

Somali Pirates

Grade Level: 7

Economic Concepts: scarcity, opportunity cost, productive resources, costs, benefits

Maryland State Curriculum

Economics Standard: Students will develop economic reasoning to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.

- 4.A.1 Analyze the decisions that people made because resources were limited to economic wants for goods and services
- 4.A.1.a Identify the opportunity cost of economic decisions made by individuals and groups
- 4.A.2 Analyze how scarcity of economic resources affects economic choices in contemporary world regions
- 4.B.2.c Analyze the ways that governments can help or impede economic activity

Geography Standard: Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.

- 3.A.1 Use geographic tools to locate places and describe the human and physical characteristics in the contemporary world
- 3.B.1.b Explain how physical and human characteristics of a region such as vegetation, climate, minerals, population density and religion, affect its economic growth and the way people make a living
- 3.B.1.d Identify geographic factors that have influenced international relations and economic development in world regions

History Standard: Students will examine significant ideas, beliefs, and themes; organize patterns and events; and analyze how individuals and societies have changed over time in Maryland, the United States and around the world.

- 5.C.1 Analyze the major sources of tension and conflict in the contemporary world
- 5.C.1.a Describe how the changes in political structures impacted individuals and groups

College and Career Ready Standards for Reading Informational Text

- RI.7.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RI.7.2 Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text
- RI.7.3 Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text
- RI.7.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text
- W.7.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- W.7.6 Use technology to link to and cite sources

Objectives: Students will be able to...

- explain the economic, geographic and political reasons behind Somali piracy
- participate in a Jigsaw activity on the Somali piracy issue
- write an article on Somali piracy
- locate other areas of the world experiencing piracy issues

Vocabulary

Scarcity: the condition that results from the imbalance between relatively unlimited economic wants and the relatively limited resources, goods and services available to satisfy those wants. (There's never enough!)

Opportunity Cost: the foregone benefit of the next best alternative when an economic decision is made. (Your next best choice.)

Productive Resources: human, natural and capital resources used to produce a good or service

Human Resources: the health, strength, talents, education and skills that humans can use to produce goods and services

Natural Resources: renewable and non-renewable gifts of nature that can be used to produce goods and services

Capital Resources: the goods that are manufactured and constructed by people and used to produce other goods and services.

Benefits: monetary or non-monetary gain received because of an action taken or a decision made

Cost: spending something, such as time or effort, in order to achieve a goal; the value that must be given up to acquire a good or service

Teacher Background

Piracy has been a fixture throughout history -- as far back as 2,500 years to the days of the Phoenicians. Children read of the exploits of Blackbeard and Captain Hook and watch as movies depict the daring-do of the *Pirates of the Caribbean's* Jack Sparrow. But piracy is neither a matter of the past nor of Hollywood's imagination. Rather, it remains a reality in various parts of our modern world. Most notably of late are the Somali pirates who engage in attacking freighters in the waters off the eastern coast of Africa.

Materials for Teacher

- Visual 1: *Can You Identify a Real Pirate?*
- Visual 2: *Somali Pirates: K-W-L Chart*
- "Expert" group questions written on the board (See #4b under "Lesson Development")
- *The Nystrom Atlas of World History*. Chicago: Nystrom, 2004.
- Resource 1, *A Pirate's Life for Me*
- Resource 2a, *Piracy Then*
- Resource 2b, *Piracy Now*
- Resource 2c, *Somalia: Geography*
- Resource 2d, *Somalia: Economics*
- Resource 2e, *Somalia: History & Politics*
- Resource 2f, *Tackling Piracy off African Shores*

Motivation

Project the pictures on Visual 1 and ask the following question: Which of these are pictures of authentic pirates? Have students explain their choices. (Answer: All but Jack Sparrow. Edward Teach = Blackbeard, a pirate from the early 1700s; Jean Lafitte = early 1800s pirate/privateer in the Caribbean; Abdiweli Muse = only Somali pirate to survive the *Maersk Alabama* capture/siege; Jack Sparrow = Disney character)

Discuss: What is a pirate? Distribute copies of Resource 1 and/or play You Tube's version of *Yo Ho, A Pirate's Life for Me* for the class. In what ways is the song similar to what we consider a pirate today? In what ways is it different? Why do you think people engage in piracy? (List student responses on the board.)

Go back to the picture of Abdiweli Muse. SAY: Today, we're going to focus on piracy in general and the Somali pirates, such as Abdiweli Muse, operating now specifically.

Lesson Development

1. Before Reading Activity: Project Visual 2 (*Somali Pirates: K-W-L Chart*) on the overhead projector or draw it on the board. Conduct a brief discussion of what students know and want to know about Somali pirates, listing their responses under the appropriate K-W-L chart columns.
 - a. **K:** Ask students to think quietly about the question "What do you already know about Somali pirates? Have them write their responses in column 1 of their chart under "K". Then, ask volunteers to share what they already know and record their responses on the transparency or on the board.
 - b. **W:** Ask students to think quietly and independently about the question "What are some things that you want to learn about Somali pirates?" Tell them to write their responses in column 2 under the letter "W." Then, ask volunteers to share what they know. Record their responses on the transparency or chalkboard.
 - c. Continue with the lesson.
2. Clear vocabulary
3. Divide students into groups of 6 students. (These are your Jigsaw groups because eventually they will piece the story together.) Distribute Resource 2a-2f, with each student receiving a different sheet. Have each student read their sheet twice in order to familiarize themselves with the information.
4. Re-divide the class into 6 "Expert" groups with all students who read Resource 2a into one group, 2b into another group, etc.... Give students in these expert groups time to:
 - a. discuss the main points of their reading
 - b. discuss the following "Expert Group Questions" in light of their reading (NOTE: Not every reading addresses every question. Questions should be written on the board for all to see)
 - i. Explain the issues and the decisions made covered in your reading and identify the opportunity cost involved.

- ii. How did scarcity of resources affect the choices people made and impact the issues identified in your reading?
 - iii. What effect did the Somali government have on the situation described?
 - c. Plan and rehearse the presentations they will make to their jigsaw group.
5. Bring students back to their original Jigsaw group. Then, each student is responsible for presenting his/her “expertise” to the group. Encourage the Jigsaw group to ask questions for clarification. Group leaders should assume responsibility for seeing to it that everyone has a chance to present their material and respond to questions.

Summary

Return to the K-W-L chart and have students report out regarding what they have learned about Somali pirates. Add student responses to the K-W-L chart on the transparency or the chalkboard.

In light of today’s activity, conduct a classroom discussion of “Piracy in the 21st century.”

Assessment

Have students respond to the following prompt:

Faces magazine has decided to devote a future issue to pirates and piracy. The editor is asking students to submit articles about modern-day pirates. From the articles submitted, they will select one to include in the pirate issue.

Use what you know and what you have learned to write an article about the Somali pirates for the editor of *Faces* magazine. Be sure to include information about piracy today and the economic, geographic and political reasons behind the actions of the Somali pirates.

Now, write your article about the Somali pirates for the editor of *Faces* magazine.

Extensions/Connections: Techno-Quest

Modern-day piracy is not only found in the waters off Somalia but also occurs in other parts of the world. Search the Internet for the International Maritime Bureau website. (Can be found via www.icc-ccs.org) Then, click on “IMB Reporting Centre” and “Piracy Prone Areas and Warnings.” Using the information from “Piracy Prone Areas and Warnings”:

- identify the countries currently experiencing piracy problems
- locate the countries on a desk-map
- create a color-code for each country indicating it as an area of high risk, moderate risk or low risk
- plot the information on a desk map of the world

Can You Identify a Real Pirate?



Jack Sparrow



Edward Teach



Abdiweli Muse



Jean Lafitte

Somali Pirates: K-W-L Chart

K (What I <u>Know</u>)	W (What I <u>Want</u> to Know)	L (What I <u>Learned</u>)

A Pirate's Life for Me

Yo Ho, Yo Ho, a pirate's life for me
We pillage, we plunder we rifle and loot
Drink up me hearties, yo ho
We kidnap and ravage and don't give a hoot
Drink up me hearties, yo ho
Yo Ho, Yo Ho, a pirate's life for me
We extort, we pilfer we filch and sack
Drink up me hearties, yo ho
Maraud and embezzle and even high-jack
Drink up me hearties yo ho
Yo Ho, Yo Ho, a pirate's life for me
We kindle and char inflame and ignite
Drink up me hearties, yo ho
We burn up the city we're really a fright
Drink up me hearties, yo ho
We're rascals, scoundrels villains, and knaves
Drink up me hearties yo ho
We're devils and black sheep - really bad eggs
Drink up me hearties yo ho
Yo Ho, Yo Ho, a pirate's life for me
We're beggars and blighters and ne'er do-well cads
Drink up me hearties, yo ho
Aye, but we're loved by our mommies and dads
Drink up me hearties, yo ho

Piracy Then

Pirates appear in literature, movies and music as men with peg legs, parrots and buried treasure. However, in reality, piracy is more complex than eye patches, gold earrings, and walking the plank. Pirates have been around as long as people have sailed the seas. In ancient times, the Phoenicians often combined piracy with more lawful business. From the 9th through the 11th centuries, the pirate-like Vikings attacked the western European coast and surrounding villages. At the same time, Muslim pirates terrorized the Mediterranean Sea, waging naval warfare and abducting slaves.

After Christopher Columbus's voyage to the New World in 1492, Spain's powerful navy became a force in the Caribbean, a region rich with gold, silver and other valuables. During the 16th and 17th centuries, England, France and the Netherlands used privately owned ships (privateers) to fight battles, conduct raids, disrupt trade and harass the Spanish in the Caribbean region without having to fund their own navy in the area. Privateers often would split the treasure they seized with the countries that commissioned them.

The desire for Spanish treasure was strong and the line between privateering and piracy (sailors' actions not sanctioned by any nation) were blurred. The late 17th and early 18th centuries, often called "The Golden Age of Piracy" in the Caribbean, saw some legendary pirates emerge. Among them were Edward Teach, a former British privateer who became known and feared as Blackbeard the Pirate. Another famous pirate of that time was the Scottish-born William Kidd, commonly known as Captain Kidd.

Pirates were law-breakers by trade, but they had a code of conduct. Pirate crews elected their own captains based on leadership and naval skills. Captured loot was evenly distributed among crew members and stealing from a crewmate carried harsh punishments. Pirate ships flew red or black flags, known as "Jolly Rogers", which typically featured a skull and crossbones symbolizing death and designed to strike fear in their enemies. There is little evidence that pirates buried their treasure or made people walk the plank as punishment.

Piracy's Golden Age ended by the 1720s, when pirates were outmatched by European military forces in the Caribbean. In general, piracy declined in the late 18th and early 19th centuries with the development of the steam engine and the growth of the British and American navies. However, piracy never disappeared completely. In recent years, cargo vessels have become the targets of piracy. These modern-day pirates use many techniques and modern technology. Today, the waters off Indonesia and Somali, not the Caribbean, are the most dangerous areas for pirate raids.

Adapted from materials from the following sources: www.History.com, the Global Policy Forum February 2, 2009 (The GPF monitors policy-making at the U.N.), Voice of America June 24, 2009

Piracy Now

Somali pirates don't wear eye patches, and instead of swords they have rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs). They use small, fast speedboats to get around and work in crews of 10 or so. Once they find a good target, they launch hooks and rope ladders up to board the ship and overwhelm the crew. They often attack at night. Since 2008, the number of incidents of piracy off the coast of Somalia has risen greatly with ransoms ranging from \$500,000 to \$2 million dollars

What has brought about the increase in piracy in recent times? While a variety of reasons have been given, it often boils down to three: economics, politics and geography. Piracy off the coast of Somalia began when the local fishing industry was hurt because foreign fishing fleets entered Somali fishing grounds depleting the numbers of fish. Somali fishermen started attacking foreign trawlers until the trawler crews fought back with heavy weapons, leading the local fishermen to turn to other types of commercial vessels. The pirates prefer to call themselves the Somali "Coast Guard," because, originally, they organized themselves to defend their communities from over-fishing by foreigners and to protect Somalia's coastline from the dumping of toxic waste by the foreign vessels.

In a world where Somalia ranks as one of the world's poorest countries, piracy is Somalia's greatest money-making business. Ship owners are willing to pay millions for the release of their hijacked vessels. It is believed that the pirates collected over \$150 million in ransoms in 2008 alone, an amount greater than the budget of the country's government, with ransoms totalling millions more since then. Dr. J. Peter Pham, director of the Nelson Institute for International and Public Affairs at James Madison University says that "...it makes a great deal of sense if you have a cargo ship that is worth at least \$20 to \$30 million...paying them a million dollars to get it back is an economically rational decision. Unfortunately, what might be in the...interest of a single shipping company contributes to a general climate where the price of ransoms are bid up and there's incentive for more people to get involved in this lawlessness," he says.

Additionally, Dr. Pham believes that politics is another reason for Somali piracy. With no strong government in Somalia since 1991, there are many opportunities for criminals to engage in unlawful activities with little fear of having to pay for their crimes.

Geography also contributes to the issue. The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) says that the Somali coast is the most dangerous stretch of water in the world. At any given time pirates are holding at least a dozen ships hostage including the occasional oil supertanker for which they can demand up to \$25 million in ransom. Somalia has a huge coastline wrapped around the Horn of Africa. Many pirate attacks were launched in the narrow channel known as the Gulf of Aden. In response to these attacks and the economic effect they were having on this popular shipping channel, a fleet of international warships are now on daily patrol. Pirates now are known to be using "mother ships" so they can launch attacks further out at sea.

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Somalia: Geography

Somalia, one of the poorest countries in Africa, is located in eastern Africa in an area sometimes called “The Horn of Africa.” A peninsula, Somalia is bordered by the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. It also borders the countries of Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya. Somalia has an area of 246,200 square miles, slightly smaller than the U.S. state of Texas.

Most of Somalia consists of plains and low plateaus. The only significant rivers are the Scebali and the Juba, which flow across southern Somalia from Ethiopia. Except for thin forests in the far south and the northern highlands, vegetation consists mainly of sparse grasses and thorny bushes. The climate of Somalia is marked by monsoon winds, high temperatures, and little rainfall causing drought.

Many of the people of Somalia are nomadic or semi-nomadic herders, who raise sheep, camels, goats, and a few cattle and live at a bare subsistence level. Hides, skins, and other animal products have long been a main export. Farming is done only along or near the rivers, where some water is available for growing crops, mainly sorghum, corn, and sugarcane. Bananas, one of the chief cash and export crops, are grown primarily on large plantations developed in colonial times.

The 9 million plus population of Somali is mostly Muslim. Mogadishu is the capital and largest city of Somalia. Elementary and secondary schooling is free, but attendance is not required and, therefore, is low. About 60 per cent of the population is illiterate.

Facts in brief about Somalia

Capital: Mogadishu.

Official language: Somali.

Area: 246,201 mi² (637,657 km²). Greatest distances—north-south, 950 mi (1,529 km); east-west, 730 mi (1,175 km). Coastline—1,800 mi (2,408 km).

Elevation: Highest—Mount Surud Ad, 7,900 ft (2,408 m) above sea level. Lowest—sea level along the coast.

Population: Current estimate—9,007,000; density, 37 per mi² (14 per km²); distribution, 65 percent rural, 35 percent urban.

Chief products: Agriculture—bananas, grains, hides and skins, livestock, sugar cane. Manufacturing—processed foods, sugar.

Adapted from: <http://geography.howstuffworks.com/africa/geography-of-somalia.htm>

Somalia: Economics

The state of Somalia's economy is poor. It lacks natural resources and faces many economic challenges that have left the Somali people dependent on funds from other nations. Its main form of wealth comes from livestock – chiefly camels, sheep, goats and cattle. However, in recent years, animal health issues and drought conditions have severely reduced the number of livestock that could be exported to other countries. Because rainfall is low, farming is limited to the coastal areas and only 2% of Somalia's land is cultivated.

A small fishing industry exists in the north where tuna, shark and other warm-water fish are caught. However, poaching* has seriously hurt the Somali fishing industry. Deposits of petroleum and natural gas have been found in various parts of the country, unfortunately efforts to mine and export them have stopped due to political instability. Illegal production of charcoal for export has led to widespread deforestation.

With no strong central government, numerous economic problems have risen. Counterfeiting has devalued Somalia's currency. Transportation is poor. There are no railways to transport people or goods; therefore, transportation throughout the country is by truck or bus. There is a national road system, but, with no government, most roads have received little maintenance for years and have seriously deteriorated. Air transportation is provided by small air charter firms and craft used by drug smugglers. Since the mid-1900s, the European Community, the World Bank, the Soviet Union and the United States have financed construction of port facilities. Again, the lack of a central government has caused these facilities to become dilapidated. Today the absence of security as well as lack of maintenance and improvements are major issues at most Somali ports.

Communications is another area of concern. The public telecommunications system has been destroyed or dismantled, but cellular phone service is available throughout the country. There are only three television broadcast stations: two in the capital of Mogadishu and one in the city of Hargeisa.

***POACHING:** trespassing for the purpose of stealing something, especially fish or game

Adapted from the U.S. State Department's website: <http://www.state.gov>

Somalia: History & Politics

Somalia's early history traces the development of the Somali state to an Arab sultanate in the 7th century A.D. However, its modern history began in the late 19th century when various European powers began to trade with Somalia and established themselves in the area. First Great Britain, and later Italy, signed trade treaties and eventually attempted to rule Somalia. In the years following World War II, advances toward self-government were made.

During the summer of 1960, the former British and Italian areas of Somalia joined to form the Somali Republic. In June 1961, Somalia adopted its first constitution which provided for a democratic state with a parliamentary form of government based on European models. A bloodless coup occurred in October 1969. Major General Mohamed Barre became the president bringing an abrupt end to the constitutional democracy in Somalia. General Barre reduced political freedoms and used military force to seize farmlands. He used force and terror against the Somali people to strengthen his power.

In the 1970's, Somalia waged war against its neighbor, Ethiopia; however, the Soviet Union supplied Ethiopia with troops and military advisors resulting in Somalia's defeat. Afterwards, Somalia turned to the West for economic aid and military equipment. In the meantime, Maj. Gen. Barre's government violently suppressed opposition movements and ethnic groups, and crushed attempts at rebellion. By the 1980s, an all-out civil war erupted in Somalia with the warfare leading to further decay within the country. An economic crisis occurred as Barre and his followers looted the national treasury. By the end of the 1980s, opposition to Barre spread causing hundreds of thousands of Somalis to flee their homes seeking refuge in neighboring countries. In January 1991, the opposition drove Barre out of office and he later died in exile in Nigeria.

After the end of Barre's rule, various groups of Somalis fought wars with each other to control the nation. Many attempts by other nations to help bring about peace in Somalia have been unsuccessful. A Transitional National Government (TNG) was formed in 2000, but its powers expired in 2003 leaving the nation in the hands of yet another transitional governing body in charge of establishing a more permanent government by 2011.

Adapted from the U.S. State Department website: <http://www.state.gov>

Tackling Piracy off African Shores

Since the International Maritime Organization (IMO) began keeping records in 1984, there have been more than 440 reported acts of piracy off the Somali coast. “Of these, 120 took place in 2008 alone,” IMO Secretary-General Efthimios Mitropoulos told the Security Council in November. More than 40 ships and 600 seafarers have been seized. Pirates have collected an estimated \$120 million in ransom.

Somali pirates are also sailing increasingly farther into the Indian Ocean from their bases in Puntland, in northern Somalia. One vessel, the *Sirius Star*, a supertanker carrying two million barrels of oil, was hijacked 450 nautical miles (833 kilometers) southeast of Kenya’s port, Mombasa, farther south than any previous attack. “This incident is significant on two counts,” says International Maritime Bureau (IMB) Director Pottengal Mukundan. “Firstly, this is the largest vessel to have been hijacked. Secondly, the distance from the shore would indicate a highly organized operation.”

Rising pirate attacks led to a 12% – 15% rise in insurance premiums in 2008 and a hike from \$500 to \$20,000 of the special risk insurance for each ship passing through the Gulf of Aden, bordering Somali waters. Ships can go around South Africa’s Cape of Good Hope to Europe instead. But the Gulf of Aden route, which serves about 20,000 vessels annually and carries over 12 per cent of all the oil transported by sea, is faster and cheaper. Nor is the Cape route totally safe. The *Sirius Star* was using the Cape route when it was hijacked.

With very little functioning government, long, isolated beaches and a population that is desperate and accustomed to war, Somalia is said to be a perfect environment for piracy to thrive. Within Puntland, the area in Somalia where most pirate attacks originate, the hijackings are seen as an important source of income, providing jobs and opportunities for hundreds. Fuel suppliers and merchants fuel the pirates’ boats.

Many pirates started as fishermen. Somalia’s fishing waters used to be a source of community income. But, over time, they attracted many European and Asian fishing vessels that depleted the fish population. This possibly prompted Somalis to target foreign ships.

Successful anti-piracy efforts do exist. Until 2004, the Malacca Straits, a narrow passage through the waters of Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, was the world’s most pirate-prone region, with 103 attacks that year. The three countries mounted daily joint air and sea patrols, eventually reducing the attacks to just 32 between January and September 2008.

Since June 2008, more than a dozen nations, including NATO and European Union members as well as Russia and India, have taken turns policing the waters. Consequently, successful hijackings fell from 53 per cent of total attacks to 31 per cent between August and October. But, the area is too vast to protect effectively.

The U.S. and European countries now are working with local navies to help police the waters because of the use of these waters by traffickers of drugs and immigrants to Europe. They also are involved because the area is an oil exporting region.

Adapted from the United Nations website: www.un.org/AR