



Private Property for the Win! | Lesson Plan

How does ownership influence the way resources are used and cared for?

Students will understand how private property and public property create different incentives that shape behavior, economic outcomes, and the development of markets.

Learning Objectives:

- Define key economic terms from the lesson, including private property, public property, incentives, profit, market development, and centralized process.
- Identify examples of private and public property and note how each operates in a real-world setting.
- Distinguish the incentives created by private ownership from those created by government ownership, using evidence from the grocery store comparison.
- Explain how private property encourages upkeep, responsibility, and innovation, and why these factors often lead to stronger economic outcomes.
- Analyze how different ownership structures influence productivity, decision-making, and the development of markets.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Private Property:** Land, buildings, or physical resources owned by an individual or group, giving the owner legal control over how it's used and the ability to earn profit from it.
- **Public Property:** Resources owned by the government and made available for everyone to use, with no single person controlling them for personal benefit.
- **Incentives:** Motivations created by different ownership systems that influence how people behave—such as working harder, maintaining quality, or improving services.
- **Profit** (or Profit Motive): The financial gain an owner can make from their property or business, which pushes them to keep things clean, stocked, organized, and appealing to customers.
- **Market Development:** The process by which private owners create economic value by working with suppliers, trying new products, and helping new businesses grow.
- **Centralized Process** (or Centralized Purchasing): A government-run system where goods must be bought through one central authority, limiting flexibility and making it harder to adapt to community needs.

Educational Standards: CCRA.R.7, CCRA.R.10, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.W.7, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.L.6

Academic Subject Areas: Economics,

What You'll Need

- Video: *Ca\$h Cour\$e: Private Property for the Win!* (Watch [Here](#))

Scan to watch episode:



- Worksheet: *Ca\$h Cour\$e: Private Property for the Win!* (Click [Here](#))
- Classroom whiteboard and dry-erase markers (or use a technology solution if available).

Lesson Plan (50 mins.)

Warm-Up: (10 mins.)

1. Begin with a quick, relatable scenario: Ask students to imagine they run a small snack stand at school. They choose what to sell, set the prices, decorate the booth, and keep whatever profit they make. They quickly learn which days students buy more chips, which candy sells out first, and what deals attract more customers. Their setup improves because *their success depends on paying attention*.

Now switch the scenario:

Imagine the school takes over the snack stand. No one personally owns it. The school decides the menu, sets the hours, and chooses the inventory—same snacks, same space. But the workers earn the same whether the stand succeeds or not, and students have no alternative snack source.

2. Ask the class: What differences do you expect between the two stands? Who would care more about what students actually want? Who has a reason to keep things stocked, clean, and appealing?
3. Explain that today's lesson will explore **how ownership shapes incentives**—and how incentives, in turn, affect responsibility, customer satisfaction, and the development of better products and services.
4. Introduce the key terms on the board. Have students write each definition and discuss the snack-stand example that fits:
 - **Private Property:** Resources owned by individuals who control how they're used.
 - Snack Example: *You* decide what to sell and how to run the stand.
 - **Public Property:** Resources owned by the government for everyone's use.
 - Snack Example: The school runs the stand and decides everything for you.
 - **Incentives:** Motivations that influence how people act or work.
 - Snack Example: You make more money when the stand runs well—so you care.
 - **Profit:** Money gained when a business succeeds or grows.
 - Snack Example: Higher sales mean more profit for your stand.
 - **Market Development:** Creating value by expanding products or improving offerings based on customer needs.
 - Snack Example: You add hot chips because you learned they sell fast.
 - **Centralized Process:** Government purchasing through one authority.
 - Snack Example: The school district chooses snacks in bulk, even if students don't love them.
5. Ask students to generate a few examples of their own—places where private ownership works well, and places where public ownership makes sense.

6. *Transition to the enduring question for the lesson: **How does ownership influence the way resources are used and cared for?***
7. Explain that this question will guide students through the lesson as they compare the incentives of private versus public systems.
8. Once students are grounded in the key terms, tell them the class will watch a short video that brings these ideas to life. Explain that the video uses history and everyday examples—like grocery stores—to show how ownership changes behavior, how incentives affect quality, and why understanding customer needs matters.
9. Let students know they'll be expected to discuss and apply what they see, so they should watch closely for moments that connect to the vocabulary they just reviewed.

Watch and Discuss: (20 mins.)

1. Show the *Ca\$h Cour\$e: Private Property for the Win!* video to the class.
2. Note to teachers: watch straight through or pause at key moments if you want to clarify MPL or substitution/income effects.
3. After the video, ask the following discussion and comprehension questions:
 - What happened in the early colonies when land was shared instead of privately owned, and what does that reveal about incentives?
 - How did private ownership change the colonists' behavior once each family had its own plot of land?
 - In the grocery store example, why does the private owner pay close attention to quality, customer service, and organization?
 - What problems can happen when a grocery store (or any resource) is run by the government with no individual owner responsible for success?
 - Why does a private grocer have better knowledge of customers' needs than a government-run store would?
 - How does ownership help create innovation and new markets, and why might that be harder under a centralized system?
4. Give each student the "Cash Course: Private Property for the Win!" Worksheet and allow them to complete it independently or in pairs.

Wrap-Up: (20 mins.)

1. If students haven't already, allow them to finish the worksheets. Use this time to circulate, answer questions, and check for understanding.
2. Review and Reflect: Go over selected questions together, especially the application question.
3. Wrap-Up Prompt (Board or Exit Ticket)
 - In two or three sentences, explain the difference between how people tend to treat something they personally own and something they receive for free from the government. Use an example from the video or your own life to support your answer.

- Students can write a quick response on an index card or notebook, or submit it at the bottom of their worksheet.
4. Collect Worksheets: Use the completed worksheet as a way to assess comprehension and mastery of the lesson objectives.

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15-20 mins.)

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video. Or, have students watch the video at home and use the worksheet as a quick quiz the next day in class.