

Lesson Plan:

On the job: Analyze Your State's Economy

Overview

Students who have been previously introduced to the concepts of GDP and economic growth 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. 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.

Resources:

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

Process

Provide each student a copy of the activity, **On the Job: Analyze Your State's Economy**, at www.bea.gov/classroom.

The activity says:

Using economic data is part of many careers. Choose one of the three jobs below—news reporter, economic development officer, or entrepreneur. As you would in that job, use data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis to analyze your state's economy. Then complete one of the following tasks for 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. 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, including the strengths and/or weaknesses that you think will be most interesting to your readers.	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? Write a persuasive report for business leaders comparing your state's economy with the economies of two competing states and the U.S. overall. Include only statistics that help make the case for your state and explain why they are promising for businesses in general or specific types of business.	You and your partners are considering whether to expand your company, based elsewhere, into this state. Analyze BEA's data for factors that can help decide whether to locate here. Include your preliminary recommendation, based on factors such as economic growth, leading industries, and the incomes of the state's residents. 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. Include both pros and cons of choosing this state, for a full discussion and a well-informed decision.

For your research, use these data tools on 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 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 GDP, growth rate, personal income, consumer spending, and industries that contribute most to the state's GDP. Note the separate tabs for reports on GDP, personal income, and consumer spending, as well as 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 or B or your own customized assignment.

Activity options (as assigned by your teacher):

- A. Write a three-paragraph summary news article or business 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 one-page news article or business 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 or give a three-minute presentation using those visuals.