

# Scraps of Time 1960: Abby Takes a Stand

By Patricia C. McKissack / ISBN: 0-14-240687-2

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## Lesson by

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## Lesson Description

In this lesson, students read about incidences of racial discrimination and how those incidences were met with methods of protests. They engage in an activity that matches programs for low-income people with the type of economic inequity the program addresses and observe an activity simulating tax payments and transfers.

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## Age Level

10-12 years

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## Content Standards:

### National Content Standards in Economics

- **Standard 16:** Students will understand that there is an economic role for government to play in a market economy whenever the benefits of a government policy outweigh its costs. Governments often provide for national defense, address environmental concerns, define and protect property rights, and attempt to make markets more competitive. Most government policies also redistribute income.
    - Benchmark 1, Grade 4: Governments provide certain kinds of goods and services in a market economy.
    - Benchmark 2, Grade 4: Governments pay for the goods and services they use or provide by taxing or borrowing from people.
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## Concepts

Boycott  
Sit-in  
Transfer payments  
Transfer programs  
Economic equity  
Taxes

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## Objectives

Students will:

1. Define boycott and sit-in.
2. Define transfer payments, transfer programs, and taxes.
3. Explain the purpose of transfer payments.
4. Explain how transfer payments are funded.
5. Define economic equity.
6. Provide examples of programs designed to further the goal of economic equity.

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## Time Required:

45-60 minutes

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## Materials

- A copy of *Scraps of Time 1960: Abby Takes a Stand* by Patricia C. McKissack (ISBN: 0-14-240687-2)
- A copy of Handout 1 for each group, cut apart
- Six small, clear jars or glasses
- Two pieces of paper folded into table tents with one labeled "Government Goods and Services" and the other labeled "Transfer Payments"
- Six index cards folded to produce six table tents, one for each jar, labeled Group 1, Group 2, Group 3, Group 4, Group 5, and the Government.
- One bag of dried beans
- Directions: Place beans in the jars as follows: group 1 – 85 beans; group 2 – 40 beans; group 3 – 20 beans; group 4 – 15 beans; group 5 – 10 beans. (Include a half bean in the group 5 jar.)
- Visual 1

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## Procedures:

1. Ask students if there are some rides at amusement parks on which they are not allowed. If their answer is no, ask if they were ever barred from certain rides when they were younger. *(The students may be of an age and size that allows them access to all rides, but they should remember a time when they were considered too short or too light to ride on roller coasters and other rides.)*
2. Ask students if there are places they are not allowed—where and why? *(movies rated PG-13 and R because they are too violent or contain content that young people should not see; taverns and nightclubs because they serve alcohol or there might be people who curse or say adult things that young people should not be exposed to; behind the wheel of a car because young people are not tall enough or mature enough to take on the responsibility of driving)*
3. Point out that these are cases in which young people are denied access because some harm could come to them if they were allowed to participate. However, there was a time in this country when young people (and adults) were not allowed to participate in certain activities and go to certain places for no other reason than the color of their skin.
4. Introduce the book *Scraps of Time 1960: Abby Takes a Stand* as the story of a young girl who joins others in peaceful protests to gain the right to go to any store, restaurant, or theater that they want. Read the story.
5. When you have finished reading the story, ask the following questions:
  - At what store did Mama refuse to shop because the manager humiliated Abby? *(Harveys)*
  - When Mama said she would shop at Harveys "no more," what did the rest of the people in the meeting shout? *(They shouted "No more" also. See pages 38-39.)*
6. Explain that all societies have economic goals, and often one of these economic goals is economic equity. **Economic equity** or economic equality means a more equal distribution of goods and services to citizens.
7. Reread Chapter 2, "The Monkey Bar Grill," and Chapter 3, "Turned Away." Ask the following questions:

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- What are some examples of how black people were separated from white people? (*Abby and Patsy attended an all-black school; black people could not get certain jobs; blacks had to live in “black” neighborhoods. Many businesses and restaurants had signs that said “Whites Only.”*)
  - What did Abby do when she walked by the Hi-Style Hair Salon and the Southland Restaurant? (*She turned her head so she wouldn’t see the “Whites Only” signs.*)
  - Why was Abby turned away from the Monkey Bar Grill? (*She was turned away because she was a black girl.*)
  - What economic inequalities did Abby and her family face? (*She and her family often couldn’t buy what they wanted where they wanted to buy it; they were unable to receive the education they wanted; and there were limited types of jobs available for black people.*)
  - What do you think was done to ensure economic equity for Abby and others? (*Answers will vary. Students might state that laws were passed and court cases were won that protected people from discrimination. They may know of programs that were established or expanded to address economic inequities.*)
8. Explain that because black people were denied access to so many stores and restaurants, they were unable to participate fully in the economy. Black people, and many white people too, became angry. These people got together and called for a boycott. A **boycott** is a method of protest where people show a business that they are angry by refusing to buy the goods or services it produces. **Sit-ins** are another effective type of protest where people refuse to buy the business’s goods and services; they also block others from making purchases by taking all of the seats in a restaurant or blocking the entrance to a business. (Optional: Re-read the first two pages of Chapter 8, “Sacrifices,” to students.) Ask the following questions:
- How did the organizers of the protest get the word out about the boycott? (*The Flyer Brigade prepared and handed out leaflets.*)
  - Did the leaflets work in persuading everyone to boycott the segregated store? (*No. Some boycotted and others were afraid to get involved.*)
  - What other form of nonviolent protest did the people use toward the restaurants that would not serve blacks? (*sit-ins*)
  - Describe a sit-in. (*People take all of the seats in a restaurant or block the entrance to a business and remain there all day so that no other customers can buy the business’s goods and services.*)
  - How does a sit-in hurt the restaurant? (*The restaurant owners cannot sell food to customers because there is nowhere for customers to sit, and the business loses money.*)

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- Do you think that the downtown stores that decided to serve black people were eventually better off or worse off? *(Answers will vary, but the answer is better off. An increase in consumers increases the demand for goods and services.)*
  - How did boycotts and sit-ins help gain economic equity for Abby and other blacks? *(Businesses, such as Harveys, lost money during the boycott because black families refused to shop there. Harveys, and other businesses, opened every part of their business to black people in order to end the boycott. Businesses experiencing sit-ins lost money because other customers could not enter the business to buy goods and services. In some cases, business owners recognized that it was unfair to discriminate against black people.)*
9. Explain that people who were angry because blacks were discriminated against boycotted and conducted sit-ins at businesses in many cities. Boycotts and sit-ins often worked, but sometimes they didn't. Review the timeline at the end of the story "Remembering How it Was" with the students. Ask what often happened to people participating in sit-ins. *(They were arrested and jailed; there were fights.)*
  10. Explain that people such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Jesse Jackson, along with boycotts, sit-ins, and marches, brought attention to economic injustices such as the inability of blacks to get jobs with white businesses and the discrimination that denied welfare benefits and Social Security to the majority of black people. There were many court cases where people argued that discrimination was wrong. Congress passed laws that made it illegal to discriminate against people because of their race. And the programs designed to give aid to low-income families were adjusted to provide greater fairness for minorities.
  11. Explain that funds dispersed by these programs are referred to as **transfer payments**. Transfer payments are money collected from some people and distributed to other people. They are designed to improve economic equity. Economic equity means a more equal distribution of goods and services to citizens. Transfer payments support **transfer programs** that help low-income families get the food, shelter, and health care they aren't able to obtain for themselves. When low-income families are given these things, it makes the way they live more equal with the way higher-income families live.
  12. Ask students to identify government programs designed to improve economic equity. *(Students may be aware of government programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, a.k.a. food stamps), low-income housing, Social Security, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Head Start, and Medicaid.)*

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13. If students are not familiar with these government programs, explain the following:
  - The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which is commonly known as food stamps, allows people to buy nutritious food and health-care products. People are given a card similar to a debit card. The state in which the person lives places money in an account and money is withdrawn from that account every time the card is used.
  - Low-income housing is provided in a couple of ways. Some people live in apartment complexes specifically designated as low-income housing. Others are provided with vouchers they can use to pay their rent, in part or in full, depending on their income level, the size of their family, and the amount of rent.
  - Social Security provides some income to retired people and minor children of a parent who has died.
  - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families provides money for families with (or expecting) children and provides parents with other benefits, such as job preparation.
  - Head Start is a program to prepare low-income children for school by teaching young children language, reading, mathematics, and science, as well as helping them learn how to make friends and enjoy learning.
  - Medicaid helps low-income people with their health-care expenses so that people can get healthy and stay healthy.
14. Explain that these programs, except for Social Security, provide temporary help to people who have lost their jobs or have had some other problem that has caused them to have less money.
15. Divide the class into groups of four to five students. Provide a set of cards from *Handout 1: Situation and Program Cards*, to each group and instruct students to match the situation card with the program card. Review student answers.
16. When students have matched the cards, ask students where the money comes from to pay for these programs. (*Students may say from taxes.*) Clarify their answers by explaining that the money for these programs is transferred through taxes. **Taxes** are required payments to the government. Explain that the government collects taxes to pay for goods and services the government provides, such as highways, national parks, and fighter jets and to operate the government. Some of the money is collected from higher-income people and distributed to lower-income people through these programs. Ask the following questions:

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- How do food programs, such as food stamps, improve economic equity? *(Higher-income people pay taxes to help low-income families buy more goods and health-care products.)*
  - How does low-income housing improve economic equity? *(Higher-income people pay taxes so that families who can't afford to rent an apartment can get housing.)*
  - How does Medicaid improve economic equity? *(Higher-income people pay taxes so that low-income families can get more health care.)*
  - How does Temporary Assistance for Needy Families improve economic equity? *(Higher-income people pay taxes to provide income for people who are having a hard time economically.)*
17. Beginning with the tent card for Group 1 and ending with the tent card for Government, display the six tent cards on a table in front of the classroom. Explain that "Groups 1-5" represent all of the households in the United States. The households are broken into five groups, so each group represents 20 percent of the households. The Government tent card represents the government of the United States.
18. Place the jars next to their corresponding tent card, one at a time, as follows:
- Group 1: Explain that these households earn the most money each year. Show students the number of beans in the jar and place the jar next to its table tent. Explain that the beans in the jar represent the amount of income earned by these households.
  - Group 2: Explain that these households earn the second-most amount of money each year. Show students the number of beans in the jar, pointing out the difference in the level of beans in the jar, and place the jar near its table tent. Remind the students that the beans in this jar represent the income earned by this group.
  - Group 3: Explain that these households earn less each year than the first two groups. Point out the level of beans, and place the jar near its table tent.
  - Group 4: Explain that these households make less money each year than the first three groups. Point out the level of beans compared to the first three groups, and place the jar near its table tent.
  - Group 5: Explain that these households make the least amount of money of all of the groups. Point out the level of beans compared to the others and place the jar near the table tent for Group 5.

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19. Reiterate that all of the beans in these jars represent all of the income earned by American families in one year, and each family is required to pay some amount of tax on the income it earns. Explain that the government collects taxes to pay for goods and services the government provides, such as highways, national parks, and fighter jets. Some of the money collected in taxes is used to take care of low-income households through transfer payments.
20. Start with the Group 1 jar. Remove 20 beans and place them in the government jar. Explain that this group pays the largest amount of taxes. Continue taking beans from the other groups and placing the beans in the government jar, as follows:  
  
Group 2 – 8 beans  
Group 3 – 3 beans  
Group 4 – 1 bean  
Group 5 – ½ bean
21. Place the table tent cards that say Government Goods and Services and Transfer Programs on the table near the government jar. Remove 20 beans from the government jar and place them on the table near the table tent that says Government Goods and Services. Remove the remaining beans from the jar and place them on the table near the table tent that says Transfer Programs.
22. Some of the money collected in taxes pays for goods and services the government provides. Ask students for examples of goods and services provided by the government. (*Answers will vary but may include national defense, highways, and national parks.*) Some of the money collected pays for transfer programs. Ask students for examples of transfer programs. (*Social Security, Medicaid, food stamps, low-income housing, TANF, Head Start*) Some of the money collected in taxes is used to run the government.

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### Closure

23. Discuss the following.
  - What does economic equity mean? (*Economic equity means a more equal distribution of goods and services to citizens.*)
  - What are taxes? (*Taxes are required payments to the government.*)
  - What are some examples of government-provided goods and services? (*Answers will vary but may include national defense, highways, and national parks.*)

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- What are transfer payments? (*Transfer payments are money collected from some people and distributed to other people.*)
- What is the purpose of transfer payments? (*to improve economic equity*)
- What are some examples of transfer programs? (*Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, a.k.a. food stamps), low-income housing assistance, Social Security, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Head Start, and Medicaid*)
- What does the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provide? (*It provides food and personal health-care items.*)
- How does low-income housing assistance help families? (*It provides a place to live for families who cannot afford to pay rent.*)
- How does Head Start help families? (*Head Start prepares children from low-income families for success in school.*)
- What protest method has people refusing to buy a business' goods and services? (*boycott*)
- What protest method has people blocking the seats and floors in a business? (*sit-in*)
- Are these methods of protest successful? (*Answers will vary. They have sometimes been successful and sometimes not.*)
- What did black leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Jesse Jackson do to gain economic equity beyond boycotts and sit-ins? (*They brought attention to discrimination, leading to laws and court decisions to correct discrimination.*)

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### Assessment

Use *Visual 1: Economic Equity* to assign a brief essay covering each of the following points as a separate paragraph. Points that might be included in each paragraph are shown below, following the topic.

#### Economic equity

- What is it? (*It is a goal for our society to provide a more equal distribution of goods and services.*)
- Is it an important goal for our government? If so, why? If not, why not? (*Answers will vary.*)
- How is this goal achieved? (*through transfer programs*)

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## Transfer programs

- What are they? *(Students can discuss any of the various programs, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, a.k.a. food stamps), low-income housing assistance, Social Security, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Head Start, and Medicaid or research a program that was not mentioned in this lesson.)*
- Who are they for? *(The programs are designed to aid low-income families.)*
- How do they address economic equity? *(They provide goods and services for low-income families, which brings low-income families closer to having the number of goods and services higher-income families have.)*

## Taxes and transfers payments

- What are they? *(Taxes are required payments to the government.)*
- From whom are taxes collected? *(Taxes are collected from nearly everyone. They are collected through several means, including income tax.)*
- How are tax monies spent? *(The money received from tax payments is spent on government-provided goods and services and on transfer programs and to operate the government.)*

## The student's conclusion

- Is economic equity an important goal for our society? Explain your answer. *(Answers will vary.)*
- Should it be provided by the government? Explain your answer. *(Answers will vary.)*

## Visual 1: Economic Equity

### Economic equity

What is it?

Is it an important goal for our government? If so, why?  
If not, why not?

How is this goal achieved?

### Transfer programs

What are they?

Who are they for?

How do they address economic equity?

### Taxes and transfers payments

What are they?

From whom are taxes collected?

How are tax monies spent?

### The student's conclusion

Is economic equity an important goal for our society?  
Explain your answer.

Should it be provided by government? Explain your  
answer. (Restate your opinion from the first paragraph.)

# Scraps of Time 1960: Abby Takes a Stand!

## Handout 1: Situation and Program Cards

Situation	Program
<p>The Smith family recently moved from Michigan to Ohio in search of a job for Mr. Smith. Money is tight. The move was expensive. The Smiths had to find an apartment, pay the first month's rent, the last month's rent, and the security deposit. They have very little money left over for food, and it seems that this could be a problem that will last for a while.</p>	<p>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (also known as food stamps)</p>
<p>Mrs. Jackson is a widow with four children. She works, but her wages are low, so low, in fact, that she earns only about one-third of what people in her city earn. She lives in a rundown, two-bedroom apartment, but was recently informed that she would have to move. Her landlord has not been making payments on the property, and it is being foreclosed. As shabby as the apartment is, it is cheap, and Mrs. Jackson can't find anything else that she can afford. She is afraid she will have to move to a homeless shelter.</p>	<p>Low-income housing</p>
<p>Almost before he blew out his last birthday candle, Mr. Rocko was at his computer and filling out his application. He turned 66 today.</p>	<p>Social Security</p>

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## Handout 1: Situation and Program Cards, (cont.)

Situation	Program
<p>Carmen and Jasmine are twin sisters who are getting ready to apply to colleges. In just one year, they will be living in a dorm with a whole bunch of other girls. They are about as happy and excited as they could possibly be. However, there was a time when they were certain that they would never be happy again. That was 10 years ago, when their dad died in a car accident. Their mom couldn't afford the house payment on her own; so, on top of being terribly sad, they were also terribly worried that they would have to move from their neighborhood. Fortunately, there was a government benefit that each of them was eligible to receive. They were able to stay in their home.</p>	Social Security
<p>Sam and Elyze are young parents. Sam is 22 and Elyze is 21, and they have three children, one-year-old twins and a 3-year-old. Neither Sam nor Elyze has been able to get a job that pays more than minimum wage, and at the moment, neither has a job at all. They have contacted their state's aid office and have been told that they are eligible for cash payments to get them through this rough time. However, as a requirement of the program, they will both have to commit to a job-training program. That's all right with them!</p>	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
<p>John and Mary are young parents. John is 22 and Mary is 21, and they have three children ages 1, 2, and 3. The 3-year-old child does not speak yet. John and Mary are afraid that their own lack of education may be a disadvantage to their children and that each of their children could benefit from starting an education program early.</p>	Head Start

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## Handout 1: Situation and Program Cards, (cont.)

Situation	Program
<p>Leah has three children, and she can't find work. She already receives Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and she receives food stamps. However, her youngest daughter needs to get her vaccinations, and these other programs do not help with the doctor bills.</p>	<p>Medicaid</p>