

Trading Across Regions

How shared payment systems make trade possible

SS.6.E.3.1 "Identify examples of mediums of exchange (currencies) used for trade (barter) for each civilization, and explain why international trade requires a system for a medium of exchange between trading both inside and among various regions."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each good, metal, shell, or coin that the passage says people used in exchange or payment. In paragraph 1, circle the phrases "each person wants what the other has" and "goods seem equal in value" to mark two problems with barter.

From Barter to Shared Payment

- ① Long before modern money, traders often used barter. In barter, people exchange goods directly, such as wool for olive oil. This works best when each person wants what the other has and when the goods seem equal in value. Across longer distances, those conditions were harder to meet. A farmer with grain might need timber, while a timber seller might want pottery instead. Merchants also had to decide how much grain equaled one load of timber. A shared medium of exchange made these trades easier.
- ② In ancient Mesopotamia, people could pay with weighed silver, often measured in shekels, and with barley in some records. A shekel named a weight of silver, not a coin. In ancient Egypt, grain and cloth could be exchanged, while copper, silver, and gold were weighed for payment. Egyptians used the deben as a weight unit to compare value, not as an object handed over by itself. These goods and metals could serve as media of exchange because people accepted them in trade. Their agreed value helped buyers and sellers make fairer exchanges.
- ③ Other civilizations developed additional choices. In ancient China, cowrie shells were used in exchange, and later governments made bronze coins. Coins were useful because their shape and marks showed an accepted value. When traders from different regions met, they needed to agree on what payment would be accepted and how much it was worth. Without such an agreement, a foreign coin, silver piece, or bundle of cloth might be refused. A shared system reduced arguments, avoided repeated barter searches, and allowed trade between regions with different goods and needs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

- 1 What two media of exchange does the passage name for ancient Mesopotamia? What does a shekel describe?

- 2 Name two goods or metals used in exchange or payment in ancient Egypt. Why was a deben not itself a medium of exchange?

- 3 What two media of exchange does the passage name for ancient China? Why were bronze coins useful?

- 4 Why did traders from different regions need to agree on an accepted payment and its value? Give two results of using a shared system.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Complete both rows to invent two trade plans between regions. In each plan, name the goods each region offers, choose an accepted medium of exchange, and explain how it helps the traders make the trade.

REGION A AND ITS GOODS	REGION B AND ITS GOODS	ACCEPTED MEDIUM OF EXCHANGE	HOW THE MEDIUM HELPS

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each good, metal, shell, or coin that the passage says people used in exchange or payment. In paragraph 1, circle the phrases “each person wants what the other has” and “goods seem equal in value” to mark two problems with barter. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What two media of exchange does the passage name for ancient Mesopotamia? What does a shekel describe?	Weighed silver and barley. A shekel describes a weight of silver, not a coin.
2	Name two goods or metals used in exchange or payment in ancient Egypt. Why was a deben not itself a medium of exchange?	Answers may name grain, cloth, copper, silver, or gold. A deben was a weight unit used to compare value, not an object handed over in payment.
3	What two media of exchange does the passage name for ancient China? Why were bronze coins useful?	Cowrie shells and bronze coins. Bronze coins were useful because their shape and marks showed an accepted value.
4	Why did traders from different regions need to agree on an accepted payment and its value? Give two results of using a shared system.	They needed agreement so payment would not be refused and both sides would know its worth. A shared system reduced arguments, avoided repeated searches for matching barter goods, and allowed regions with different goods and needs to trade.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

REGION A AND ITS GOODS	REGION B AND ITS GOODS	ACCEPTED MEDIUM OF EXCHANGE	HOW THE MEDIUM HELPS
River farmers, grain	Hill woodcutters, timber	Weighed silver	Both groups accept its value, so they do not need to want each other's goods.
Coast fishers, dried fish	Inland potters, pottery	Bronze coins	The marked coins show an accepted value and reduce arguments about a fair trade.

Accept historically accurate media named in the passage and clear explanations that distinguish an exchanged item from a unit used to measure value. For Your Turn, accept reasonable invented regions and goods when the student selects an accepted medium and explains how it solves a barter or value problem.