

Economic Themes in Elementary Childrens' Books
A Selective Bibliography of Books in the Teaching Resources Center



Capital Resources

Trivizas, E. (1993). *Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books. (398.2-Tri)

The three little wolves build several houses out of different materials, but the big bad pig uses different tools to destroy each one. Finally, the house they build out of flowers appeals to the pig, and they all live happily ever after. *Grade Levels: K-4*

Consumers

DeCapua, S. (2002). *Paying Taxes*. Danbury, CN: Children's Press. (336.2 DeC)

This book is an excellent primer on taxes for young people. The many topics covered include why people pay taxes, kinds of taxes, how taxes are spent, and what makes a good tax. *Grade Levels: 3-5*.



Hall, D. (1979). *Ox Cart Man*. New York: Viking Press. (E-Hal)

The ox-cart man, his wife, his daughter, and his son worked all year to gather, grow, and make goods to sell at the market. The man used the money he made to purchase things they needed.

Grade Levels:

1980 Caldecott Medal Winner

Williams, V. (1983). *Something Special for Me*. New York: Greenwillow Books. (E-Wil)

Rosa's mother and grandmother decide to let her shop for her own birthday present from the jar of money they had saved. Rosa had trouble deciding what to buy until she heard some accordion music. *Grade Levels: K-3*

Economic Wants

Cronin, D. (2000). *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type*. New York: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers. (E-Cro)

What is Farmer Brown to do when he finds out that his cows are typing him messages announcing that they will no longer produce milk unless he gives them electric blankets? It gets even worse when the hens declare that they, too, need electric blankets – or Farmer Brown will get no eggs. *Grade Levels: Pre K-3*

Dewan, T. (2002). *Crispin, the Pig Who Had it All*. New York: Dell Dragonfly Books. (E-Dew)

Crispin is the pig who has it all. He seems to have many wants. This year, Santa has left Crispin a mysterious box that promises to be the "very best thing in the whole wide world." *Grade Levels: Pre K-2*

Mayer, M. (1989). *Just Shopping With Mom*. New York: Random House. (E May)

In this humorous story, a mother goes shopping with her three kids. The little girl wants to buy everything in sight. They pass by the bakery, the pet store, the toy store, the dress store, and finally the ice cream shop. The mother buys a dress for the little girl and they all go home and eat ice cream. *Grade Levels: Pre K-3*

Numoff, L. (1998). *If You Give A Pig A Pancake*. New York: Laura Geringer Book. (E-Num)
Chaos is the order of the day when an accommodating little girl tries to keep up with the whims of a busy little pig. *Grade Levels: Pre K-2*

Wilson, K. (2002). *Bear Wants More*. New York: Scholastic. (E Wil)
A delightful story told in verse of a bear's desire for more and more food once he awakens from his long winter nap. Will bear's friends want more food, too? *Grade Levels: Pre K-2*

Entrepreneur

Fritz, J. (1976). *What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?* New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan. (B-Fra)
This is a brief and sometimes humorous life story of Ben Franklin, one of our most outstanding inventors, scientists, philosophers, and politicians. Students learn about all the many ideas and inventions of this famous American. *Grade Levels: 2-6*

Lasky, K. (2000). *Vision of Beauty: The Story of Sarah Breedlove Walker*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick. (B Wal).
Sarah Breedlove "Madam" Walker was a successful, African-American entrepreneur. Born in 1867, she rose from bleak poverty in the south to develop a large company that provided beauty products for women – especially black women. *Grade Levels: 3-7*

Murphy, P. (2006). *Earning Money*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications. (650.1 Mur)
This book teaches students the basics of earning money, focusing on how to start a real business. Students learn that entrepreneurs must produce a quality good or service that people really want. *Grade Levels: 3-7*

Goods and Services

Axelrod, A. (1997). *Pigs Go To Market: Fun with Math and Shopping*. New York: Simon and Schuster Books. (513.2-Axe)
Mrs. Pig and her family go to the supermarket to purchase Halloween candy for the party. Luckily, Mrs. Pig was awarded a five-minute shopping spree and could purchase a variety of goods. *Grade Levels: 1-3*

Burton, V. L. (1943). *Katy and the Big Snow*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. (E-Bur)
Katy the red crawler tractor could do a lot of tasks – in all types of weather. Things were a bit slow one winter day in Geopolis, when all of a sudden the "big snow" hits town. Who will help all the people, businesses, and government agencies in their distress? Katy, of course! Follow her around the city as she digs a path in the deep snow. *Grade Levels: K-3*

Jacobsen, K. (2003). *My New York New Anniversary Edition (Holiday)*. New York: Little Brown Publishing.
Identify public goods and services as you take a tour of the sites and sounds of New York City – from the towering Empire State Building to Central Park and the Sixth Avenue Flea Market. *Grade Levels: 1-4*

Keats, J. E. (1966). *Jennie's Hat*. New York: Harper and Row. (E-Kea)
Jennie wants a big flowery hat as a present. When she receives a plain hat, she tries to create her own hat using goods from her home. Still not satisfied, Jennie receives help from the birds to get the hat she wished for. *Grade Levels: K-2*

- Miranda, A. (1997). *To Market, To Market*. California: Harcourt Brace. (E-Mir)
 In this take-off of an old nursery rhyme, *To Market To Market*, a woman goes to the market to buy all kinds of pet animals and vegetables. She ends up making a delicious soup for all her animal friends. *Grade Levels: Pre K-2*
- Silverstein, S. (1983). *Who Wants a Cheap Rhinoceros?* New York: Macmillan. (E-Sil)
 A cheap rhinoceros is available for a house pet. Explore the many services a rhinoceros can provide around the house. *Grade Levels: K-3*
- Stanley, D. (1997). *Rumpelstiltskin's Daughter*. New York: Scholastic. (398.2 Sta)
 Rumpelstiltskin's daughter outwits the greedy king, who tries to get her to spin straw into gold just as her father once did. In the end, she helps a troubled community overcome their economic problems created by the king. *Grade Levels: 1-4*
- Zimmerman, A. and Clemesha, D. (1999). *Trashy Town*. New York: Harper Collins. (E Zim)
 Follow Mr. Gilly around town as he performs a valuable service - picking up trash from people in his community. What excellent work he does! *Grade Levels: Pre K-K*

Human Resources

- Aliki. (1986). *How a Book is Made*. New York: Crowell. (686-Ali)
 It is not easy to make a book. Many people are involved in the production process before we can sit down and enjoy it. The author thinks and writes. Then the book goes to the many people who take part in producing it. *Grade Levels: K-5*
- Carle, E. (1995). *Walter the Baker*. New York: Simon and Schuster. (E-Car)
 Walter is a famous baker who makes good things to eat. He solves a problem and invents a roll that the sun can shine through three times. The people are happy to have the baker and something new and wonderful. *Grade Levels: Pre-K*
- Castaneda, O. (1993). *Abuela's Weave*. New York: Lee and Low Books. (E-Cas)
 Esperanza and her grandmother, her Abuela, work hard at their weaving to produce goods for the market in a nearby Guatemalan town. Will they get done in time? Will they produce beautiful items that people will buy - especially since the items sold by other vendors were produced on machines? Find out what happens on market day! *Grade Levels: 3-4*
- De Paola, T. (1973). *Charlie Needs a Cloak*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall. (646.4-Dep)
 Charlie is a shepherd, and everyone says he needs a cloak. He shears his sheep, cards and spins the wool, weaves and dyes the cloth, and sews a beautiful new red cloak. *Grade Levels: Pre-K*
- Krensky, S. (1998). *How Santa Got his Job*. New York: Simon & Schuster. (E-Kre)
 So how did Santa Claus get his job? Learn how in this humorous story that recounts all the jobs that Santa got – and then lost – that helped him acquire the skills he needed to be the Santa Claus that we all know today. *Grade Levels: Pre-K*
- Williams, S. A. (1992). *Working Cotton*. California: Harcourt Brace. (E-Wil)
 A young black girl describes a day working in the cotton fields of central California. Her migrant family works very hard to pick the cotton without using the help of advanced machinery. *Grade Levels: 1-3*

Interdependence

DiSalvo-Ryan, D. (2000). *Grandpa's Corner Store*. New York: Harper Collins. (Not in catalog)
Grandfather's small grocery is threatened by the building of a new supermarket. With the help of his granddaughter, Lucy, and the neighborhood, Grandpa's store is saved. *Grade Levels: 1-3*

Dorros, A. (1988). *Ant Cities*. New York: Harper Trophy. (595 Dor)
This book explains how ants work together to survive in their ant cities. The book describes the different tasks that each ant does in the ant city. Your students will learn many interesting facts about ants, including how to make a simple "ant farm!" *Grade Levels: K-4*

Investing

Mollel, T. M. (1999). *My Rows and Piles of Coins*. New York: Clarion Books. (E-Mol)
Saruni empties his secret money box and arranges the coins into piles and the piles into rows. He is saving to invest in something special. How happy and proud he will be when he can help his mother carry heavy goods to market on his very own bicycle! *Grade Levels: Pre K-3*

Market

Grossman, P. & Sanchez, E.O. (1989). *Saturday Market*. New York: Dell. (E Gro)
Sellers from near and far arrive at the market before dawn on Saturday. There are trucks, carts, and donkeys loaded with beautiful rebozos, fiery chile peppers, comfortable huaraches, squawking parrots, fine rugs, flowers, etc. *Grade Levels: K - 3*

Seymour, J.M. (2002). *Stock Market Pie*. Dynaminds Pub. (E Sey)
As Grandma makes an apple pie with her granddaughter, Emily, she explains all the ins and outs of stocks and the stock market. This cleverly illustrated and highly informative book is perfect for helping students to learn about a complicated subject in an amusing and motivating way. At the end, Emily learns about the "magic" of compounding – how the value of an investment of just \$5 a week (assuming a 7.5% rate of growth) will earn \$39,503 in 30 years! *Grade Levels: 4 and up*

Natural Resources

Deedy, C. A. (1991). *Agatha's Feather Bed*. Atlanta, GA: Peachtree Publishers. (E Dee)
Agatha is disrupted by six cranky, cold, naked geese. They want to discuss the source of the feathers that are keeping her warm in her brand new feather bed. Agatha arrives at a solution and finally understands that: "Everything comes from something..." *Grade Levels: K-2*

Ehlert, L. (1994). *Growing Vegetable Soup*. New York: Scholastic Inc. (f BB-E-Ehl)
A child and her father plant, water, weed, and pick vegetables to make soup. *Grade Levels: Pre-K-2*

Silverstein, S. (1964). *The Giving Tree*. New York: Harper and Row. (E-Sil)
This is the touching story of a boy's relationship with a tree, and how the tree provides for him throughout his life. *Grade Levels: Pre K-3*

Van Allsburg, C. (1990). *Just a Dream*. Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin. (E-Van)
Walter believes the future is going to be wonderful-filled with robots and other amazing inventions. When he falls asleep, his wish comes true. But the world Walter sees is not exactly what he imagined. *Grade Levels: K-4*

Opportunity Cost

Stevens, J. (1995). *Tops and Bottoms*. California: Harcourt Brace. (398.2-Ste)

This humorous story illustrates the importance of hard work and shrewd business practices. Hare's family was hungry, with no land to raise a crop. Bear was lazy with plenty of farmable land. Hare proposes a deal to Bear: Hare will farm the land for half the crop - tops or bottoms. Bear is in for quite a surprise! *Grade Levels: K-3*

Tunnell, M. (2000). *Mailing May*. New York: Harper Collins. (E Tur)

In 1914, May really wants to visit her grandmother. Her parents had promised her a trip, but the train ticket costs a full day's work. So her parents "mail" her there, and she rides through the Idaho mountains in the Postal car of the train! *Grade Levels: K-3*

Price

Friedrich, E. (1999). *Leah's Pony*. Honesdale, PA: Boyd Mills Press. (E Fri)

This Depression Era story paints a realistic picture of the hard life of American farm families during the 1930's. Leah decides to sell her beloved pony in order to raise enough money to help her family keep their farm. The day of the farm auction arrives - what will happen to all of Mama and Papa's prize possessions? *Grade Levels: K-3*

Gill, S. and Tobola, D. (2000). *The Big Buck Adventure*. Massachusetts: Charlesbridge. (E-Gil)

A little girl learns that there are many ways to spend her dollar. For example, she could buy a hundred jawbreakers, twelve gummy bears, six night crawlers, twenty dill pickles, or three neon guppies. What does she finally buy? *Grade Levels: K-2*

Glass, J. Dr. (2000). *A Dollar for Penny*. New York: Random House. (E Gla)

Penny sells lemonade at her lemonade stand for one penny. As she sells each cup, the price goes up. Eventually, she earns a dollar to buy a birthday card for her mother. *Grade Levels: K-2*

Murphy, S. (1998). *Penny Pot*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers. (513.2-Mur)

Various students count their coins to pay 50 cents for face painting at the school fair. Extra pennies are put in the penny pot for other students to use if needed. *Grade Levels: 1-4*

Producers

De Paola, T. (1978). *The Popcorn Book*. New York: Holiday House. (E DeP)

The history and a variety of facts about popcorn are described. Different methods of production are included as well. *Grade Levels: K-4*

Diakité, B. W. (1999). *The Hatseller and the Monkeys : A West African Folktale*. New York: Scholastic Press. (398.209-Dia)

An African version of the familiar story, *Caps for Sale*. In this story, a man encounters difficulty from a group of mischievous monkeys on his way to the festival to sell his hats. *Grade Levels: Pre-K-3*

Lindsey, K. (2003). *Sweet Potato Pie*. New York: Lee and Low Books. (E Lin)

Papa tells the family to come to the kitchen one morning to receive some bad news - the bank is about to take away the family farm unless Papa repays a \$75 loan. Because of a severe drought, all the family had left was a crop of sweet potatoes. Through ingenuity and hard work, the family works together to bake and sell Mama's special sweet potato pies at the Harvest Celebration Fair. But could they bake enough pies to save the farm? *Grade Levels: 2-3*

Sturges, P. (2002). *Little Red Hen: (Makes a Pizza)*. New York: Puffin. (398.2 Stu)
When Little Red Hen decides to make a pizza, she discovers she doesn't have the necessary tools and ingredients. So she buys all the ingredients she needs and produces a large enough pizza to feed her friends. *Grade Levels: K-2*.

Productive Resources

Andrews-Goebel, N. (2002). *The Pot that Juan Built*. New York: Lee and Low Books. (B-Que)
Students will learn how Juan Quezada creates stunningly beautiful clay pots out of natural materials. The text is written in the form of "The House That Jack Built," but is supplemented by descriptions of the entire pottery making process. *Grade Levels: 2-3*

Blood, C. L. (1990). *The Goat in the Rug*. New York: Aladdin Books. (E-Blo)
Geraldine, a goat, lives on a Navajo Indian Reservation with her friend Glenmae. In this story, Geraldine tells a humorous story of how Glenmae, a Navajo weaver, changes her from a plain old goat to a rug. *Grade Levels: Pre-K-2*

Brandenberg, A. (1992). *Milk from Cow to Carton*. New York: Harper Collins. (637 Ali)
Milk comes from cows and other animals that eat grass. This interesting book explains how milk is produced, step by step - from cow to carton! *Grade Levels: K-3*

Carle, E. (1991). *Pancakes, Pancakes*. New York: Aladdin Books. (E Car)
A boy named Jack wakes up hungry for an enormous pancake breakfast. But before he can enjoy his breakfast, he must first spend time and energy gathering all the resources and ingredients that he needs to make pancakes. *Grade Levels: Pre-K-2*

Gibbons, G. (2000) *Apples*. New York: Holiday House. (634.11-Gib)
Learn all about apples and how they are grown - from seed to final product. The book describes many different types of apples and shows how they are turned into apple cider and apple pie. Many interesting "apple facts" are also provided. *Grade Levels: Pre-K-3*

Paulsen, G. (1995). *The Tortilla Factory*. California: Harcourt Brace. (641.8-Pau)
The Tortilla Factory describes, in simple and elegant language, the age-old process of making tortillas - from corn seed to finished product. *Grade Levels: 1-3*

Priceman, M. (1994). *How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World*. New York: Random House. (E-Pri)
Making an apple pie is usually easy for the young baker except when the market is closed and no ingredients can be bought. The reader is taken on a journey around the world to find the finest ingredients to make a delicious apple pie. *Grade Levels: K-2*

Productivity

Leedy, L. (1993). *The Furry News: How to Make a Newspaper*. New York: Holiday House. (070.4 Lee)
Big Bear, Rabbit, and other animals work hard to produce a newspaper for their own neighborhood. They divide up the labor to write, edit, and print a variety of stories. *Grade Levels: K-2*

Rey, M. & A.H. (1998). *Curious George Goes to a Chocolate Factory*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co. (E Rey).
Curious George and the man with the yellow hat stop at a chocolate factory store. George follows a tour group around the factory, and before you know it, he accidentally – and dramatically – speeds up the candy production. How will the extra candy coming off the assembly line be handled? Curious George to the rescue! *Grade Levels – Pre-K - 2*

Profit

- Brown, M. (1990). *Arthur's Pet Business*. Massachusetts: Joy Street Books. (E-Bro)
Arthur really wants his own puppy. So he starts his own "Pet Business" to make a profit and to prove his responsibility to his parents. *Grade Levels: K-2*
- Zimelman, N. (1992). *How the Second Grade Got \$8,205.50 to Visit the Statue of Liberty*. Morton, IL: Albert Whitman and Co. (E Zim)
The second grade class makes several attempts to earn enough money to visit the Statue of Liberty. The report includes the expenses, income, and profit of each business venture. *Grade Levels: K-3*

Saving

- Mitchell, M. K. (1993). *Uncle Jed's Barbershop*. New York: Simon and Schuster Books. (E-Mit)
Sarah Jean's Uncle Jed has a dream. He saves his money and lives for the day when he can open his very own barbershop. But it is a long time, and there are many setbacks before the joyful day when Uncle Jed opens his shiny new shop. *Grade Levels: Pre K-2*
- Williams, V. B. (1982). *Chair for My Mother*. New York: Scholastic. (f BB-E-WIL)
A young girl, her mother, and her grandmother lost all of their belongings in a house fire. Generous friends, neighbors, and family replaced many things, but they still had no soft comfortable chair. They all placed their coins in a large jar for a long time until they saved enough money to buy a beautiful chair to share. *Grade Levels: K-3*
- Viorst, J. (1988). *Alexander, Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday*. New York: Aladdin Books. (E-Vio)
Alexander had a dollar last Sunday, but he just can't seem to hang on to it. Follow Alexander through the week as he makes many poor spending decisions, resulting in his not saving anything. *Grade Levels: K-3*

Scarcity

- Aardema, A. (1981). *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain: a Nandi Tale*. New York: Dial Press. (398.2-Aar)
This book tells the story of how a young boy, Ki-pat, brings the much needed rain to the dry Kapiti Plain. *Grade Levels: K-3*
- Chinn, K. (1995). *Sam and the Lucky Money*. New York: Lee and Low Books. (E Chi)
Sam can't wait to go shopping in Chinatown with his mom. He has his traditional gift of "lucky money" to spend - any way he chooses! But when Sam realizes he doesn't have enough money to purchase the things he wants, his excitement turns to disappointment. *Grade Levels: K-3*
- Demi. (1997). *One Grain of Rice: a Mathematical Folktale*. New York: Scholastic Press. (398.2-Dem)
A raja in India decrees that the rice farmers in his province must give him nearly all their rice to store for himself. After a bad growing season, the raja continues to demand the rice, and the people are faced with a severe scarcity problem - famine. Luckily, a young maiden develops a plan to get the rice back from the raja. *Grade Levels: K-3*
- Hutchins, P. (1986). *The Doorbell Rang*. New York: Greenwillow Books. (E-Hut)
Victoria and Sam are forced to share or distribute a limited number of cookies. Each time the doorbell rings, more friends arrive and the children face a cookie scarcity problem. *Grade Levels: K-3*
- Seuss, D. (1971). *The Lorax*. New York, Random House. (E-Seu)
Find out what happens in this Dr. Seuss classic when the Once-ler begins chopping down Truffula Trees to make the wildly popular Thneeds! The results are rather grim – but could they have been avoided? *Grade Levels: K-3*

Specialization

- Caple, K. (2004). *Worm Gets a Job*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press. (E Cap)
Worm learns about an upcoming art contest that he is sure he can win. But he must earn some money quickly so he can buy a paint set! What can he do? Follow Worm's adventures as he tries babysitting, housecleaning, delivering newspapers, and painting signs. In the end, worm learns what he does best to earn a living in his animal community. *Grade Levels: K-3*
- dePaola, T. (1989). *Tony's Bread*. New York: Putnam & Grosset Group. (398.2 DeP)
Tony dreams that one day he will become the most famous baker in all of northern Italy! He loves his precious daughter, Serafina, and thinks that no man is worthy of his daughter. Angelo, a wealthy nobleman from Milano, passes by Tony's bakery and sees Serafina. Suddenly, it appears that Angelo may have the answer to Tony's dreams. *Grade Levels: K-3*
- Gibbons, G. (1990). *How a House is Built*. New York: Holiday House. (690 Gib)
Follow the work of all the special workers as they build a house from start to finish - from designing the plans to landscaping the yard. What a lot of special skills are needed! This colorful book also shows pictures of houses from different places and eras. *Grade Levels: K-3*
- Polacco, P. (1998). *Thank You, Mr. Falker*. New York: Philomel Books. (E-Pol)
Trisha loves school until her inability in reading makes her feel dumb. Luckily, in the fifth grade, her teacher, Mr. Falker, uses his specialized skills to help her learn to read and overcome her problem. *Grade Levels: K-4*

Supply and Demand

- Brown, M. (1997). *Arthur's TV Trouble*. New York: Little Brown. (E Bro)
Arthur gets into "TV trouble" when he insists on buying The Amazing Treat Timer, a gadget that would help him feed his dog. Will it be worth using his hard-earned cash to purchase the Timer? See what happens to Arthur in this amusing story. *Grade Levels: K-3*
- Murphy, S. (1998). *Lemonade for Sale*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. (513.2-Mur)
The members of the Elm Street Kid's Club open a lemonade stand to earn money to build a new clubhouse. Business is brisk for a while, as shown by the children's bar graphs. But in a few days, no one shows up to buy lemonade! *Grade Levels: 1st and Up*

Trade & Money

- Adams, B. J. (1992). *The Go-Around Dollar*. New York: Four Winds Press. (332.4-Ada)
The story describes the journey of a one-dollar bill as it changes hands. Special information about our paper money is included on each page. *Grade Levels: 4-6*
- Axelrod, A. (1997). *Pigs will be Pigs: Fun with Math and Money*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks. (513.2-Axe)
This story is about a pig family adventure. Amy and her family are in the car, ready to go out and grab a snack. When they realize they are short on cash, they decide to return to the house to hunt for money. *Grade Levels: K-3*
- Wells, R. (1997). *Bunny Money*. New York: Dial Books. (E-Wel)
Max and Ruby save birthday money to buy presents for their grandmother. However, they spend so much money on emergencies along the way they barely have enough left for gifts. *Grade Levels: Pre-K-K*

Ziefert, H. (1986). *A New Coat for Anna*. New York: Random House. (E-Zie)

At the end of World War II, Anna needed a new winter coat, but her mother had no money. They use valuable things they own to barter for the goods and services needed to produce the coat. *Grade Levels: Pre-K-3*

Trade-Offs

Yolen, J. (1995). *Letting Swift River Go*. New York: Little Brown. (E Yol)

Sally Jane began her life in one of the small towns along the Swift River. Because the city of Boston needed more water, the small rural towns were removed, the river was damned, and the Quabbin Reservoir was formed. *Grade Levels:*