

NUMISMATICS AND SOCIETY: *Using the Lens of Weimar Hyperinflation*

Creating Prepared Students in Social Studies (CO standards):

Analyze the origins, structures, and functions of governments to evaluate the impact on citizens and the global society

I Can Statements:

- I can explain the process of hyperinflation
- I can analyze the social, emotional, and mental impact of hyperinflation on citizens
- I can evaluate artistic expressions and their representations of societal struggle

Grade Level: 9-12

Essential Question:

How can government decisions impact the daily lives of citizens?

Materials and Resources:

Internet Access to visit embedded links:
bit.ly/hyperinflation-lesson



Learning Plan

1. ACCESS PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:

Break students into small groups and pose the following questions:

- Why don't we print more money when we are in a recession?
- What would you do if a single egg cost 2 billion dollars? How would you survive?
- Where have you seen art that represents issues in society? What kind of art do you think would emerge if an egg cost 2 billion dollars?

Have groups share out their answers

- Create 3 columns on the board with key points that the groups share (*keep as a reference as you move through the next part*)



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MONEY.ORG/TEACHER-TOOLS

2. ACCESS NEW INFORMATION

Introduce the students to hyperinflation with [this video](#)

Pull up the ANA website linked [here](#)

- Read the brief description of German notgeld and show the actual images from the ANA Money Museum (*Be sure to differentiate marks that were issued by the government, and notgeld which was issued by local communities*)

Break the class into 3 groups, giving each group a letter of A, B, or C

- Student will start by working alone to read the article assigned their group
 - **Group A** will focus on the basics of [Hyperinflation in the Weimar Republic](#)
 - **Group B** will focus on [The Impact of Hyperinflation on Democracy](#)
 - **Group C** will focus on [The Art of German Hyperinflation](#)
- Create a jigsaw by having students meet (*size of 3-4 students is recommended*) with others in their same group. For example, you may have 3 groups of As and 3 groups of Bs, etc. In these groups, students will become the “expert” and share their thoughts on the article they read.
- Next, have students create groups of 3, with each group containing a member of A, B, and C. Students will be tasked with sharing the information they became an expert on and asking questions to the other students about their learnings.
- After feeling confident in having the knowledge from all 3 articles, the groups should discuss the initial questions from the beginning of class.
 - *Why don't we print more money when we are in a recession?*
 - *What would you do if a single egg cost 2 billion dollars? How would you survive?*
 - *Where have you seen art that represents issues in society? What kind of art do you think would emerge if an egg cost 2 billion dollars?*
- Return to the whole group and discuss reflections on the initial answers on the board.

3. ASSESS LEARNING

Have students consider a social issue from the present or past (*this is open to how much room you want to give the students*)

Ask them to create a piece of notgeld for the issue

- In other words, ask them to create an emergency currency from the time of the societal issue they are exploring. This currency should be similar to notgeld in that the design in the art represents the frustrations and worries of the citizens toward the government.
 - *More examples of notgeld can be found online through a simple Google search*
- Ask the students to explain in writing the issue they are exploring, how the article(s) they explored during the lesson influenced their choices, and how frustration with the government is evident in their design



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