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# Phoenician Trade

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Early Trade Simulation



#### **About the author**

James Francis received his Masters in History from Southeast Missouri University. Subsequently he has taught in Thailand, Slovakia and, since 2004, at Cleveland NJROTC in St Louis, Missouri. In 2010 he was selected as Saint Louis Public Schools' Social Studies Teacher of the Year. He currently teaches World History and AP European History, as well as being an ACP Adjunct Faculty Teacher at the University of Missouri - Saint Louis.

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## **Welcome to *Phoenician Trade!***

Puts students in the roles of early Phoenician traders and forces them to deal with the difficulties merchants of that time period faced. Resources to buy and sell are limited, and to make money students have to take certain risks. The further students travel away from the source of a product, the more they will find its price has risen.

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## Preface

As a student teacher in the inner city (more than a few years ago) I was confronted with a problem almost all social studies teachers have: How do I make a bunch of dead people come alive to my students? The world my students lived in had little in common with the Age of Pericles, the Gold-Salt trade of Ghana, or feudal society. How could I engage them in a meaningful way?

To solve this, I began to rely on my Peace Corps experience. Three years prior, I spent two years in Thailand teaching English. As in St. Louis, the students of Rong Rien Plu ta Luang were less than enthusiastic about learning English—especially the boys. To engage them, I began to use different “learning games.” These were simple, but pulled the students into the lesson and energized the material for them. The students became motivated to know the material so they could “win” the games. By playing the games regularly, the students began to learn the material despite themselves.

Stepping into my first class, I realized the sort of “game” lesson plans from the Peace Corps would not work with my students in St. Louis. However, I also realized that “traditional” lesson plans also would not engage my students at the level I wanted. To draw them into the subject area, I had to meld the two approaches. I wanted to find a way to pass on the subject material and make an emotional connection to the people who lived hundreds of thousand of years ago.

It was here that I began developing “simulators” to engage the students. I figured if I could make them imagine that they were knights fighting for power or tribes living in the Stone Age they would connect how they experienced the simulator with the actual history they were learning. At first, I used crude drawings on the blackboards, with one side showing the rules and the other showing the “board” for the game. Even with this rough presentation the response was incredible. Not only did the students enjoy the experience, but their test scores began to rise too. In addition, I found problems in classroom behavior dropped, as some of my rowdier students joined in class discussions and became more focused on learning history.

As time moved on, I was hired to teach at one of the public high schools in St. Louis, Cleveland NJROTC. Here, I began to expand and improve my simulators. Having taken quite a few programming courses in college, I began tinkering with PowerPoint. Now I could leave the chalkboards and whiteboards, giving the students a better visual representation and enhance their experiences. I also began looking into cross-curricular ideas: for instance combining basic economic ideas with ancient history. Behind each and every lesson was the idea that if the students could acquire empathy with the subjects, they would become more engaged in class.

## Introduction

Introducing economics into world history can be difficult. The ideas of supply and demand or the impact of market forces need to be taught early and then reinforced throughout the school year. This simulation puts students in the role of an early Phoenician trader and forces them to deal with the difficulties merchants of that time period faced. Resources to buy and sell are limited, and to make money students have to take certain risks. The further students travel away from the source of a product, the more they will find its price has risen.

### NCHE Objectives

*In part, the following NCHE Strands are used in this simulation:*

**Strand 2.** The connections among civilizations from earliest times, and the gradual growth of global interaction among the world's peoples, speeded and altered by changing means of transport and communication.

**Significant Questions:** The role of travelers, missionaries, trade, investment, migrations, advancing technologies of transport and communication?

**Strand 7.** Comparative history of selected themes, to demonstrate not only between European and other societies, but among European and non-European societies themselves.

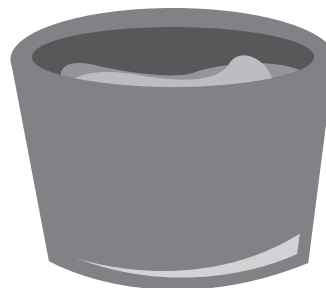
**Significant Questions:** The economic comparative history between societies.

**Strand 9.** Comparative study of the art, literature, and thought of representative cultures and of the world's civilizations.

**Significant Questions:** What have been the effects on their cultural lives of technology, economics, religion, ideology, politics, and of individual genius?

### Vocabulary

- Phoenicia
- Profit
- Scarcity
- supply and demand

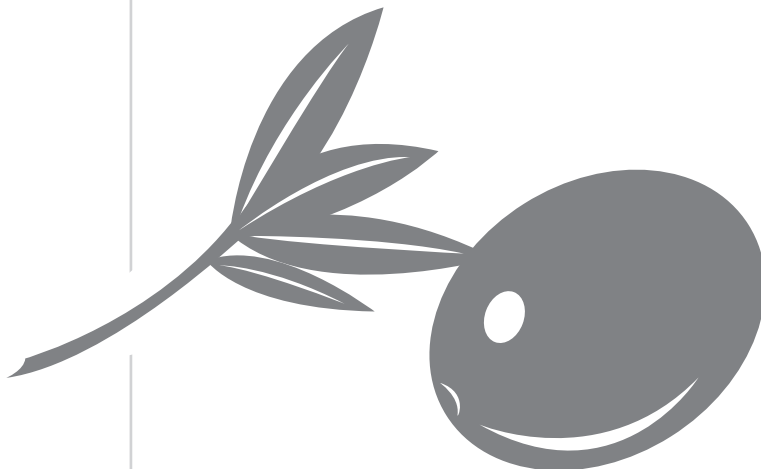


# Preparation

### **Materials:**

- Interactive whiteboard
- projector
- computer with PowerPoint®

The best way to run the lesson is to have an interactive whiteboard with a projector. This allows maximum class involvement and removes the teacher to the role of judge. When opening the PowerPoint®, be sure to enable macros in order to allow the objects to move and random numbers to be rolled. If you don't have an interactive whiteboard, you can still use the PowerPoint® on a computer attached to a projector but the impact lessens to a degree. If you don't have a projector then you can use a regular whiteboard or a chalkboard, but you will have to draw the map on the board prior to class.





# Procedure

## The Main Board

The main board shows the early Mediterranean world and its major cities. Each part is described below.

1. **The Ship Links:** These are located in the upper left corner of the map. Each colored ship connects to a slide which will allow the students to trade, buy, and sell. See below for a description of the ship slide.
2. **Pirate Movement:** In the center of the board is a series of three black rectangles. These determine where the pirates move. Pressing the top button will cause the bottom two rectangles to show a random direction. The pirates will move in their respective positions. For more on the pirates, see below.
3. **Moves:** This button will cause a random number between one and six to be generated. These numbers determine how far a player will be able to move. Based on the pirate scenarios, the number can also determine the distance traveled by the pirates.
4. **The Cities:** Along the coastline, links to the various cities can be found. More information about these links can be found below in the description of the cities slide.
5. **The Ships:** The ships can be found in the lower right portion of the board. All ships will start at Phoenicia and make their first purchases there. To move a ship, click on it and then click on the hex you wish to move it to.

