

Lesson Plan

On the job: Analyze Your State's Economy

Overview

Students who have been previously introduced to the concepts of GDP, economic growth, and per capita statistics in the national economy apply their knowledge to their own state's economy, while developing college and career readiness skills.

Students use primary source data and their critical thinking skills to research their state economy using the online tools at bea.gov, the website of the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. They'll write about their findings in a workplace context.

Choose between options for assigning this lesson as in-class work or a more in-depth project, or consider customizing your assignment further. Depending on the option you choose, students may work with visual information, incorporate presentation skills, or seek additional sources to expand their research and analysis in your customized assignment.

Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics (Grades 8-12):

Standard 18: Economic Fluctuations

Standard 15: Economic Growth

Resources:

Students will need a computer with Internet access to research economic data on bea.gov.

Process

Provide each student a printed copy of the activity sheet, **On the Job: Analyze Your State's Economy**, or ask them to read it online at www.bea.gov/classroom.

The activity:

Using economic data is important in many careers. Choose one of the three jobs below that you'd like to perform: news reporter, state economic development officer, or entrepreneur. You will be using data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis to analyze your state's economy and write an article or report as part of doing this job. Your teacher will give you more details about your assignment.

After students read about the jobs and tasks, you may want to lead a classroom discussion about analyzing and presenting data for different purposes. Depending on their chosen job, what will be different about writing an objective news article vs. a persuasive writing piece vs. an analytical report for internal discussion?

How might the objectives of the job they choose affect which statistics and comparisons they include in their report? While meeting their objectives, how will they also ensure their work is accurate and trustworthy?

News Reporter	Economic development officer	Co-founder of a growing company
You've been assigned to write a news article updating readers on your state's economy. Analyze BEA's data to write an objective account of the state economy, backed up with statistics. Consider factors such as: How fast is the state economy growing? Are people's incomes rising? What are the major industry sectors? Write an article comparing the state's economy with the economies of two other states and the U.S. overall. Write an objective account, <i>including the strengths and/or weaknesses that you think will be most interesting to your readers.</i>	Your job is to persuade businesses to open their new factories, stores, or offices in your state. Analyze BEA's data to find statistics that will help promote your state's economy over others. How does its economic growth compare? What might its personal income statistics say about available workers or consumers? What types of industries are located here already? Write a persuasive report for business leaders comparing your state's economy with the economies of two competing states and the U.S. overall. <i>Include only statistics that help make the case for your state. Indicate why they are promising for businesses in general or for particular industry categories.</i>	You and your partners are considering whether to expand your company, based elsewhere, into this state. Analyze BEA's data to consider whether to expand to this state (you can choose what type of business you've started). Make a preliminary recommendation based on factors such as the state's economic growth, leading industries, and residents' incomes. Write a report for discussion with your partners, comparing this state's economy with the economies of two other states and the U.S. overall. <i>Include both pros and cons of choosing this state, to help make a well-informed decision.</i>

For your research, use these data tools on [bea.gov](https://www.bea.gov) (see accompanying instructions for using the state and local data tools):

- [BEARFacts](#) has state factsheets with current data, state and national comparisons, and links to more detailed data.
- [GDP and Personal Income Mapping Tool](#) makes custom maps and charts to visualize comparisons between states and regions.

Consider the state's GDP, economic growth (as shown by the GDP growth rate), per capita personal income, top industries, and other BEA data you may choose.

You may want to demonstrate using the the BEA website's online tools, as described in the instructions that accompany this lesson, **Using State and Local Data Tools at bea.gov**. You may provide printed copies of the instructions for easier reference (the PDF is found at bea.gov/classroom).

Features to note in the BEARFACTS tool include each state's per capita personal income, GDP, growth rate, and industries that contribute most to the state's GDP. Note the separate tabs for facts on GDP and facts on personal income, the charts, and the text that includes comparisons to national data.

You may also point out that making a map on the GDP and Personal Income Mapping Tool is a good way to get a quick visual comparison between your state and other states.

Assign your students activity option A, B, or C, or your own customized assignment.

Activity options:

- A. Write a one-page summary article or report for your chosen job. Include at least three economic statistics about the state, including comparisons to two other states and the nation.
- B. Write a two-page article or report for your chosen job, including at least five economic statistics about the state, with comparisons to at least two other states and the nation. Include an appendix with two maps or charts that support your points.
- C. Write a two-page article or report for your chosen job, including at least five economic statistics about the state, with comparisons to at least two other states and the nation.

Based on your report, prepare a three-minute presentation, including visuals. Deliver your presentation in a professional manner suitable for a reporter on a news video, an economic development officer speaking to a business group, or an entrepreneur leading a meeting of the decision-makers in your business.