

October is National Cooperative Month

In honor of National Cooperative Month, we are providing this *Colorado Reader* to you during the month of October. Cooperatives are community-born, community-led organizations. Co-ops across the country serve 140 million co-op members. Consider asking a representative or member of a co-op in your community to visit your classroom. If you need assistance in connecting with a local co-op, please contact us at Info@GrowingYourFuture.com.

Pre-Activity

Prior to giving this *Colorado Reader* to your students, please check for background knowledge of cooperatives by asking these questions:

1. How many of you have heard of the term cooperative?
2. How many of you know that a cooperative can be a business?
3. Can you name a cooperative that does business in Colorado?

Colorado Academic Standard Focus

4th & 5th Grade Reading, Writing, and Communicating:

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes. (CCSS: RL.5.4)
- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. (CCSS: RL.4.1)
- By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. (CCSS: RI.4.10)

4th Grade Social Studies:

- Analyze methods of limiting financial risk (PFL) (DOK 2-3)

5th Grade Social Studies:

- Identify different financial institutions (DOK 1)
- Give examples of group and individual actions that illustrate civic ideals in the founding of the United States. Ideals to include but not limited to freedom, rules of law, equality, civility, cooperation, respect, responsibility, and civic participation (DOC 1-3)

Additional standards can be easily met by utilizing the complementary lesson plans from the National Agricultural Literacy Curriculum Matrix, identified to the right.

Answers

Page 6 - What did we learn?

1. A supply cooperative **buys** things to sell to its members.
2. A marketing cooperative **sells** things for its members.
3. A service cooperative provides a **service** to its members.
4. Cooperative members are also A. customers.
5. Members elect A. the directors.

6. Directors are C. both A and B (members and responsible for decisions).

Page 7 - Cooperatives are on Good Terms

1. Companies that are owned by the customers are called **cooperatives**.
2. Cooperatives are owned by **members** who are also customers.
3. Rural Electric Cooperatives are also known as **associations**.
4. Members can both vote for and become **directors**.
5. Cooperatives use the **Seven Cooperative Principles** to guide their business priorities.
6. Three leading types of cooperatives are **supply, marketing, service**.
7. A cooperative's **profits** or savings are returned to the members.
8. Many cooperatives operate in **rural** areas that other business avoid.
9. The first cooperative in America was started by **Ben Franklin**.

Lesson Plans to go with this Reader

The Agricultural Literacy Curriculum Matrix is an online, searchable, and standards-based database for K-12 teachers. The Matrix contextualizes national education standards in science, social studies, and nutritional education with relevant instructional resources linked to Common Core Standards. Below are a few lesson plans that could be used in conjunction with this *Colorado Reader*. Go to www.GrowingYourFuture.com and click on Curriculum Matrix (on the Home Page or under the Educator's Tab), search each title within the Curriculum Matrix to find these lesson plans.

Food Miles: Students will explore the economic and environmental benefits of buying locally grown food.

A Day without Dairy: In this lesson, students will create, read, and interpret graphs relating to the economic importance of the dairy industry and be challenged to understand the economic consequences of a day without dairy.

Supply and Demand: What if?: Students will demonstrate understanding of the importance of the relationship between producers and consumers by explaining how agricultural supply and demand affects commodity prices.

Grocery Store Problem Solving: Students will use basic mathematical skills to solve problems related to the cost of food while integrating geography and nutrition to enhance learning. Activities include analyzing grocery ads, assessing the nutrition and cost of meals, and exploring diets around the world.



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This activity was adapted from: www.equalexchange.coop

ACTIVITY: Students role-play as members of a farmer co-op. They make an important decision about whether to build a storage barn or pay themselves more money. Give the students the scenario and four farmer options below. Have four students volunteer to act out this role-play in the front of the room. Ask one of the students to read the setting to get the role-play started. Once students have completed the role play, ask students to write about which option they would vote for and why.

DIALOGUE: Gather the class again after they have completed the writing assignment and ask:

- What made this decision hard?
 - Is there a right answer?
 - How should a group of farmers make a decision like this?
 - Should they talk about it until someone makes a proposal they can all live with?
 - Should they vote and have the majority win?
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Scenario

You are a member of the Mile High Farmer Cooperative. Your co-op signed on to sell your pinto beans to the Mexican Food company and a good-sized check just came into the co-op to pay for all your pinto beans. For the last two years, your co-op has not been able to get a good price and your family has not had a lot of extra money. Everyone has been thinking about all the things they'll be able to do now that they'll have good checks coming in.

Farmer #1

You're excited about getting some money, but you have been thinking a lot about how best to use it. Part of the reason you made so little money over the last two years was that you lost a lot of your crop just when you were ready to ship it out. Storms came and destroyed it. You're thinking that all the co-op members should put their money together to build a storage shed to protect your crops. Waiting just a little more to get your money will mean there will be fewer times when you don't get it.

Farmer #2

You are so excited about getting some money. You are planning to put your money into renovating part of your house. You would like to redo your kitchen and create a new family room. You've heard a rumor that someone is going to propose that the co-op keep all the money at the meeting today, but you're sure you must have misunderstood the rumors.

Farmer #3

You're up for anything. You really want everyone to get along and you're not as concerned about what the decisions are. You've heard that some of the members want to invest in the co-op's future and some have things they feel their family needs to invest in. You see the wisdom in both choices.

Farmer #4

Your oldest daughter is interested in going to a business program at a community college. If she goes, she might be able to really help the co-op better understand how to run the business with so many complicated things going on. You're really looking forward to having the money to pay for her to go.