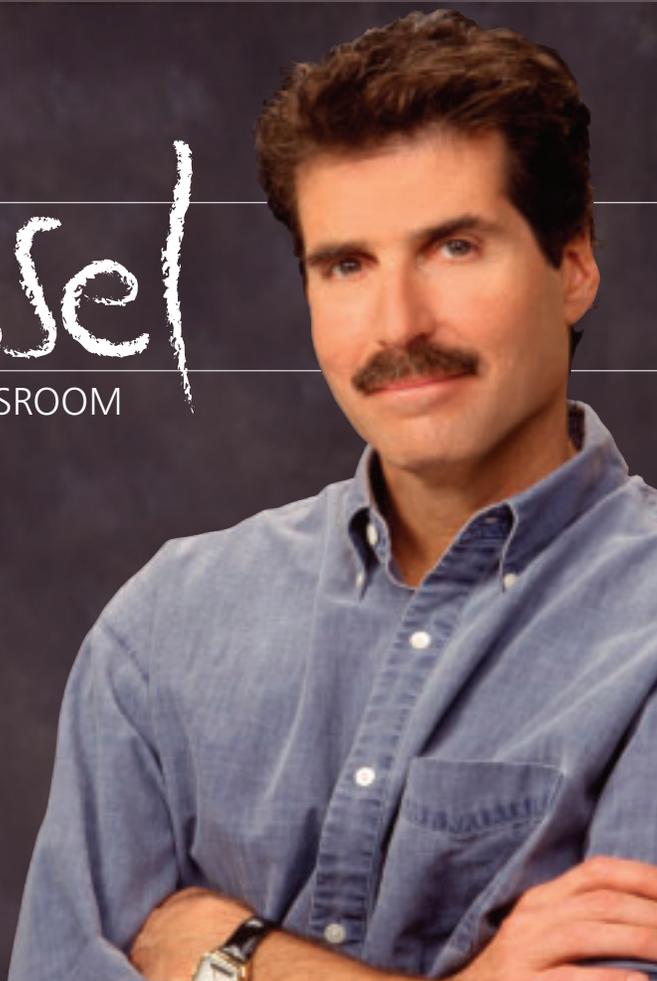


TEACHER'S GUIDE

Stossel
IN THE CLASSROOM

2007
EDITION



FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

Dear Educator:

I am excited to offer you high-quality classroom materials that teachers say bring lesson plans to life, engage students and encourage them to think and participate, while serving your curriculum requirements.

I hope you'll use the discussion questions and activities in this guide, along with the 2007 edition of the *Stossel in the Classroom DVD*, to help your students improve their critical thinking skills, while giving them the confidence to express their opinions.

Best wishes,



www.stosselintheclassroom.org

www.abcnews.com

www.centerforindependentthought.org

OBJECTIVES:

To help your students:

1. Explore issues such as stereotyping, foreign aid versus charitable contributions and the laws of supply and demand.
2. Use critical thinking to make sound decisions, and to distinguish between fact and opinion.
3. Determine whether to accept others' opinions as valid, based on their credentials, their backgrounds, and the value of their evidence.
4. Research and use current data and historical knowledge to help them examine social and ethical issues.
5. Recognize that interpretations are influenced by individual experiences, societal values and cultural experiences.

STEREOTYPES

(segment length: 6:01)

An experiment with blue-eyed and brown-eyed children shows how bias can make it harder for kids to succeed. Conversely, students tend to do better at tasks when their expectations to succeed are higher.

For Discussion:

- 1) *(Middle School, High School)* One suggestion in the video is that “mindset matters.” When students are told they are good at a subject, their behavior is affected and they do better on tests than when they are told they are not good at that subject.
 - a) The teacher in the video says about her experiment, “I set them up to fail and they failed.” Others were set up to succeed, and they succeeded. Explain why the teacher’s impression of the students impacted their test performance. Why do other people’s perceptions of you influence your behavior?
 - b) Give an example from your own life that supports the theory that perceptions matter and they influence behavior. Describe a time when you or someone else has been set up to either succeed or fail.
 - c) If mindset matters, how can this help you when dealing with others?

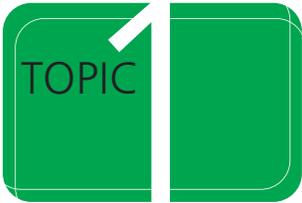
- 2) *(Middle School, High School)* Stereotypes can cause us to jump to conclusions without gathering enough facts to make an informed decision.
 - a) Describe when a stereotype has caused you to have a wrong impression about someone, or caused someone else to have a wrong impression about you.
 - b) Has this wrong impression changed your behavior or the behavior of the other person? What was gained and what was lost? Did what was gained cover the losses? Explain. Use this to give advice to others when forming impressions about friends and others?

Activities:

- 1) *(Middle School, High School)* Conduct library or Internet research to learn about experiments that test stereotypes. Explain how stereotypes can be used to discriminate and negatively impact performance. What can you find out about experiments that ask people to make judgments about others based on gender, male or female? Plan and conduct your own research by showing photos of people of different gender, and asking others to guess which person will likely perform best in:
 - a) A job as a scientist
 - b) A job as a parent
 - c) In math
 - d) In a sport
 - e) Working with other people

Summarize what you discover.

- 1) *(Middle School, High School)* Research and write a paper about a time in history in which a certain group was stereotyped, and describe what happened. Has progress been made in reducing that stereotype? How did that progress occur?



TOPIC

AID TO AFRICA

(segment length: 6:20)

After rich nations sent billions of dollars in aid to Africa, individual Africans were poorer than before. Is there a better way to help the poor?



For Discussion:

- 1) (*Middle School, High School*) Some people think that most of the world's problems, such as little if no education, poverty, and disease would be solved if only rich governments would give poor governments more money. Others suggest evidence that government-to-government aid makes problems worse.
 - a) Millions of dollars have been given to African governments. But the receiving nations are still poor. Why?
 - b) In the video, John Stossel suggests that giving money to private charities will help more people than giving money to governments in Africa. What evidence does Mr. Stossel provide to suggest that the receiving governments are corrupt? How does this corruption affect business people and consumers in Africa?
 - c) Property rights give individuals the rights to buy, sell and get income from their land, labor, capital, businesses and ideas. Why do government corruption and insecure property rights hinder economic growth? Use the video clip to explain why the fear that property will be confiscated reduces individuals' incentives to invest in their businesses, start new ones and discover new ways of doing things.
 - d) When there is political instability, government corruption and insecure property rights, explain why (i) domestic savers will look to other countries to find places to save and (ii) foreign investors will be reluctant to invest in the country.
- 1) (*High School*) According to the 20/20 story, "Africa is full of governments that steal money." Countries and people who donate to charity want to make sure the money they give goes where they want it to go – mainly to help the people who need it.
 - a) Who is held accountable for allocating foreign aid given to the various governments of African countries? Explain why the government officials who receive the aid have incentive to channel it to their own family and friends and to support special-interest groups at the expense of the unorganized, widely dispersed members of the general population. What happens if foreign aid funds are not used effectively to reduce poverty?
 - b) Who is held accountable for allocating charitable funds in private organizations? How can the individuals contributing to those private charities know how their foreign contributions are being used? What happens to charitable giving if there is evidence that donated funds are not used effectively or in the fashions advertised?
 - c) How do you feel when you give money to charities that help people who poor, hungry, sick and in need? What will happen to your amount you donate to a specific organization if you see that it is not getting results? Aside from giving money, what other things can you give?

Activities:

- 1) (*Middle School*) What can each person do to help the poor, either in one's own community or around the world?
- 2) (*Middle School*) Describe what is meant by the following quote: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for life."
- 3) (*Middle School, High School*) Discuss the value of teaching those in other countries about better farming and food storage and distribution, either instead of, or in addition to, sending money.
- 4) (*Advanced High School*) Hold a classroom debate about what role the United States should play in trying to address world hunger, reduce poverty, improve health and nutrition and protect the environment. While researching the facts in print and electronic newspapers and magazines, be sure to consider:
 - a) the money and non-money alternatives
 - b) weighing the benefits against the costs of each alternatives
 - c) choosing that alternative with the highest net benefit (benefit less cost)
- 5) (*Advanced High School*) Research what countries rule by law and permit their citizens to own their own property and use it securely. Find examples of how one of these countries or the United States has used each of the following, either successfully or unsuccessfully, to improve the welfare of its citizenry:
 - a) Free trade within the country
 - b) Free trade between the country and other countries
 - c) Economic sanctions or incentives
 - d) Public opinion

PRICE GOUGING

(segment length: 4:28)

After natural disasters, some businesses raise prices. Is that evil? This segment provides a lesson about supply and demand.



For Discussion:

1) (*Middle School, High School*) A natural disaster such as Hurricane Katrina brings the nation's attention to helping families whose homes were damaged or destroyed. This video segment shows what happens to one man who tries to sell electric generators to the people who need them.

- Describe how the hurricane impacted the regional supply of generators. Describe the impact on the demand for generators. Consequently, what happened to prices and to the supply and demand for generators in the region because of the natural disaster?
- What need was the generator man trying to fill? What costs did he incur by purchasing and taking the generators to the hurricane area? Compare the price he tried to charge for the generators to the costs he incurred in getting them there. Explain how the difference between the two provided the generator man with the incentive to bring the items to the hurricane area.
- Should the man who wanted to sell the generators at a profit have gone to jail? Why or why not? What happened to the generators he brought? If people like the generator man cannot profit from their efforts, what impact will this have on their incentive to bring goods and services to areas impacted by natural disasters?

1) (*High School*) Economics is the study of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services when resources are limited. Economists are experts in how goods and services are created, distributed, and allocated.

- One of the nation's best-known and most-respected economists is Nobel Laureate Milton Friedman. When interviewed on 20/20, Friedman said that after Hurricane Katrina, "The 'price gougers' deserve a medal."
What does he mean by this statement? What services did the "price gougers" provide to the disaster victims? What expenses and costs did these "gougers" incur in bringing goods and services to the disaster areas? How did the people living in the hurricane area benefit from their services?
- How can "price gouging" make an impor-

tant economic contribution after a natural disaster?

- Some people featured in the video are against "price gouging". On what basis do they disagree with Friedman? What would happen to the number of items brought into the disaster area if prices were not permitted to rise?
- After comparing the two views on "price gouging," what do you think should happen in markets after a natural disaster? Should the government intervene and impose price controls? Why or why not?

Activities:

- (*Middle School, High School*) The video makes the case that if prices do not rise when demand is high and supply is low, many people would not be able to buy what they want or need. Suppliers would not have incentive to produce enough goods and services at the artificially low price. They could produce other goods and services and sell them in other markets. Is this enough of a reason to allow prices to rise?
- (*High School*) Why do high prices encourage people to conserve? Explain how high prices would reduce individuals' incentive to buy all of the batteries, food, or equipment in an emergency when they are first in line during or after a disaster. What would happen to the quantities of these goods on the shelves of stores if the government stepped in and forced a price reduction?
- (*High School*) Why are higher prices tough on consumers today but possibly good for them in the future?
- (*High School*) Some state governments try to protect their citizens by making price-gouging illegal. Such laws are a form of price controls. Price controls generally lead to the inefficient use of resources. Using the library or the Internet, research other ways in which well-intended government officials have created programs that lead to unproductive behaviors. Debate with your classmates about whether the government is involved in each area just enough, too much, or too little. Be sure to back up your point of view with facts. Consider the following topics
 - Protection of property rights
 - War on poverty
 - Seat belts and child car seats
 - Social Security
 - Health care

OIL SUPPLIES

(segment length: 3:27)

"America is running out of oil." Truth or myth?

For Discussion:

- 1) (*High School*) This segment examines the question, "Are we running out of oil?" It finds that the supply of oil is still plentiful, but that some oil extraction alternatives are more costly than others.
 - a) What incentive do Americans have to conserve on gas when prices increase? What incentive do they have to conserve on gas when prices fall?
 - b) As gas prices rise, oil producers have more incentive to discover new ways of producing oil, to extract oil from tar sand, or to find alternative energy sources. Explain why.
 - c) Some people suggest that the government should raise the tax on gasoline. The demand for gas would decrease. Some claim this would be good for the environment because less gas consumption translates into less pollution. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
 - d) Some people think that Americans should use less oil to reduce our dependence on oil from other countries. Explain how higher oil prices might help us decrease our dependency on foreign and domestic oil.
 - e) Why will the high oil prices of today provide individuals with incentive to conserve on fuel? How will higher oil prices lead to new discoveries and ultimately the production of alternative fuels? How will this lead to lower fuel prices in the future?

- 1) (*Advanced High School*) Pretend that you are a reporter and need to prepare a set of interview questions and discussion points for a meeting between you and the owner of an oil company. Questions and discussion points should reflect your full understanding of the (i) motivations of the oil producer and the (ii) relationship between the amount of oil produced and price, production costs and environmental considerations, fuel prices and profit, and profits and incentive to supply.

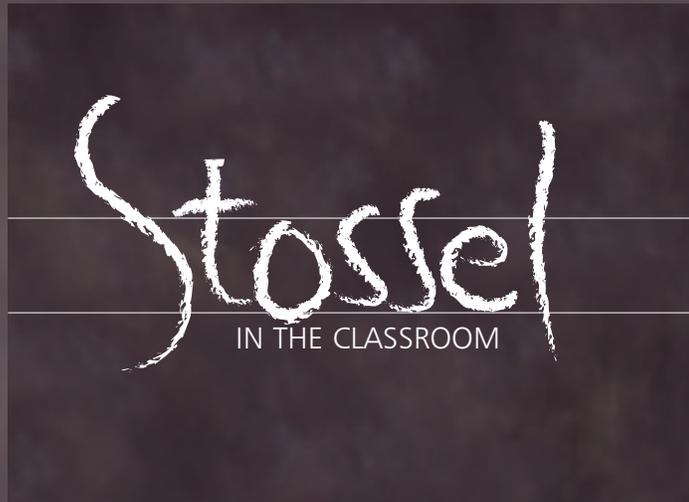
Activities:

- 1) (*Middle School, High School*) Go to the website of the U.S. Energy Information Administration <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/kids/energyfacts/sources/non-renewable/oil.html>>. Research how oil is formed, where it comes from, how crude oil is made into different fuels like gasoline, diesel, and propane, and oil and the environment. Write a report about how we get and process our oil. Discuss the costs associated with bringing crude oil to the gas pumps.
- 2) (*Middle School, High School*) Even though there might be enough oil for many years to come, other energy sources (including coal, nuclear, hydro, wind and solar) are available. They may be less harmful to the environment. Research and write a paper about these sources, and what the pros and cons are of each.



About John Stossel

John Stossel, a graduate of Princeton University, started his journalism career at a Portland, Oregon television station. He joined ABC first as a consumer editor of Good Morning America, then joined ABC News' newsmagazine, 20/20, where he is now co-anchor. He is the author of ***Give Me A Break*** and ***Lies, Myths, and Downright Stupidity***. He has received many honors for his work, including 19 Emmy Awards.



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