

# The Globalization of Economics and How It's Changing Domestic Politics, International Relations, and Our Lives

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Teaching economics at the preK-12 level has always been, in my opinion, one of the most difficult aspects of social studies education. Maybe it's because I took fewer economics courses in college than those in history, political science, geography, and sociology. Yet, I knew throughout my teaching career that economic issues and events were the drivers of most historical, political, and sociological trends and topics. In a sense, human slavery was driven and maintained by economics. The American Revolution and the U.S. Civil War were based to a large extent on economic issues.

Recent and current national and international events and issues all have economic aspects. The future of the European Community, which will govern the future of what we call “Western civilization,” is largely an economic matter. Analysts contend that the political rivalry between the United States and China will be exacerbated or eased by economic events and relationships.

And, more and more, the term “global economics” is being used to describe a world where economics events in a single nation—such as Greece, Japan, or the United States—affect international relationships and the global economy. John Kerry, at his Senate confirmation hearing for the position of secretary of state, asserted that the United States must get its financial house in order if it is to lead in the world. Kerry stated that “More than

ever, foreign policy is economic policy.”

One of the best, concise definitions I've seen for the concept of economic globalization comes from the European Commission (1997):

Economic globalization can be defined as the process by which markets and production in different countries are becoming increasingly interdependent due to the dynamics of trade in goods and services and flows of capital and technology. It is not a new phenomenon but the continuation of developments that have been [ongoing] for some considerable time.

My years with Indiana University brought me into professional work and

personal friendship with the acknowledged “Father of Global Studies,” James Becker. He directed and co-directed projects that brought both expansion and improvement of teaching about other nations, their relationships with the United States, and the growing interconnectivity of the world's people.

Incorporating topics and issues of economics and economic globalization throughout the social studies K-12 curriculum is not the easiest thing to do. Yet, there are ways to use examples. (Students can check labels on their clothing and then discuss the degree to which other nations depend on U.S. citizens for their economic well-being.) It is an issue that we need to keep in mind when looking at current international relations and even topics in U.S. history—such as the role of economic issues in the lead-up to the American Revolution.

Before we look at specific Internet sites that focus on economic globalization, here's one that I want all of you to have. It's the recently-released “Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds,” published by the U.S. National Intelligence Council (NIC). The NIC supports the director

of national intelligence in the role as head of the intelligence community. NIC calls on scholars from academia, government, and the private sector. I think all teachers ought to know what these scholars predict for the United States and the world in 2030. Think about it—a baby born today will be a high school senior in 2030. A 16-year junior in U.S. history will be 33, working, possibly have a family, and facing the challenges that the NIC predicts. We teachers, for our own interest and, more importantly, for our students, ought to design and “tweak” our planning and instruction to help prepare students for this world. You can find a PDF version of this Global Trends 2030 document at: [www.dni.gov/index.php/about/organization/national-intelligence-council-global-trends](http://www.dni.gov/index.php/about/organization/national-intelligence-council-global-trends).

Now, let’s review some of the sites I think will help classroom teachers and curriculum supervisors integrate the concept and significance of economic globalization into their curriculum and teaching. There are many more—just search on “economic globalization” to review them.



### Global Envision for Teachers

[www.globalenvision.org/](http://www.globalenvision.org/)

Global Envision is a project of Mercy Corps and focuses on the “Confluence of Global Markets and Poverty Alleviation.” This first page has news related to international relations and other globalization issues. Click on “For Teachers,” at the top, and you will find a great introduction to the topic and links to some outstanding lesson plans on culture, economics, global health, global climate, and wildlife and globalization. This website also includes recommended links to journals, online blogs, and other sites that teachers could assign to individual students or students working on class projects. You’ll use this site frequently.

### Globalization 101B

[www.globalization101.org/teaching-tools/](http://www.globalization101.org/teaching-tools/)

This is a great source for both background information and lesson plans. The lesson plans are very well written and instructively sound. All of the necessary resources are provided with a mouse click. The topics are almost as wide-ranging as the concept of globalism, and include such intriguing concepts as Women and Globalization, Globalization and the Environment, and Technology and Globalization.

### Gloaled.org

[www.gloaled.org/database/](http://www.gloaled.org/database/)

This is another amazing resource of lesson plans on a myriad number of topics. It’s the product of The American Forum for Global Education. The note on this page says that you have to register to search for specific topics or nations. There is no fee or any other reason not to do so, but I was able to click on “General Resources,” get a huge number of lesson plans, look at them, and download many of the resources or activity sheets. With some lessons, the teacher has to provide some maps or, in one case, the teacher needs to provide the story, titled *The Merchant’s Tale*. Registering may put you on a list to receive updates or new lesson announcements. Topics range from “Was the Silk Road the Internet Highway of the Ancient World” to “World Issues: Whose Side Are We/They On?”



### The Asia Society

<http://asiasociety.org/education/resources-schools/professional-learning/teaching-global-economy>

This is one lesson focusing on this column’s primary theme and it’s a good one. Click on either “Elementary Lesson Plans” or “Secondary Lesson Plans” and you’ll get some great lessons on economic globalization ...all on Asia, of course. Elementary plans include “Animal Bingo” and “Nim: A Game Played around the World.” Secondary lessons include “Water is Life” and “Comparative Religious Teachings.”

In searching for information on the globalization of economics, I ran across a paper I had written on a similar topic many years ago. It’s for sale for \$5.95 from Amazon.com. I’d be willing to bet that Amazon’s economic future doesn’t depend on sales from that product. But, the globalization that I wrote about a long time ago is rapidly growing in strength and impact. Our students need to both know about economic globalization and how it will affect their future. We should too. 🌐

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