Three Ways to Trade

Compare barter, money, and credit in a town market.

6-9.WH.3.3 "Analyze the role of money and alternative means of exchange."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the passage. Circle each way people exchange goods, and underline a benefit or a limit of each way.

How Mara Gets Her Boots

1. Imagine a farming town in the United States in the 1800s. Mara raises chickens and needs a new pair of boots. She offers eggs to a bootmaker, but he has plenty of eggs. He wants a sack of flour instead. Mara could search for someone who wants eggs and has flour, then trade the flour for boots. Trading goods directly like this can work when people want what each other has. Yet finding the right trading partner may take time, and fresh eggs cannot be saved forever.

2. At the town store, Mara sees that flour and boots have prices in dollars. Money gives people a shared way to compare the prices of different goods. If Mara sells eggs for money, she can buy boots without finding a bootmaker who wants eggs. The bootmaker can then use the money to buy flour. Coins are easier to carry than sacks of flour and do not spoil. Still, Mara cannot pay in cash if she has not yet sold her eggs.

3. The storekeeper offers another option: Mara may take flour now and pay for it later. She can then trade flour for boots. The storekeeper writes the price in a ledger, a book that records what customers owe. This is credit, not a free gift. It helps Mara get boots before she has sold enough eggs. If her hens lay fewer eggs than expected, paying the debt may be difficult. Barter, money, and credit each help people exchange goods, but each depends on different conditions.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does Mara's first offer of eggs fail, and what would make a direct trade work?

2. How could using money help Mara and the bootmaker get what they want without trading with each other?

3. How does credit help Mara get boots sooner, and why is it not a free gift?

4. If Mara has not sold her eggs, why might credit work when cash does not? What risk comes with that choice?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a different trade involving two people and a good or service. In 4 to 5 sentences, explain when a direct trade could work, how money would change the exchange, and one benefit and one risk of buying on credit.

ANSWER KEY

Three Ways to Trade

GRADES 6-9 · 6-9.WH.3.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage. Circle each way people exchange goods, and underline a benefit or a limit of each way. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does Mara's first offer of eggs fail, and what would make a direct trade work?	**The bootmaker does not want eggs. A direct trade would work if Mara offered something he wants, such as flour.**
2	How could using money help Mara and the bootmaker get what they want without trading with each other?	**Mara could sell eggs for money and buy boots. The bootmaker could use the money to buy flour.**
3	How does credit help Mara get boots sooner, and why is it not a free gift?	**She can take flour now and trade it for boots before selling her eggs, but she still owes the storekeeper payment.**
4	If Mara has not sold her eggs, why might credit work when cash does not? What risk comes with that choice?	**She has no cash yet, but credit lets her take flour now. If her hens lay fewer eggs than expected, she may struggle to pay her debt.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A gardener wants a chair, and a carpenter wants fresh vegetables. They could trade directly because each wants what the other offers. If the carpenter preferred something else, the gardener could sell vegetables for money and buy the chair. On credit, the gardener could get the chair before selling any vegetables. But if the crop failed, paying the carpenter later could be hard.

Accept other explanations grounded in the passage. For Your Turn, look for a workable direct trade, a clear role for money, and both a benefit and a risk of credit.