

**INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:**

**CRCT
Information** 1
&
3

**GCEE
Economic
Resources** 1
&
6

**Countries on an
Economic
Continuum** 2
&
5

**Communism,
Long Lines, and
Toilet Paper** 3

**Lesson Plans and
Online Activities** 4

**Submit Your
Ideas, Comments,
and Suggestions** 6

This newsletter contains over 50 links. If you receive a paper copy and would like an electronic version to activate the links, email [Shaun Owen](mailto:Shaun.Owen@doe.k12.ga.us) at sowen@doe.k12.ga.us.



CRCT Information

The weather is changing, the end of the school year is right around the corner, and the CRCT is drawing near. After the 6th and 7th grade social studies test results were nullified last year, we know that there may still be many questions about this year's test.

As you are aware, the grade 6 and 7 Georgia Performance Standards in Social Studies were reviewed last summer and revised. As is our practice, each year we develop and field test new items. This year, all items are new and reflect the revised curriculum. This spring, those new test items will be field tested with Georgia students. The purpose of the field test is to validate new test items with a representative

group of students. On a typical CRCT, students only take 10 field test items, which do not contribute to students' scores. All items on the grades 6 and 7 Social Studies CRCT are new and, therefore, considered field test items. Given the purpose of the field test is to gather information about how the items perform and not students, no results -- at any level -- will be reported.



[Assessment Page for the CRCT, EOCT, GHSQT, GAA, and Writing Assessments](#)

During the summer, a committee of Georgia social studies teachers will review the field tested items, along with key statistical data, and recommend which items should be kept for inclusion on an operational test, which items should be discarded, and which items should be edited for re-field testing. Interested teachers should contact their System Test Coordinator and/or Curriculum Director to serve on the committee. Standardized test development is a highly specialized process which includes extensive data analysis. A detailed description of the process is included on pages 2-3 of the [Assessment Newsletter](#).

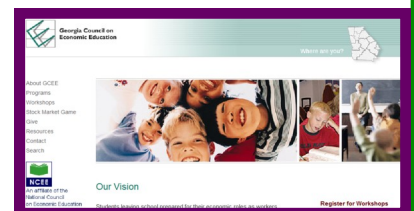
(cont. page 3)

GCEE Economic Resources

The [Georgia Council on Economic Education](#) is an excellent resource to assist teachers with the GPS economic domain. There are 40 state economic councils across the U.S., and GCEE is the most active. In 2008, GCEE presented 200 day-long workshops to 5,983 teachers. GCEE has the largest state run

stock market game in the country and is the largest purchaser of [Council for Economic Education](#) materials.

There is no registration fee for [GCEE](#) middle school workshops, materials are provided without charge, and breakfast and lunch are usually provided. GCEE also pays for the



[Click here to access the Georgia Council on Economic Education.](#)

substitutes for all middle school workshops except Virtual Economics. (cont. page 6)



[The Battle for the World Economy](#)



[Country at a glance UN Cyber School Bus](#)



[Ask Dr. Econ](#)



[Council for Economic Education](#)



[Economoagic.com](#)



[EconData.net](#)



Countries on an Economic Continuum

Economics! Once relegated to the backseat of the four domains, it seemed to have very little relevance to middle schoolers whose primary encounters with money seemed to be... do I have enough to buy this item or that item? For good or bad, economics has now moved to the front seat and has everyone's attention. Terms such as market and command economy, globalization, interdependence, depression, and recession have been dusted off the econ shelf and are now part of our everyday vernacular.

On the CRCT, economics counts for 25% of the content weight in 6th and 7th grades and 16% in 8th. It is crucial that our middle schoolers develop a sound understanding of economic principles. Students learn about money on a personal level (money management), on a state level (importance of entrepreneurs in Georgia who developed enterprises such as Coca-Cola, Delta Airlines, Georgia-Pacific, and Home Depot), and on a national and international level (voluntary trade, factors that influence economic growth/GDP, and economic systems from various countries around the world).

Let's start with the basics. How many types of economic systems are there?

Name the economic systems. Which economic system do a majority of textbooks say is the most common throughout the world?

According to our economic experts (GCEE), there are three types of economic systems: command, traditional, and market. This may seem a little confusing because many textbooks say that there are four. This is because many textbooks include mixed as a type of economy. Mixed is not a type of economy. Since there are no "pure command" economies (total government control) and no "market economies" (no government control), countries lie somewhere on a continuum, which means they are a mixture of command and market systems. Thus the term mixed. Mixed means that they lie somewhere on the continuum, but mixed is not one of the three basic economic systems. The more government control a country has in its economy, the closer it is to a command economy. The less government control a country has in its economy, the closer it is to a market economy.

The element that seems to receive the most questions in 6th and 7th grades is "Compare and contrast the basic types of economic systems found in...various countries listed." In 6th

grade, students look at Canada, Cuba, Brazil, United Kingdom, Germany, Russia, and Australia (SS8E1c, E5c, and E8c) In 7th grade, students look at South Africa, Nigeria, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, China, India, Japan, and North Korea (SS7E1c, E5c, E8c).

How do we determine where countries fall on the economic continuum between pure market and pure command? Once again, [CIA World Factbook](#) is an excellent, reliable, and up-to-date resource. The Introduction Background and the Economy Overview help explain some of the important transitional events in a country's history...including economic changes/developments. The Economy section offers a lot of information pertaining to the factors that influence economic growth.

Another excellent source to help with the economic continuum is the [U.S. Department of State](#). Click on Travel on the top nav, then from the drop down menu click countries and regions. When you go to the next screen on the left nav under General Information, click Background Notes, then select a country from the list. Read the information under Economy. (cont. page 5)

Communism, long lines, and toilet paper



Why would people stand in line all day long for one roll of toilet paper? This was the situation created by centralization in a command economy under the Soviet Union.

In a command economy, all economic activity is done on the orders of the government. Until the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent collapse of communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a large part of the world's population lived in countries that had command economies. Sadly, they didn't live very well.

Goods and services weren't allocated using a price system whereby output went to those willing and able to pay for it.

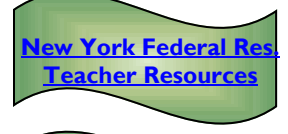
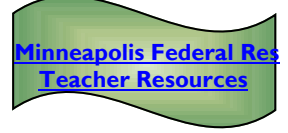
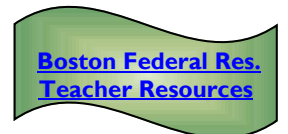
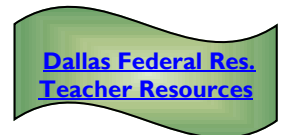
Rather, because everyone in a communist country is ideologically equal, the government attempted to give everyone an equal share of the goods and services made. The result of this system was not an equal division but rather shortages of everything from toilet paper to medicine. There were exceedingly long lines with more going to those willing to wait in line the longest. Because everything was in short supply, people would get into long lines, even if they did not know what was being sold.

How did centralization lead to this problem? In Moscow, government officials, called central planners, attempted to determine the correct amounts to produce for 24 million different items! It was an impossible task. Take, for instance, toilet paper. Central planners would have to estimate all of the following: how many millions of rolls of toilet paper are needed?; how many trees need to be cut down to make that much

paper?; how many railcars are needed to carry the trees to paper mills?; how many workers are needed to cut down the trees, run the railcars and work in the paper mills?; In addition, planners had to balance production of toilet paper against the other zillion things that required trees, railcars, and workers.

The result was that resources were constantly being misdirected and wasted. For instance, food often rotted at farms because no railcars had been scheduled to take it to cities; the officials hadn't accounted for an early harvest, and the railcars were busy elsewhere. In a price system, the farmers would have simply paid to bid the railcars away from other users. This solution wasn't possible in a centralized economy in which prices weren't used to allocate resources.

Excerpts from Flynn, S. (2005). Communism, long lines, and toilet paper. *Economics for Dummies*. (p. 47). New Jersey: Wiley.



CRCT Information

(continued from page 1)

Where do we go from here? The field item tests will be reviewed after students take the CRCT. Some items will remain, and some items will be eliminated based on specific, data driven criteria. Next year, (2009-2010) systems, administrators, teachers, and students will receive CRCT results for sixth and seventh social studies.

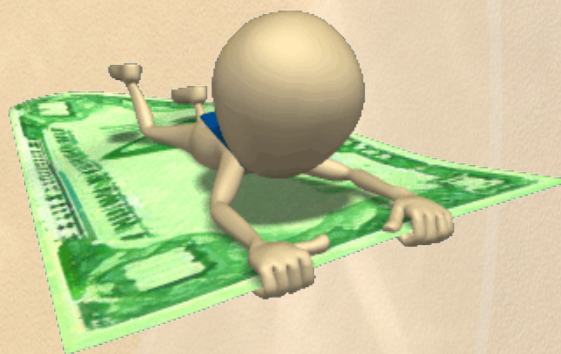
For more information on the [CRCT](#), please contact Joe Blessing, the CRCT Specialist, at jblessing@doe.k12.ga.us.

Additional Testing Resources

- * [Study Guide- Grade 6](#)
- * [Study Guide- Grade 7](#)
- * [Study Guide- Grade 8](#)
- * [Content Descriptions-Grade 8](#)
- * [Online Assessment System](#)
- * [Content Weights CRCT](#)
- * [Promotion and Retention](#)
- * [Assessment Newsletter](#)

LESSON PLANS & ONLINE ACTIVITIES

- [Economic Education Web](#)
- [The Educators' Reference Desk](#)
- [The New York Times](#)
- [Economics Wisconsin](#)
- [Federal Reserve Education](#)
- [Federal Reserve Teacher Resources](#) Search by educational level, type of media, and concept/standard.
- [The Federal Reserve System DVD and Video Lending Library](#) Topics: personal finance, government and the economy, competition, entrepreneurs, specialization, how society has evolved from the subsistence economies of old to the global trade economies of today, why countries trade? NAFTA: who wins? Who loses?, (rental is free- \$2 return shipping)
- [Lesson Plans and Teaching Strategies](#)
- [The Mint](#)
- [PBS Teachers - Middle School Economics Lessons](#)
- [PBS—Don't Buy It!](#)
- [Tonya Skinner's Economics Lesson Plans/Activities](#)
- [McRel Lesson Plan Library– Economics](#)
- [Sites for Teachers](#)
- [Teachers.net Middle School Lesson Plans](#)
- [Teachers.net Social Studies Lesson Plans](#)
- [Africa: Scarcity of Clean Water, Desertification of Farmland, and the Economy](#) Lesson plan from PBS/Nova.
- [Russia's Conversion from Communism to Capitalism](#) Lesson plan from PBS/Frontline.
- [Foundation for Teaching Economics](#) This site is geared towards high school teachers but many lessons can be modified for lower grades. Teachers can also watch teaching videos online to develop a deeper understanding of economics.
- [Bead Game Simulation](#) Comparing market, command, traditional systems). Posted on FTE website.
- [Market Economy Simulation](#) Lesson plan posted on Foundation for Teaching Economics website.
- [Comparing Economic Systems](#) Lesson plan from EconEd Link.
- [Trade Barriers, such as tariffs, quotas and embargos](#) Lesson plan (Limiting Trade) from Economic Education Web.
- [Maryland Council on Economic Education](#) Sixteen lesson plans for middle school teachers.
- [Southern Center for International Studies](#) Complementary material to the Southern Center instructional resources that were distributed during revised GPS training. Check the Educational Updates for World Regions for supplemental updates.
- [GPB Education Streaming](#) To access the clips go to GPB.org, then GPB Education, then GPB Education Streaming. There are numerous video clips pertaining to economic principals, factors of production and economic information about numerous countries throughout the world.
- [Galileo](#) Social Studies resources such as Compton's Encyclopedia, SIRS Discoverer, Kids Search, Book Collection: Nonfiction, Digital Library of Georgia, New Georgia Encyclopedia are available through this site. If you do not have a password, see your media specialist.



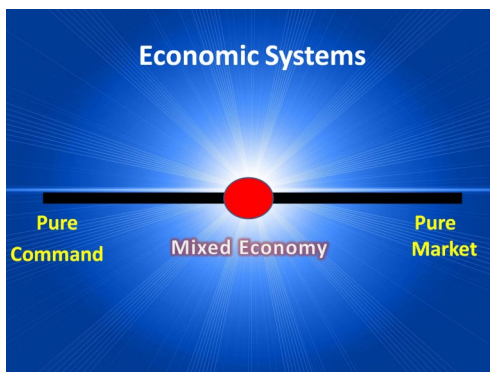
Countries on an Economic Continuum (continued from page 2)

Under this section, teachers want to look for words like the following: market reforms, market-based, privatized, nationalized, public owned, protection of private property rights, etc. Our economics expert, Sherilyn Narker, provided a few examples of what to look for when evaluating where a country lies on the economic continuum utilizing the [U.S. Department of State](#) website.

* **Canada**- Due to the close relationship between the United States and Canada, most of the *Background Notes* information in the economy, trade, and investment sections focuses on trading relationship between the two countries. Canada definitely leans toward the market side of the economic system continuum. Although famous for its socialized medicine, Canadian industries are mostly privately owned. Canada allows a tremendous amount of direct foreign investment by American companies.



* **Cuba**- By official government statements, Cuba would be considered a socialist state with most industries controlled by the government and 75 – 93% of the labor force employed by the government. This places Cuba very close to the command side of the economic system continuum. In reality, however, like many centrally planned economies, Cuba's state-run entities are inefficient and do not provide all the goods and services desired by citizens. Because of these inefficiencies, Cuba has a vibrant informal economy that is estimated at about 40% of the total economy. Since informal economies tend to be very close to



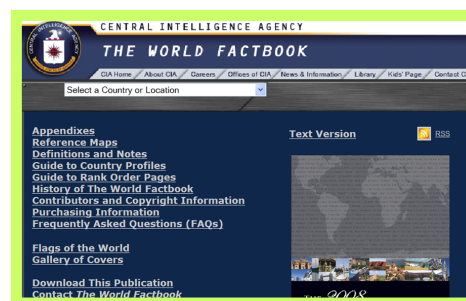
pure market systems, this would move Cuba somewhat away from the command side of the continuum. However, in comparison to Canada, it would still be more command-based.

* **Brazil**- Since 1996, many Brazilian industries have become privatized. There is competition, both foreign and domestic, in most major industries. On the command side, the two largest banks in Brazil are government-owned and there are still higher taxes than in many other market leaning countries. The ownership of productive resources tends to be held by an increasingly larger yet still more privileged class, with a large number in the population living in poverty. However, Brazil's reforms and its large scale participation in international free trade relationships places it more toward the market side of the continuum than the command side. It would fall between Cuba and Canada on the continuum.

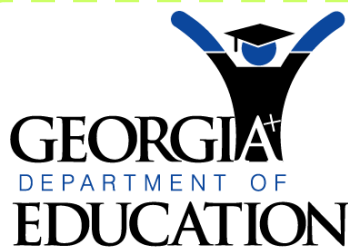
* **Nigeria**- For Nigeria, we are looking at an economy that lies half-way between the center and the market side of the continuum. I base this on recent privatization of the petro industry; however, there are still high levels of government oversight in the industry and competition between companies is limited. The transportation system is still government controlled, but the banking industry is highly competitive and privately held. Nigeria is gradually increasing its enforcement of private property rights which make it more attractive to private, domestic, and foreign investors. It holds

membership in the WTO and the IMF, which means it is trying to follow international free market standards laid out by these international organizations.

* **South Africa**- The South African economy reflects a great divide between the highly developed industrial sector, rivaling top western nations and the part of the nation that remains impoverished due to the legacy of Apartheid era economic and political practices. The developed economy is highly market-based and would be much closer to the market side of the continuum than Nigeria and Kenya. However, due to the large number of citizens living in extreme poverty, the government has to create social programs designed to increase education levels, employment skills, housing, and access to basic services. However, the nation does belong to all major international economics' organizations, advocates free trade, and floats its currency, which are all indicators of strong free market principles.



This list is not meant to be all inclusive but rather to be an insight into some of the factors that influence where a country lies on the economic continuum. Students are not expected to memorize all the factors for the various countries of study. Instead, have an understanding of what factors move a country more toward a pure command economy and what factors move a country more toward a pure market economy. The information should then be applied to the various specific countries outlined in the 6th and 7th grade GPS.



Kathy Cox, State Superintendent of Schools

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The mission of the GADOE Social Studies Department is to provide outstanding service to Georgia's K-12 teachers. We are committed to helping teachers acquire the knowledge, training, and resources to effectively implement the Georgia Performance Standards. This newsletter seeks to provide the additional support to Georgia's Middle School educators.

If you are an educator with an outstanding resource, unit, or lesson to share, please contact [Shaun Owen](#), and I will gladly include you and your ideas in our next newsletter. This will provide help to thousands of teachers statewide and serve as a nice addition to your portfolio.

www.gadoe.org

www.georgiastandards.org

GCEE Economic Resources

(continued from page 1)

Research supports the effectiveness of GCEE workshops. Students whose teachers have attended a GCEE workshop score higher on the Economics EOCT. The increase in test results is in direct proportion to the number of trainings teachers have attended. For example, if a teacher has attended four workshops, his/her students perform statistically, significantly better than a teacher who has attended three workshops. Research refers to high school teachers in regard to the Economics EOCT. There was a statistical significance associated with up to 13 workshops.

The Georgia Council on Economic Education offers a variety of workshops throughout the year for elementary, middle, and high school teachers. For additional information, go to www.gcee.org.

Middle School Workshops

- * Economies in Transition (command vs. market economies, currency exchange, economic and political freedom indices).
- * Financial Fitness for Life (personal finance— consumers, savers, investors).
- * Georgia Economic History (Award-winning project for 8th grade Georgia Studies teachers).
- * Learning, Earning and Investing (ins-and-outs of long term investing— mutual funds, stocks, bonds)
- * Stock Market Game Advisor Orientation (Introduction for teachers new to the ten-week, web-based stock training simulation).
- * Virtual Economics 3 (A wealth of resources from 51 key economics concepts with practical

teaching tips to 1,200 reproducible activity-based, GPS correlated lessons).

* Wide World of Trade

(International trade, trade restrictions, and how weak or strong the dollar is relative to other currencies).

GCEE also has regional workshops that are tailored to the 6th and 7th grade GPS. Regional workshops— Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

Visit the GCEE blog- A place for teaching tips, econ in the news, and GCEE program information.

www.georgiacouncil.blogspot.com

For more information about GCEE, contact Glen Blankenship at gblankenship@gsu.edu.