

## Trickle Down Diplomacy (11<sup>th</sup> Grade US History)

**Problem Behaviors:** Students are standing around and talking after the bell rings to start class and many have not completed the homework that is supposed to be turned in at the beginning of class. Additionally, many students leave a mess around their desk, including food wrappers, empty water bottles, and loose paper.

**Expected Behaviors:** Earn breaks on your “taxes”

- Students should be sat in their desks with textbooks and class materials (binder, notebook, pen/ pencil) out by the time the bell rings to start class. (+1 tax credit)
- Students should have their homework completed and ready to turn in at the beginning of class. Homework will be collected by the teacher at the start of class. (+1 tax credit)
- Students should pick up any trash or messes that around their desk or other work areas in the classroom before leaving class. (+1 tax credit)

**Positive Reinforcements:**

- Immediate Reinforcement: When students perform the expected behaviors, they will receive a “tax credit” in the form of a paper slips. “Tax credits” for clean desks will be handed out the following class period.
- Ongoing Reinforcement: Students are to keep their “tax credit” slips in their binder for class or in their backpack if they do not have a binder. At the end of the week, students will turn in their credits in a collection box so that the teacher can tally and keep track of the class total. This also incentivizes students to stay organized, a bonus objective for the plan.
- Overall Activity: **Economic Recovery Plan Project**

**Interactive Learning Activity:** Economic Recovery Plan Project

- TEKS: 113.41 (c) Knowledge and skills (10) History. The student understands the impact of political, economic, and social factors in the U.S. role in the world from the 1970s through 1990. The student is expected to: (B) describe Ronald Reagan’s leadership in domestic and international policies, including such as **Reaganomics** and Peace Through Strength.
- TEKS: 113.41 (c) Knowledge and skills (32) Social studies skills. The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings. The student is expected to: (A) use a problem-solving process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution; and (B) use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences, and take action to implement a decision.

President Reagan introduced the Economic Recovery Tax Act (ERTA) of 1981 during his first 6 months in office. This was the largest tax cut in US history and included large tax reductions for top income earners and corporations. The theory behind these tax cuts is that it would allow Americans to invest more into business growth and spending, thereby boosting the overall economy and increasing tax revenue. The theory also relied on the idea that by cutting corporate taxes, businesses would have more money to grow and create jobs, thus reinvigorating the weakened economy.

Students will have 6 weeks to accumulate 600 “tax credits”. Credits will be turned into a collection box at the end of each week so that the teacher can tally the numbers and keep a running total of credits. If students reach the goal of 600 credits before the 6-week period is over, they will have advanced time to begin their economic recovery plan projects.

For the economic recovery plan project, students will analyze the weakened state of the US economy when Reagan took office. Based on our learning of Reaganomics, students will consider if the ERTA is an effective way to boost the economy, or if there are other economic recovery plans that they feel would be more effective. Students will be divided into small groups of 4-5 to develop plans for economic recovery. These plans can mirror Reaganomics or take a completely different approach. The important part of this project is that students weigh the advantages and disadvantages of certain economic policies. Each group will present their plan in class through a multi-media format. This can include PowerPoints, posters, handouts, videos, or an audio file such as a podcast. Students are able to choose whatever materials they feel will best work for their project. This can include cameras, audio recording equipment, poster boards, markers, PowerPoints, computers, paper, scissors, pens, pencils, stickers and more.

### **Teach the behavior:** Mini lesson to explain and practice the steps

As the teacher, I will wait for class to start and explain that I am going to provide an example of the desired behaviors. First, I will exit the room, so that I can re-enter and go through the desired behaviors. Upon re-entering the class, I will sit in a desk and then pull out my “homework” and class materials. I will provide a timeframe for how long this should take; roughly 2 minutes, which is plenty of time to get seated and unpack materials. “Fast forward to the end of class” I will drop some papers around my desk and then when the “bell rings” I will collect my class materials, put them in my backpack, and then proceed to collect the trash around my desk and any other areas in the classroom and dispose of the trash in the proper trashcan.

During the demonstration, I will explain to my students that there it takes very little physical effort to execute the expected behaviors, and that these behaviors can be developed through mental discipline. Additionally, I will explain that by taking these steps, students will be able to develop skills of responsibility, accountability, and respect for their learning environment. Furthermore, I will explain that these skills will translate into many aspects of their life, including job skills, domestic duties (laundry, dishes, daily chores), and other academic endeavors.