Job Cards”
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Sticky notes
- Student notebooks
- Simple “Business Supplies” (paper, markers, tape)
- Fake money or tokens

Hook (5 minutes): Would You Rather?

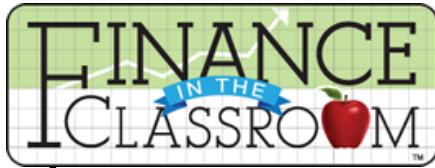
Write on the board: Would you rather?

- get a job working for someone else OR
- start your own business?

Have students go to one side of the room or the other. Let a few share why.

Tell them:

“Today you’re going to experience BOTH!”



Mini-Lesson (10 minutes): Quick Teach

Make a simple T-chart.

Working for an Employer

- You are hired by someone
- You get paid a set amount
- You follow rules
- The employer decides what you do

Working for Yourself (Entrepreneurship)

- You create your own business
- You decide what to sell or offer
- You take risks
- You earn money based on how well your business does

Ask students:

- Can people choose either one?
- Can some people do both?" (Yes—many do!)

Interactive Activity Part 1: Job Experience (10 minutes)

Tell half the class:

“You will be employees. You will work for a company and earn a set amount.” Give each employee group a Job Card, such as:

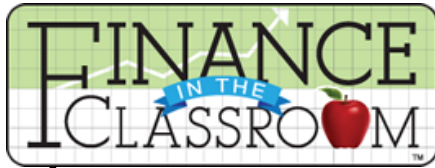
- “Clean Desk Crew”
- “Paper Sorters”
- “Pencil Sharpening Team”
- “Hallway Poster Helpers”

Each group:

1. Completes the job
2. Gets paid 5 tokens no matter how fast or slow they work

Ask:

- “What was good about being an employee?”
- “What was challenging?”



Interactive Activity Part 2: Be Your Own Boss (15–20 minutes)

Now the other half of the class becomes entrepreneurs.

Tell them:

“You are starting a tiny business! Your goal is to create something you can ‘sell’ to me for tokens.”

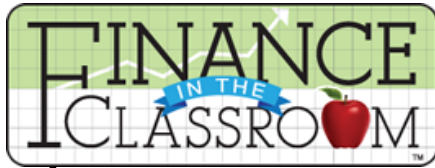
Examples:

- A paper bookmark
- A decorated pencil label
- A tiny origami shape
- A creative logo design

Steps:

1. Students design their product.
2. They set a “price.”
3. They “sell” it to you, the teacher.
 - If it’s high quality → 5 tokens
 - Medium → 3 tokens
 - Needs improvement → 1 token

Then switch roles, so everyone experiences both.



Group Reflection (5–7 minutes)

On chart paper, ask students to help summarize:

What was it like to work for an employer?

- You get steady pay.
- You don't decide the tasks.
- You follow rules.

What was it like to work for yourself?

- More choices
- More creativity
- More risk
- Pay depends on quality

Then ask:

“Why might someone choose one over the other?”

Students share.

Independent Practice (5 minutes)

In notebooks, students answer:

- Which job did you enjoy more and why?
 - What is one benefit of working for an employer?
 - What is one benefit of working for yourself?
 - Can a person choose either one? Explain.
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Closing (3 minutes)

Exit ticket:

“One thing I learned today about choosing how to work is...”

Printable Job Cards

(Working for an Employer)

JOB CARD 1

Clean Desk Crew

Task: Neatly wipe and organize the desks in the classroom.

Pay: 5 tokens

JOB CARD 2

Paper Sorters

Task: Sort a stack of papers into 3 categories (you decide the categories).

Pay: 5 tokens

JOB CARD 3

Pencil Sharpening Team

Task: Sharpen 10 pencils safely and neatly.

Pay: 5 tokens

JOB CARD 4

Hallway Poster Helpers

Task: Straighten the hallway posters or classroom bulletin board materials.

Pay: 5 tokens

JOB CARD 5

Library Organizers

Task: Organize a small section of classroom books by genre or ABC order.

Pay: 5 tokens

JOB CARD 6

Technology Wipe-Down Crew

Task: Clean screens/keyboards with teacher-approved wipes.

Pay: 5 tokens

Printable Entrepreneur Cards (Working for Yourself)

ENTREPRENEUR CARD 1

Bookmark Business

Product: Create a decorated paper bookmark.

You set the price.

Teacher pays 1–5 tokens depending on quality.

ENTREPRENEUR CARD 2

Logo Designer

Product: Design a creative logo for a pretend company.

You set the price.

Teacher pays 1–5 tokens.

ENTREPRENEUR CARD 3

Origami Creations

Product: Make a simple origami piece (heart, cup, dog, etc.).

You set the price.

Teacher pays 1–5 tokens.

ENTREPRENEUR CARD 4

Mini Poster Maker

Product: Create a tiny motivational poster using markers.

You set the price.

Teacher pays 1–5 tokens.

ENTREPRENEUR CARD 5

Sticker Designer

Product: Draw and cut out a sticker (on paper).

You set the price.

Teacher pays 1–5 tokens.

ENTREPRENEUR CARD 6

Greeting Card Shop

Product: Make a mini greeting card with a design inside.

You set the price.

Teacher pays 1–5 tokens.