

National Farmers Union



“Cooperatives: The Business of Teamwork”

Section 3: Grades 6-8

Contents:

Lesson 1: Cooperatives Put People Ahead of Profits ~ 1 hour

Lesson 2: Putting Co-ops on the Map ~ 1 hour

Lesson 3: The Business of Cooperation ~ 1 hour

Lesson 4: Ready, Set, Cooperate ~ 1 hour

Optional Activities

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Lesson 1: Cooperatives Put People Ahead of Profits

- Unit Objective:** Children will expand their awareness of the types of cooperatives serving Americans and how they differ from corporations.
- Grades:** 6-8
- Length:** 1 hour: 10 minutes for opening discussion, 10 minutes for the Sunflower Seed stockholder activity, 10 minutes for discussion on the types of cooperatives, 15 minutes for the guest speaker, 15 minutes for snacks, the crossword puzzle, and closing discussion.
- Materials Needed:** Whiteboard or flipchart and markers, bags of sunflowers, a few small toy trucks, a large bag of potato chips, white tag board and marker or white board that you can use, pens or pencils for your students.
- Preparation Needed:** This session will require a classroom setting. In advance, print out enough Sunflower Global Corporation and Sunflower Hometown Cooperative stock certificates for all of your students. Print out and cut enough play money for all of your students. Call one week in advance of the meeting to arrange for a manager or director of a co-op to be the guest speaker. Ask this person to talk about why his or her co-op is different than other businesses. Verify this person's participation the day before the class.

Background:

Cooperatives are flourishing in America's biggest cities and smallest towns. Members of housing, daycare, and food co-ops are enjoying the benefits of working together for the common good. This is because cooperatives are a type of business that put people before profits. This lesson looks at what makes cooperatives different from corporations.

Teaching Strategy:

1. *Cooperatives are businesses that are owned by the customers. Does that seem unusual to you? Why would people want to own a business together? Listen to their answers. Their comments will help you frame the topics of this lesson. Write down their answers on a whiteboard or flip chart. In the United States, businesses are started for many reasons, but almost every business is formed because the owner or owners want to make money. Some cooperatives are organized to help the owners save money or to provide a service. These are among the reasons that cooperatives are unique businesses.*
2. *Ask your students, Who owns America's businesses? Again, listen to and list their responses. An individual may own a business. Most farm and ranch operations are owned by individuals, which typically are the families who live and work on them. Small family-owned businesses that provide services such as accounting or products such as groceries that may be found in your hometown. As businesses get larger, two or more people may own them. This is known as a partnership. Even larger businesses will have multiple owners. These are known as corporations. A corporation's owners may include people who buy stock in the business yet will never actually be a customer of the corporation. Familiar corporations include Ford Motor Company and Walmart. Investors in these corporations receive a share of the profits based on how much stock they own. Investors expect companies to generate the highest possible profits and also to increase the value of the company. This means the value of the stock increases over time so that when the investor sells it he or she makes money. You do not have to buy a Ford automobile in order to be an investor in Ford.*
3. *So we have three common types of ownership: individual, partnership, and corporation. Another type of ownership is when the customers actually own the business. This is known as a cooperative. Cooperatives are businesses that operate to benefit the members who also are customers. These benefits range from providing services otherwise not available to reducing costs for the products being purchased by members.*

4. Show your students a variety of products made by cooperatives. These items may include milk from a local dairy, cheese from Land O' Lakes, motor oil and displaying the Cenex brand. Also show your students a pail of grain from a local co-op or Harvest States elevator, and a light bulb and checkbook to represent electric utilities and credit unions, respectively.
5. *In general, businesses want to make the most money possible. They do this by charging the highest prices possible and at the lowest cost of doing business. Paying employees less money, or using fewer employees is one way to increase the profit margin. Corporations focus on making money for their investors who own stock in the business. These stockholders may want the company to do things that are not best for their customers or communities. The more shares a stockholder owns, the more he or she can control the business. People who own a lot of stock have been known to pressure management to eliminate long-term investments that will help the business grow in the future in order to increase short-term profits right now. These actions may benefit a few stockholders, yet can harm many people – including other stockholders, employees and customers – in the long run.* Give your students a few moments to digest this information. *One stockholder who has a lot of money invested in the company can have much more influence than thousands of customers who actually spend money to buy that company's products.*
6. *The customers of cooperatives are encouraged to participate in how the business is operated. Each member has one vote regardless of how much he or she buys or sells during the year at the co-op. No one person has any more control than any other member. This means the co-op can focus on doing what is best for all its owners/customers, rather than one or two owners who may not be customers at all. Members of cooperatives each have one share of stock. No one can buy additional shares, so no one member of a co-op is more influential than another.*
7. To illustrate this, pass out play money to your students. Make sure all students except one get a \$5 bill. One student, however, will be given two \$20 bills for a total of \$40. *We are going to form a Sunflower Seed Corporation. As the treasurer of the corporation, I will sell you shares in exchange for your money. Each share is worth \$1 and each share represents one vote.* Walk around and exchange the 5-share certificates for \$5. Present the single 40-share certificate to the student with \$40. *How many votes do you have?* All but one student will have 5 votes. A single student will have 40 votes. (NOTE: for this exercise to work, the collective voting strength of the students who hold 5 shares must not exceed that of the one student who owns 40 shares. If necessary, give the one student who needs to own the majority of stock more money to “buy” additional shares.)
8. *As stockholders, you are entitled to attend the annual meeting. An annual meeting is the event at which the management updates the owners on the current operations and long-range plans of the business. Owners are stockholders. Sometimes, stockholders as owners will vote to support to reject a proposal recommended by management. Let's say (name the student who owns the majority of the shares) proposes that the Sunflower Corporation buy a potato chip business. You may or may not know that this stockholder also owns stock in a company that sells equipment to make potato chips, or may own a company that sells potatoes. He or she owns the majority of the Sunflower Corporation. All the rest of you have looked at this proposal and believe the Sunflower Company should instead buy new trucks rather than a potato chip company, as the old trucks are costing more and more money to keep running. The potato chip plant may not make money for two or more years. How will you vote? How do you think the majority owner will vote?* Place several model trucks at one end of a table and a bag of potato chips at the other end. Have the people who want to buy the potato chip company stand up behind the bag of potato chips (it should be just one student). Then have the people who want to buy new trucks stand up at the opposite end of the table. It should be all the rest of the students. Because of the actual shares owned, one student will have more votes than everyone else. He or she will really decide. *Does the amount of the company you own affect how each of you makes a decision? Does it seem fair to other stockholders?* Take time to discuss these questions.
9. *How is a cooperative different than a corporation? We are going to find out.* Give every student a \$5 bill. Everyone will have the same investment; no one will have more than one share. Pass out stock certificates to each student in exchange for his or her \$5 bill. This time, everyone gets one share in the Sunflower Cooperative and only one vote. *Cooperatives follow certain business*

principles, one of which is “One member, one vote.” No one can own a majority of stock. We will pretend we are at the annual meeting of the Sunflower Cooperative. At this meeting, the same type of proposal comes up. The co-op members are asked to decide if they should buy a potato chip plant or new trucks. This time, however, each one of you knows that you each have one vote. Those who want to buy new trucks, line up at this end of the table. Those who want to buy a potato chip business, line up here. This time, there may be students at either end of the table. Count the votes and declare the decision: new trucks or potato chips. What made this vote different? Listen to the responses and use them to engage your students in additional discussion. You will want to make the following points. Using the one member, one vote principle, the people who attend the annual meeting can choose what is best overall for the cooperative as compared to a cooperative in which the person with the most votes will choose what is best for him or her alone. Because everyone has an equal position, each stockholder in a co-op is more likely to listen to (and comment on) various proposals before a vote is taken.

10. *Both corporations and cooperatives want to be successful. The difference is who will benefit or profit from that success. In a corporation, the majority owners by themselves or a few working together can control a company’s priorities. For this reason, they may take actions that have immediate benefit to themselves at the expense of customers, employees, or other stockholders. In a cooperative, everyone has an equal desire to see the business succeed. There is more incentive for stockholders to make choices based on what is good for the cooperative and its members rather than just for themselves.*
11. *Put another way, the benefits of a cooperative are returned to all members in numerous ways. Cooperatives return their profits to members based on the amount of business each member does at a co-op. Or, the benefits may be that products are sold at lower prices to members to begin with. The more you use the co-op, the more you save. And, the co-op may provide services otherwise not available.*
12. *Electric utilities provide a good example of this type of service. Explain that some electric utilities are cooperatives, others are investor-owned utilities. Investor-owned utilities often serve big cities. Why? Because these service areas are profitable. When electric companies were first formed, there were many customers in big cities. Because all the customers – businesses and homes – were together, the utilities were willing to invest in equipment and power lines to deliver electricity. Big cities had a tendency to grow bigger, resulting in more customers every year. All this added up to more profits for investors. However, investor-owned utilities did not want to serve farms and small towns. The stockholders said there was little hope to make money from a few customers spread far apart. Farmers and rural communities invested their own money to create rural electric cooperatives. These co-ops were willing to put up power lines to serve just a few customers miles apart because they followed a principle of treating everyone the same. Cooperatives can and do put the needs of people ahead of profits. Cooperatives focus on their customers, because the customers are equal owners in the business.*
13. *The three leading types of cooperative businesses focus on purchasing, marketing, or service operations. Purchasing cooperatives may be known as supply or buying cooperatives. These co-ops provide affordable supplies and goods to their members. Cenex is a brand of fuel sold by CHS, Inc. to locally-owned cooperatives. These co-ops may be in your hometown. Some may even be Farmers Union cooperatives. CHS has a refinery at which it produces diesel fuel and gasoline. As a regional cooperative, CHS is owned by the local co-ops. They work together to provide their owner-customers with lower-cost products.*
14. *A marketing cooperative is organized by members to sell something on their behalf. What is sold can vary, from milk to artwork. Farmers use marketing cooperatives to create a larger supply of, say, grain, which is easier to sell by the trainload. Farmers are able to earn more income from their crops doing this over selling the same grain on their own.*
15. *Service cooperatives are formed to provide a service generally not available to potential customers. The Rural Electric Cooperatives we talked about earlier are a good example. Other service cooperatives can include credit unions that operate much like banks, rural telephone cooperatives, and even daycare cooperatives.*
16. *Finally, another type of cooperative is one that adds value to something owned by the members. Value-adding cooperatives include dairies, meat processing plants, and bakeries.*
17. *Numerous cooperatives may be a blend of two or all three types – service, supply, and marketing – although each usually will be strongest in one specific area. Marketing and value-adding cooperatives often complement each other.*

18. Tape a white tagboard to the wall or set it up on an easel in a landscape or “sideways” format, or use a whiteboard in the same configuration. At the top write the headings Purchasing, Marketing, Service, and Value-Adding. Ask your students to help you decide how to categorize the following cooperatives based on their focus. (Refer to the sheet below and be sure to add the names of local cooperatives).
19. Invite your guest speaker to the front of the room. Introduce him or her by name, and give a brief explanation of his or her cooperative. Keep an eye on the time: when the speaker’s scheduled time is coming to a close, step to the front, thank him or her, and ask if there may be any questions. Be sure to thank your speaker again and lead a round of applause.
20. Serve your students snacks that come from cooperatives: milk, cheese slices, orange juice, cranberry juice, and other items. While they are enjoying their snack, pass out the crossword puzzle and allow them time to fill it out.
21. Close the activity by asking each student to stand up and share one or two things they learned about cooperative businesses (or corporations) during this session.

Cooperatives in our everyday lives

Ace Hardware (Sells tools, home improvement supplies to customers through locally-owned stores)

REI (Sells hiking, camping, outdoor equipment to its members through stores and on-line)

CHS, Inc. (Provides fuel and fertilizer to local cooperatives, sells crops for farmers, processes soybeans into salad dressing)

LOCAL NAME HERE Rural Electric Cooperative (provides electricity to members)

Land O Lakes (Provides cattle feed and management advice to farmers, processes raw milk into butter, cheese, ice cream and other products sold to customers and to other food companies)

LOCAL NAME HERE Dairy (processes raw milk into butter, cheese, and ice cream for members)

LOCAL NAME HERE Credit Union (Provides financial tools and loans to members)

LOCAL NAME HERE Co-op Grain Elevator (Sells grain for farmers, may also sell fertilizer to farmers)

The Associated Press (Allows member newspapers to share stories and photos)

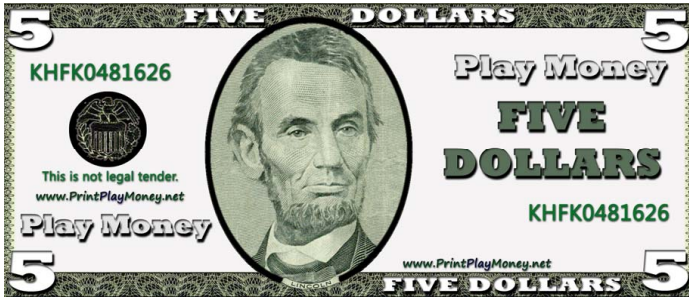
Farm Credit Services (Provides loans, financial services to farmers and ranchers)

Ocean Spray (Processes cranberries supplied by members into juice which is sold in stores)

Sunkist (Processes oranges supplied by members into juice which is sold in stores)

LOCAL NAME HERE Cooperative Grocery Store (Buys various food products directly from farmers, which are subsequently sold to members)





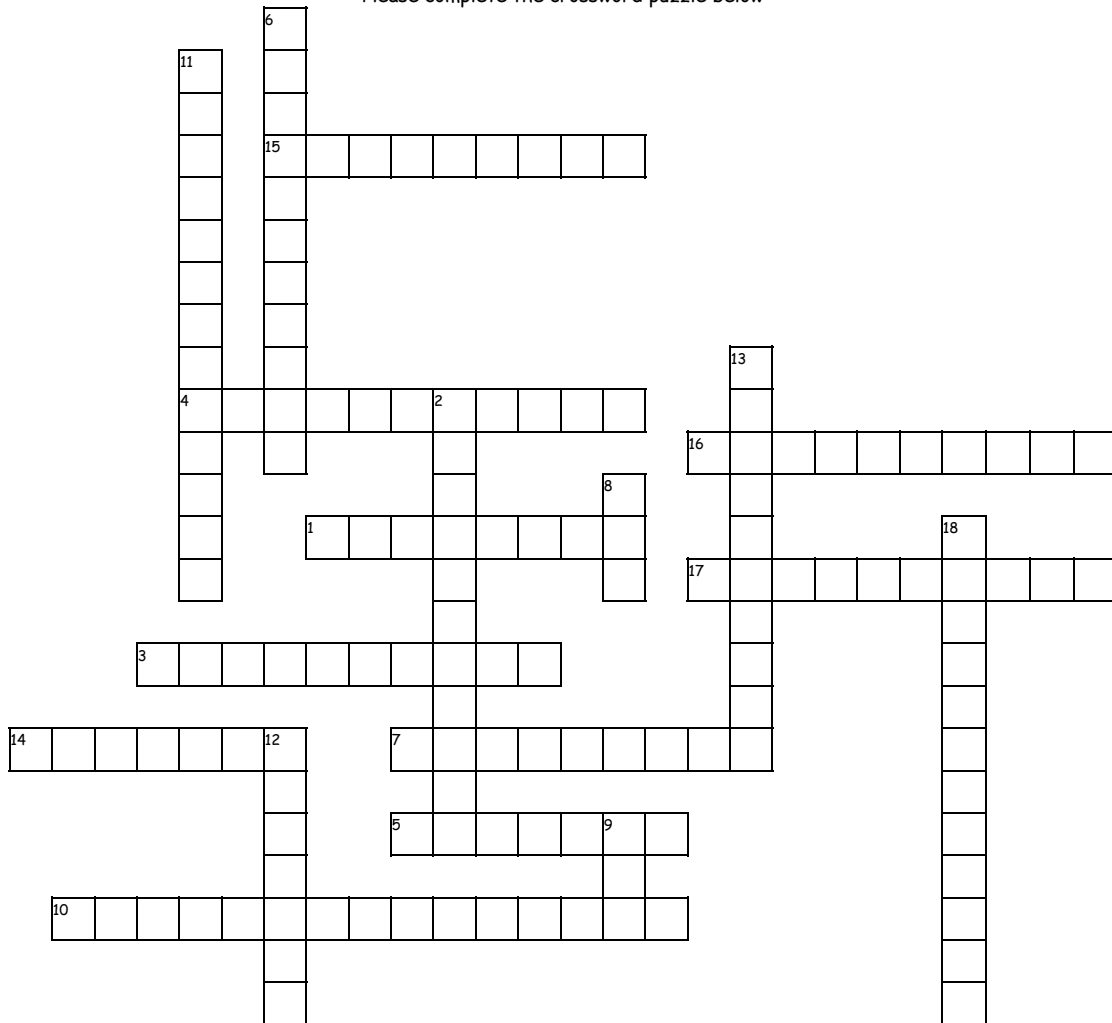




Name: _____
 Provided By: TheTeachersCorner.net [Crossword Maker](#)

Cooperative Crossword

Please complete the crossword puzzle below



Across:

- 1. A successful early cooperative in England
- 3. A financial cooperative that lends money to farmers
- 4. Working together so everyone benefits
- 5. Providing a convenience to members
- 7. Selling crops raised by many farmers to one customer
- 10. A media co-op that allows its members to share news

Down:

- 2. Sells home improvement materials and tools
- 6. A financial services co-op
- 8. Sells outdoor and camping equipment to members
- 9. A regional cooperative whose Cenex and Harvest States operations are well known
- 11. A utility co-op that lights up farms and ranches

Lesson 2: Putting Co-ops On The Map

Unit Objective: Your students may not appreciate the history of cooperative businesses. They may not know of the international scope of cooperatives. As you know, co-ops can be small or large. They can focus on providing one service to a few local customers or deliver thousands of products to tens of thousands of members. This session delves into the many types of cooperatives, their history, and their service areas.

Grades: 6-8

Length: 1 hour: 15 minutes for discussion, 20 minutes for the mapping activity, 10 minutes for Co-op Map activity, 15 minutes for a snack and closing group discussion.

Materials Needed: Pencils, enough chairs and table space for each student, whiteboard or flipchart and markers, enough copies of ... one each poster-size map of your city or county, the U.S., and the world (these may be obtained at most major discount stores, online, or possibly donated by a local library, travel agency, or AAA outlet); hat pins

Preparation Needed: Be sure to print enough copies of the co-op map of the U.S. for each student. This lesson requires you to research in advance the names of co-ops that serve your city, county, and region (These Web sites will be helpful: www.uwcc.wisc.edu/pubs/CurrentResearch/state-by-state.aspx and ten.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cooperatives#United_States. Also, you will need to know how long your local co-ops have been in business, so a few phone calls or visits may be necessary. Whenever possible, print out the home page of the cooperatives that you choose to use as examples.

Background:

Across America's heartland, cooperatives are on the job providing services to farmers, ranchers, and rural communities. Historically, many of today's successful cooperatives grew from roots planted in the prairies well away from the big cities. Co-ops were formed to provide electricity to rural America, process and market the milk of dairy farmers, and buy fuel and fertilizer in bulk to help farmers save money. Cooperatives today are flourishing in both bigger cities and small towns. Members of housing, daycare, and food co-ops are enjoying the benefits of working together for the common good. This lesson looks at the historical roots and current variety of U.S. co-ops.

Teaching Strategy:

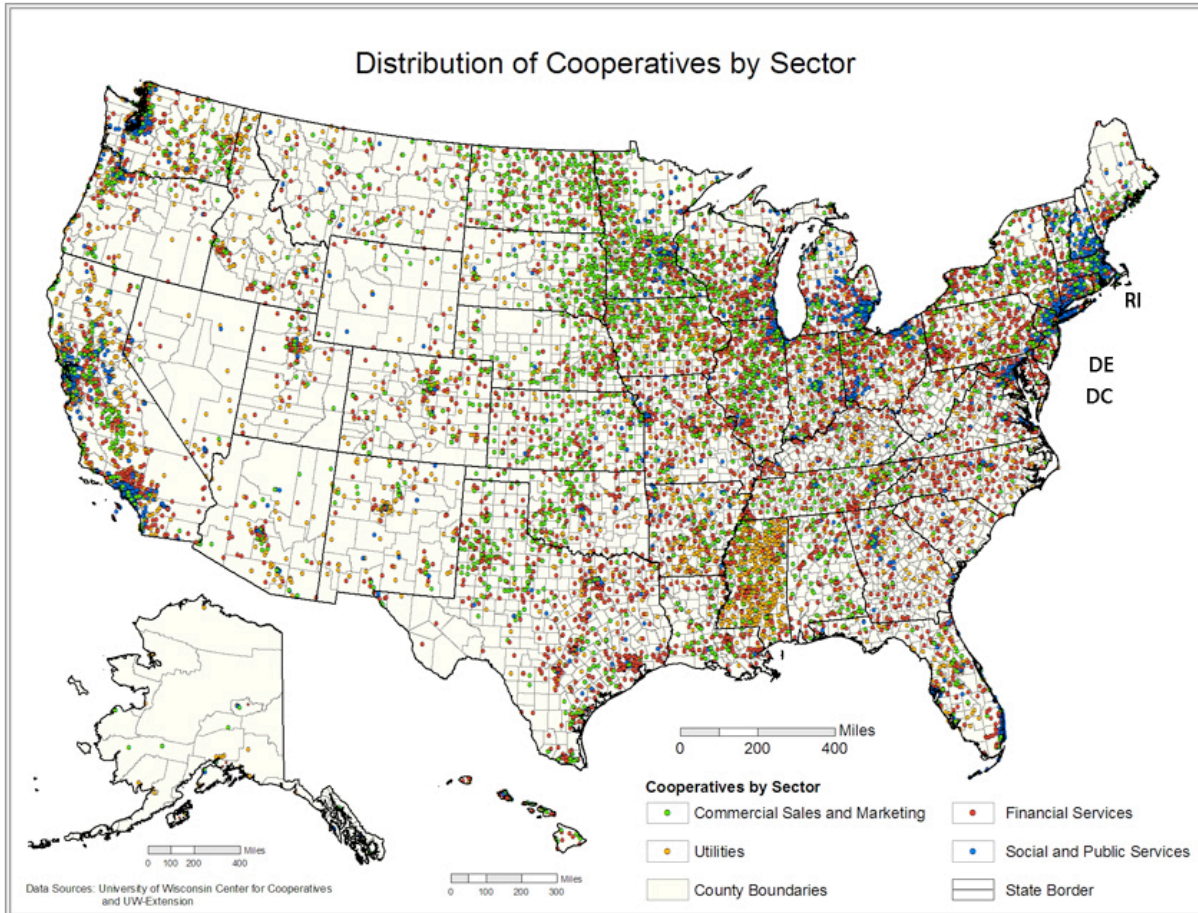
1. Ask your students to name a few local businesses. Write down the answers on a whiteboard or flip chart. Now ask them to name a few cooperative businesses. In advance of this lesson you will need to research this yourself. If they have trouble identifying cooperatives, you need to have a few that you can write down for them to consider. In rare cases, your community may not have any cooperatives. However, it is probable you will have a credit union, rural electric, Cenex, or other cooperative to use as one or more examples, or cooperatives that sell products or services in your area.
2. *What makes a cooperative different from other businesses?* Listen to the responses given to you and use these as the basis for discussion. *A cooperative is owned by its customers who may also be known as members or patrons. Also, cooperative members are encouraged to have a voice in how the cooperative operates. They can attend annual meetings and serve on the board of directors.*
3. *Cooperatives are as American as Ben Franklin, who set up one of the first cooperative efforts in Philadelphia to respond to fires. Back then fires were more common and could destroy downtown businesses in minutes. There were no fire trucks, so in order to fight a fire people of the day used buckets of water. Using cooperation, people were able to rely on each other to work as a group and do something no one person could accomplish alone.*
4. *There were cooperatives in the 1700s in both Europe and America. Many of these co-ops were started because the*

organizers knew they had to work together to share the benefits. One co-op really stands out in history. Formed in 1844 in Rochdale, England, the original members each contributed a little money to get the co-op started. Known as the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, the co-op opened a store on Toad Lane. The people who started this co-op wanted to buy basic food items and clothing at the lowest possible cost. They were able to do this by running their own supply-style grocery store. Why would this one co-op be so important? The members of the Rochdale Society wrote a set of priorities for the co-op. These principles worked so well that other cooperatives worldwide began using them. This co-op also returned any profits back to members in the form of dividends.

5. Let your students know cooperatives can be found in their community, their state, their nation, and around the world. Explain to them the three main types of cooperatives are marketing, supply, and service.
6. *A marketing co-op finds buyers for its members. A grain elevator may sell wheat for farmers. A dairy co-op will sell milk. Many of these marketing co-ops also process an item into a ready-for-consumers product. Supply or buying co-ops focus on purchasing large quantities of items for their members and sharing the resulting savings. Cenex is a farmer-owned cooperative that supplies fuel, seed, fertilizer and other items for farmers. In urban areas, cooperative grocery stores buy food items directly from local farmers for their customers. A service co-op is just what it sounds like: it provides a service to its members. Electricity, telephones, and loans are among the services provided by some co-ops.*
7. Pass out colored construction paper and stick pins with which to make flags that will be placed on the city or county map, the U.S. map, and the world map. Show the students how to make a flag by cutting the paper to the proper size and putting a pin through one end of the paper (see diagram). Each student will be responsible for preparing a flag for at least one local co-op. Use blue for a service co-op, yellow for a supply co-op, and green for a marketing co-op. Assign each student to write the name of the cooperative and how many years it has been in business on his or her flag. You will need to provide these names and years based on your research. During this process, talk about the local co-ops and what types of services or products they provide.
8. Ask the students to step up to the city or county map and place their flag about where the co-op is located. They do not have to be exact in the placement of their flags.
9. If you have printed out the home page of any of these cooperatives, hand one sheet each to individuals, small teams or tables and ask them to spend a few minutes learning more about the cooperative. Have each person, team, or table report on the co-op. You can ask them what products the co-op sells, what services it provides, what marketing it may offer to its members. You may want to print a few additional pages from the websites to provide the students with additional information from which to prepare a report.
10. Now ask your students to make white flags that they will use to identify larger cooperatives in their state or other locations in the U.S. Examples may include Land O Lakes or CHS in Minnesota, Ace Hardware in Illinois, CoBank in Colorado, or The Associated Press in New York. The last step in this activity will be to prepare flags using red construction paper. You will need one student to mark a flag “France,” another “Germany,” another “Japan,” another “Canada,” one for “Italy,” and a last one for the Rochdale Pioneers in England. Ask the students to place the appropriate flag in each of these countries. Tell your students that *Cooperatives are especially strong in these countries. Did you know 2012 is the International Year of Cooperatives? Today we learned about cooperatives in our own community, and we learned that cooperatives have been around for hundreds of years both here and overseas.*
11. Pass out the U.S. “co-op” shown map below to each student. Ask the students by table to answer the questions below the map. Give them five minutes to work on this project. Then ask each table to report on how they answered one question. If you have fewer students, have each table offer two answers. If you have more tables than questions, ask the questions of some tables and then ask the others if they agree or disagree.
12. Pass out snacks of food items that include products made by cooperatives such as milk, cheese, orange juice or cranberry juice.
13. *We’ve located a few cooperatives in our community, our state, and nationwide. I am glad you took time to learn more about these special businesses and how they contribute to our standard of living. Should your schedule*

allow, ask the children to repeat their reports on local co-ops to parents. Alternatively, the youth could give these same reports at a county Farmers Union meeting.

Sources: National Farmers Union, United States Department of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives



A Cooperative Q&A

In which areas are cooperatives more concentrated?

Do you see a relationship between rural areas and the number of cooperatives in those areas?

Do social and public service co-ops show up more in high population areas? If so, why do you believe this occurs?

Are cooperatives found nationwide?

Lesson 3: The Business of Cooperation

Unit Objective: Students will tour a cooperative business and meet members of the “team.”
Grades: 6-8
Length: 1 hour: 5 minutes for introduction, 50 minutes for a tour of the cooperative, 5 minutes for wrap-up discussion. Either make arrangements for parents to drop off and pick up their children at the co-op chosen for this event, or make other provisions to transport them to the store if allowed by your sponsoring Farmers Union organization.

Materials Needed: The “Cooperative Q&A” checklist.

Preparation Needed: Make the necessary calls in advance to locate a cooperative whose manager will allow your students to tour his or her operation (either hosted by a store employee, the manager or a director). Explain that you will have an activity sheet the students will fill out to learn more about the co-op. You will want to approach the following to schedule a tour: Farmers Union oil and elevator co-ops, CHS operations using the Cenex and Harvest States brands, local credit unions, local rural electric or rural telephone co-ops, Farm Credit Services, local dairy co-ops, Land O Lakes, food co-ops, and housing co-ops. In addition to local co-ops, you may have regional co-op facilities that may be open to tours. NOTE: You may want to ask a few members of a Farmers Union Collegiate Chapter to accompany the students on this tour. In advance, hand out the prepared checklist to your students. Also, if you have an area Farmers Union member who is a director for the co-op you tour, be sure to invite him or her to join your group. Call a day ahead to verify the tour time and who will be the host.

Background:

Cooperatives come in many forms. Some are large, serving customers across America’s heartland (think CHS). Some have national name or brand recognition (think Land O’ Lakes, Ocean Spray, and Blue Diamond), some are in the wholesale supply business (Basin Electric), some look like everyday retailers (REI, Ace Hardware), some don’t look like a co-op at all (7500 York Cooperative Retirement Living in the Twin Cities).

Teaching Strategy:

1. Meet the children at the entrance to the co-op at the set time. If you need additional adult assistance for a larger group, make sure you have arranged for parents or other volunteers to accompany your group.
2. Walk inside the store or business and meet the manager or other representative as pre-arranged. Make brief introductions and ask your students to promise to be on their best behavior. Hand out the “Cooperative Q&A” checklist to the students. Tell your students as they go through the business to write in answers once they learn them. Make sure your host has a checklist too so he or she can help guide the children to discover the answers for which they will be searching. If your students are to wear special clothing (protective glasses, hairnets, hard hats) help them with these items.
3. Encourage the students to ask questions during the tour. You may have to ask a few questions to set the example. Also, you will need to let students know the difference between a service, purchasing, or marketing co-op so they can determine what type of co-op they are visiting.
4. At the conclusion of your tour, have your students thank the store manager.
5. Before they leave, find a quiet spot and ask the children to review their answers with you. This activity is meant to be an awareness-building exercise for your students.

Cooperative Q&A

How many members belong to this co-op? _____

How long has this co-op been in business? _____

Is this a service, marketing or purchasing co-op? _____

Why did members start this co-op? _____

What kind of industry does this co-op serve (agriculture, finance, grocery, hardware and lumber, healthcare, energy and communications, recreational, media, housing or other)? _____

Is this a retail or wholesale co-op? _____

Can non-members shop at this co-op? _____

Does this co-op make any products? _____

Is your family a member of this co-op? _____

Name one benefit of belonging to this co-op? _____

Does the co-op compete with other businesses? _____

What new service or product would you recommend? _____

Lesson 4: Ready, Set, Cooperate

Unit Objective:	Students will engage in the group dynamics of cooperation.
Grades:	6-8
Length:	1 hour: 10 minutes for the introduction and discussion, 15 minutes for the Cooperative Crossing, 5 minutes for a snack, 15 minutes for the table-setting activity, 10 minutes for discussion, and 5 minutes for concluding comments.
Materials Needed:	A flipchart or whiteboard, an empty round table with four chairs spaced around it, a rectangular table with no chairs around it, a tablecloth, a dinner setting for four (plates, non-glass “glasses,” spoons, forks, knives (butter, not steak), cups, saucers, bowls, napkins, and other items as you believe are necessary, a stopwatch. Enough two-by-fours to stretch 24 feet (either three 8-footers or six 4-footers).
Preparation Needed:	Put the two-by-fours 2 by 4s on the floor, end to end to create a narrow “bridge.” This bridge should be at least 24 feet in length. It does not have to be nailed together, nor does it have to be supported at the ends. In advance you will want to place all the dinner setting items in a very disorganized pattern on the rectangular table and cover it with a tablecloth. You will need an empty round table next to the rectangular table.

Background:

By nature, children are competitive. Living with siblings, participating in team sports, and developing the first adult interests and responsibilities all create competitive environments. These same situations may also foster cooperative practices. This lesson encourages students to step back and consider how well they can cooperate with others. It will challenge them to see how their individual contributions can count for much more when combined with the efforts of others. This is known as compounding or synergy.

Teaching Strategy:

1. At the top of your flipchart or whiteboard, write the headings “Leadership” and “Teamwork.” Ask the students to describe the difference between leadership and teamwork. Write down their answers below the headings. Leaders may be inspirational (but who do they inspire?); they may take charge in organizing (but who do they organize?); they may determine a strategic plan (but who is responsible for accomplishing the work?); they may build consensus (but whose agreement are they seeking?). Lead the discussion on each of these questions. Be sure to encourage all students to contribute their thoughts.
2. Next question, *Can a leader lead if no one follows?* Wait for students to offer you their observations. *Often we encourage leadership. Leadership requires an equal measure of teamwork. Leaders need teams. Otherwise, leaders are individuals. In life you may be a leader, you may be a member of a team. If you are on a team it does not mean you are a follower. It means you are part of group that can get more done together than any one person could do on his or her own. When two people try to lead a group, it can lead to competition and that can split the effort and divide resources.*
3. *Cooperation is a form of teamwork. In fact, cooperation is one way to create a business operation. In some teams, you do not need a leader or followers. The group discusses a challenge, offers solutions, and reaches agreement together on how to achieve results. Are you ready to try a cooperative challenge as a group?*
4. Have the students gather around your Cooperative Crossing. *This is not a competition. This is to see how well you make group decisions and communicate with each other.* Keep each group at 12 to 16 students. Set up a second Cooperative Crossing if you have more students, or have a second group wait until the first one is done. Do not let the second group watch the activity, as they will have to figure it out on their own. Have half the group (6 to 8 students) stand in single file on one end of the “bridge,” the other half will stand at the opposite end. Ask the teams

to face each other. *The object is for all the members of one team to exchange places with members of the other team. None of you can step off the bridge. If you do, you have to return to the spot at which you started and proceed from that location. You will have to communicate and cooperate to cross to the other end.*

5. Allow each group up to seven minutes to achieve this goal (adjust the time according to the number of students, if you have just one group give them more time for this activity). Have your students return to their seats. Use the following questions to prompt discussion. Did everyone play an equal role in deciding how to pass each other? Did anyone emerge as a leader? Did you discuss more than one way to attempt this task? How did you feel if you stepped off the bridge? How did you feel when someone else stepped off?
6. Time for a snack. Serve snacks that include cheese, milk, and juice made by cooperatives, along with fruit or vegetable slices. This is a good opportunity to highlight cooperative products, especially those made or sold locally.
7. Lift back the tablecloth covering the rectangular table and place it on the round table. Ask your students if they help set the table at home. For those who have (all of them, hopefully), ask them to tell you what routine they use to make the job easier and go faster. Break your students into two groups of equal size. Select one group and ask them to set the table as quickly as possible. Give them no further directions. Use a stopwatch to time them.
8. After they have set the table, inspect their results then ask them return everything to the rectangular table and make sure these items are again disorganized. Tell the second team they too will have to set the table as quickly as possible. However, they will do it as a cooperative effort. Allow them time to discuss their task in advance. Do not use the stopwatch during this discussion. If they need guidance, suggest they first organize the items on the rectangular table but stacking or organizing cups, glasses, dishes, bowls, and silverware. As a cooperative effort, the next step will be for each student to accept an assignment. One will place plates, another glasses, another silverware, another napkins and so on. They also should decide in which order they might do these tasks. When they are ready, use your stopwatch to time them.
9. Hopefully, the second team will be quicker (and calmer) in setting the table.
10. *Okay, some of you will say this is an unfair competition. Actually, it is only an example of cooperation. When a group is unorganized, it shows. Cooperation works if you begin by first organizing. You need to talk to each other to determine your goals, draw up your action plan, and assign responsibilities.*
11. Pass out the discussion checklist. Direct your students to write their answers or observations to each question. While they are doing this, tape the signs “Agree” and “Disagree” on opposite walls.
12. Some students work more quickly than others. Use your judgment on when to begin discussion of this exercise. Ask the students to gather in the middle of the room. For each question you ask, have the students run toward the “Agree” or “Disagree” signs. Once they have chosen, ask students to share their own answers to the question. You may want to ask students by name to assure each one has an opportunity to participate. Not every student has to answer each question. Adjust this back-and-forth discussion for the time you have remaining in this lesson.
13. Close your lesson by assuring your students they can accomplish a lot through cooperation rather than competition.

Sources: Adapted from Activities That Teach, KnowledgeStorehouse

What does it take to cooperate?

Does cooperation require compromise, listening, sharing, encouraging, taking turns, and doing your part?

Is it fun to work in groups?

Can it be frustrating when working in groups?

Is it easier to cooperate with your friends?

Continue with these general discussion questions

What is something you have to do to cooperate at school?

Can you think of any examples of cooperation in nature?

How does your family cooperate?

Alexander Graham Bell said, "Great discoveries and improvements invariably involve the cooperation of many minds." What does that mean to you?

When is it okay to be uncooperative?

Teacher's Insight

What does it take to cooperate?

Does cooperation require compromise, listening, sharing, encouraging, taking turns, and doing your part?

(Share a few examples from today's activities)

What is fun about working in groups?

(Learn new things, some people have different ideas to contribute)

What can be frustrating when working in groups?

(One person is too bossy. No one listens. Some people have different ideas and try to pull the group in different directions)

Tell about a time you cooperated with your friends.

What is something you have to do to cooperate at school?

Can you think of any examples of cooperation in nature?

(Ants building a colony and gathering food)

How does your family cooperate?

Alexander Graham Bell said, "Great discoveries and improvements invariably involve the cooperation of many minds." What does that mean to you?

When is it okay to be un-cooperative?

(People trying to get you to do things you know are bad. If others want you to join them in bullying a classmate, is it right?)

Agree

Disagree

Optional Activities

The following activities could be incorporated at the end of any lesson to fill extra time.

1. Discuss other ways to prepare fruits and vegetables. Examples may include pouring skim milk over a small bowl of sliced fruit and adding a dash of honey; adding fruit slices to a whole bran cereal; grilling shish kabobs of potatoes, tomatoes, green or red peppers, and onions; making a sandwich using sliced tomatoes or onions or radishes using low-fat ranch dressing on whole wheat bread.
2. Have the students prepare a thank you card for their host at the grocery store. Use a large tagboard folded in half and have all of the students sign it. Be sure to make the card colorful and bold. Chances are the store will display it so be sure to add your Farmers Union organizational name at the bottom.
3. Have the students step up to the whiteboard or flip chart and write down the good food item they should eat more of, and beside it write the snack food they eat too much of.
4. Teach some Farmers Union songs.