

Teacher's Guide: Introduction

Welcome to the STORE WARS lesson plans. These lessons will allow students to understand the various cost/benefit issues and problems that city planners and city officials in general face when approached with a major decision such as approving zoning for a big-box superstore. Students may also role-play persons involved in the Ashland, Virginia Wal-Mart story in a "talk show" format, to demonstrate their knowledge of the implications of this issue as seen through the eyes of the participants.

These lessons are directed toward grades 6 through 12, for use in the following subject areas: social studies and economics.

LESSON PLANS

[LESSON ONE: The impact of Big-Box Stores on Ashland, Virginia \(and on your town\)](#)

Students will learn about the impact and effect a big-box department store chain has on a community by analyzing the Ashland, Virginia situation. They will also analyze how chain stores impact their own communities.

[LESSON TWO: Role-Playing the Ashland/Wal-Mart Story](#)

In this activity, students will role-play persons involved in the Ashland/Wal-Mart story in a "talk show" format, demonstrating their knowledge of the implications of this issue as seen through the eyes of the participants.

[LESSON THREE: Should We Let Them In? A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Allowing a New Chain Store Into Town](#)

Students will summarize the possible costs and benefits of a Wal-Mart opening in their town in economic, social and environmental terms, and write an assessment for their town's mayor.

About the film:

STORE WARS, written, produced and directed by Micha Peled, follows the one-year conflict that polarizes Ashland, Virginia, population 7,200, when Wal-Mart decides it wants to build a megastore on the edge of town. The ensuing debate pits neighbor against neighbor in a battle as protracted and bitter as those fought in the Old West between ranchers and farmers over land-use issues. The struggle between conflicting versions of the American dream has on one side those who want to preserve their seemingly idyllic small-town way of life versus those who believe in the positive economic benefits Wal-Mart promises. A truly American story, STORE WARS is about the right of a community to determine its own future: Which values are most important? Who gets to decide?

About the authors:

Michael Hutchison is a social studies teacher at Lincoln High School in Vincennes, Indiana. He has been recognized nationally for his use of cable television technology in the classroom, and has been recognized as a "Champion Teacher" by *Cable in the Classroom*. He has contributed several lessons featured on PBS Web pages, and is a member of the PBS TeacherSource Advisory Group.

Betsy Hedberg is a teacher and freelance curriculum writer who has published lesson plans on a variety of subjects. She received her Secondary Teaching Credential in Social Studies from Loyola Marymount University and her Master of Arts in Geography from UCLA. In addition to curriculum writing, she presents seminars and training sessions to help teachers incorporate the Internet and other technologies into their classrooms. She presented a seminar entitled *The World Wide Web Can Help Your Students Think Critically* at the California Council for the Social Studies 1998 annual conference. In 1997, she founded Curriculum Adventures, a curriculum development, publishing and consulting business.

LESSON ONE: The impact of Big-Box Stores on Ashland, Virginia (and on your town)

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Standards](#)
3. [Related resources](#)
4. [Method of activity](#)
5. [Method of assessment](#)
6. [Author bio](#)

1. Introduction:

In this activity, students will learn about the impact and effect a big-box department store chain has on a community by analyzing the Ashland, Virginia situation. They will also analyze how chain stores impact their own communities.

This simulation gives students an opportunity to not only research the viewpoints of the participants in the issue, but also an opportunity to understand the various issues and problems that city planners and city officials in general face when approached with a major decision such as approving zoning for a big-box superstore.

In the lesson, students investigate this in two separate ways. First, they conduct a real-time survey in which they research big-box stores in their area, such as Wal-Mart, K Mart, Home Depot or Target, including numbers of local people employed at the store, average salary, benefits, etc. They'll also gauge the effect of the big-box store on local merchants and local government.

2. Standards:

This lesson addresses the following national content standards established by McREL at <http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>:

Civics Standards:

- Understands about civic life, politics and government
- Understands the role of diversity in American life and the importance of shared values, political beliefs and civic beliefs in an increasingly diverse American society
- Understands the character of American political and social conflict and factors that tend to prevent or lower its intensity
- Understands issues concerning the disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life
- Understands the formation and implementation of public policy
- Understands issues regarding the proper scope and limits of rights and the relationships among personal, political and economic rights

3. Related resources for this lesson include:

Ashland and Wal-Mart Websites

Ashland Convention and Visitor's Bureau home page
<http://www.town.ashland.va.us/ahevb/index.html>

Ashland city home page
<http://www.town.ashland.va.us/>

Ashland/Hanover Citizens for Responsible Growth
<http://www.acservices.com/javanut/smartgrowth.htm>

Wal-Mart home page
<http://www.walmartstores.com/>

Articles About the Impact of Wal-Mart

A story from the *Sacramento Business Journal* regarding impact of a Wal-Mart store plan in El Dorado County
<http://sacramento.bcentral.com/sacramento/stories/1998/02/09/editorial1.html>

A Dove Foundation column regarding Wal-Mart's selling of "sanitized" music
<http://www.dove.org/columns/1996/column9612.htm>

A Concerned Women of America story of Wal-Mart censorship of CDs
http://www.cwfa.org/library/misc/1997-01-16_walmart.shtml

A story regarding the opening of a Minnesota Wal-Mart superstore where the community embraced it (from Office.com)
http://www.office.com/newscatcher/show_article/1,3806,65_59120,00.html
(This story can also be found on the Duluth Tribune Web site
http://Web.duluthnews.com/content/duluth/2001/02/27/business/du_WAL0227.htm)

A story from the New Rules Web site which notes the Ashland/Wal-Mart issue and notes a study of Virginia Wal-Mart stores which notes that when competition is removed, prices in Wal-Marts vary (often by as much as 25 percent)
<http://www.newrules.org/resources/smapaspeech.html>

A reprint of a 1994 *Christian Science Monitor* story about other communities' fight against Wal-Mart stores in their towns
<http://www.norfolk-county.com/users/claytons/walmart2.html>

Organizations Against Wal-Mart

Sprawl-Busters home page
<http://www.sprawl-busters.com/index2.html>

An essay by Sprawl-Busters founder Al Norman regarding the negative effect of Wal-Mart in a community
<http://www.sprawl-busters.com/caseagainstsprawl.html>

A July 1999 Sprawl-Busters news flash which includes the Ashland Wal-Mart issue
<http://www.sprawl-busters.com/newsflash/jul99news.htm>

A Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union page opposing Wal-Mart
<http://www.rwdsu.on.ca/walmart.htm>

An essay by Tom Meier in *Conscious Choice* which notes that Wal-Mart jobs are low-paying and money spent at Wal-Mart generally leaves the community in which the store is located
<http://www.consciouschoice.com/issues/cc1204/schumacher.html>

Government Resources and Business Reports

A resource for various state and local government agencies online (State and Local Government on the Net)
<http://www.piperinfo.com/state/index.cfm>

Library of Congress page regarding state and local government agencies
<http://www.loc.gov/global/state/stategov.html>

An excerpt from the Shills Report on Measuring the Economic and Sociological Impact of the Mega-Retail Discount Chains On Small Enterprise in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Communities
<http://www.lawmall.com/rpa/chap1.html> (Note: the entire report's table of contents can be found at <http://www.lawmall.com/rpa/toc.html>)

In addition, it is suggested that student participants in this lesson conduct their own Web or text based research for materials on the issue. Links included in this activity were gathered primarily from the Google Internet search engine (<http://www.google.com>). However, teachers and students can easily use other search engines, or research traditional sources of information if they prefer, or if they have limited access to a classroom Internet connection.

4. Method of activity:

In the first activity, students will survey and research local community persons and businesses to determine the impact of a big-box store on their community. Based on this information, they'll work to develop conclusions about the effect (negative or positive) of a chain store in their community.

Prior to the teacher showing the program STORE WARS, lead a short discussion about the role big-box department stores play in students' lives. Questions to consider in the discussion might include:

1. Do you shop at Wal-Mart, K Mart, Target, (or whatever the nearest chain department store is)?
2. Do you think teenagers have a reasonable chance of being hired at the store?
3. If the students know someone who is employed at the store, are they treated fairly as employees? (Are they paid a fair wage, do they get adequate benefits, etc.?)
4. Do they know of any instance where the store has been a "good member of the community" (for example, do they donate to local charitable causes, do they support schools, and so on)?
5. Do they think the chain store has had a negative impact on local business? Do any students have information about family members who have been impacted negatively by the location of a store in their area?
6. Any other questions the teacher might develop or that might come up during the discussion.

Once the teacher has concluded the discussion, the class can view STORE WARS. The teacher will want to have the students look for specific instances where information is given about the impact (either negative or positive) of Wal-Mart or other big-box stores on a community. Some suggested points in the program include:

- From 5:30 - 6:30 in the program, the size and value of the Wal-Mart Corporation and stores is discussed.
- From the 13:10 to 16:25 point in the program, Al Norman (founder of "Sprawl Busters") discusses the negative impact of Wal-Mart in a community, while Wal-Mart officials discuss the long-term positive influence of a store in a community.
- At the 19:25 mark in the program to the 22:30 mark in the program, Mayor Herbert and a council member travel to Tappahannock to discuss the impact of the Wal-Mart store there with a local building supply business owner, while a business owner in Warrenton, Va., discusses the "loss of personal service" local businesses provide when big-box stores move in and force small stores out.
- At the 36:30 point in the program, employment at the proposed Wal-Mart store is discussed, and the narrator notes the number of persons employed by Wal-Mart and how Wal-Mart defines "full time" employees. In addition, the program notes the amount of turnover Wal-Mart has in its workforce yearly.
- At 38:00, Sharon McKinley discusses the good Wal-Mart has done for her family, as an employer as well as a convenience when she shops.
- At the conclusion of the program (55:00), the narrator speculates on the amount of business and money the Ashland Wal-Mart is expected to bring in.

Once the students have viewed the tape, the teacher passes out information forms ([see related form](#)) for students. The teacher will probably elect to have students work in pairs or teams for this activity.

The information form ([see form](#)) is designed to help students understand the impact of a large retail chain on a community and its workforce. However, teachers should consider the feelings of the community and students regarding use of a form that asks driving questions about the impact of one of the community's largest employers for example, or a store that recently has forced a student's parent to close a business. If the teacher feels comfortable in administering the information form locally, then copies can be distributed.

One recommendation regarding the form would be for students to contact the store for some of the more basic information, including when the store opened, number of employees, starting salary of employees, etc. Students might also, however, do some digging on the Internet or in back issues of newspapers from the community to determine other information, such as whether there were protests against the store opening, or how many businesses (if any) in the community have closed their doors since the big-box store opened.

It is also recommended that teachers require students to "cite" sources they utilize, whether they personally interview store management or employees or use resources such as the Internet or newspapers to find

information.

The teacher should allow adequate time for students to complete their research, and then ask students to either report on their findings in class, or perhaps submit information either in a poster or in a spreadsheet that will include all the information sheet data.

Still another suggestion on how collected information can be displayed would be to have students use multimedia software such as Power Point or Hyperstudio to create a presentation of their particular store.

The teacher can determine to what extent students should create a multimedia presentation. Suggestions for information to include are:

1. Pictures (either with a digital camera or scanned) of the local business community
2. Pictures of the big-box store
3. Pictures of closed businesses
4. A short history of the big-box company
5. Statistics gathered in the student investigation using the "Store Information Form"
6. Any sound files or "special effects" related to the multimedia software the teacher feels enhances the presentation
7. Any other information the teacher feels appropriate for the assignment

5. Method of assessment:

The method of assessment of the project may change depending on what format the teacher wants students to use in compiling the information. For example, the teacher will want to develop a rubric if multimedia presentations are used. An example of a basic Power Point assessment rubric can be found at <http://www.tappedin.sri.com/info/teachers/temp/eight.html>.

Should the teacher use another format for compiling the information from the student forms, the rubric may be adapted for that purpose.

6. Author Bio:

Michael Hutchison is a social studies teacher at Lincoln High School in Vincennes, Indiana. He has been recognized nationally for his use of cable television technology in the classroom, and has been recognized as a "Champion Teacher" by *Cable in the Classroom*. He has contributed several lessons featured on PBS Web pages, and is a member of the PBS TeacherSource Advisory Group.

LESSON TWO: Role-Playing the Ashland/Wal-Mart Story

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Standards](#)
3. [Related resources](#)
4. [Method of activity](#)
5. [Method of assessment](#)
6. [Author bio](#)

1. Introduction

The teacher may wish to implement this activity either in replacement of Lesson 1, or in combination with it.

In this activity, students will role-play persons involved in the Ashland/Wal-Mart story in a "talk show" format, demonstrating their knowledge of the implications of this issue as seen through the eyes of the participants.

2. Standards:

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An excerpt from the Shills Report on Measuring the Economic and Sociological Impact of the Mega-Retail Discount Chains On Small Enterprise in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Communities

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3. Method of Activity:

The teacher may wish to introduce the extension activity in a similar manner to the basic activity, which would include a discussion of the impact of big-box stores.

Prior to watching the program, the teacher can either assign roles to students, or students can self-assign roles. While the program is shown, students can develop information about their specific character.

Roles will include:

- Tommy Herbert, mayor of Ashland
- At least one of the town council members (perhaps Franklin Jackson, a Wal-Mart supporter). The teacher may elect to add more council members depending on the size of the group and the number of persons desired to participate in the talk show.
- Mary Leffler, the head of the Pink Flamingos
- Jay Weinberg, attorney for Wal-Mart who argued the store's case to the community and the local government
- Al Norman, founder of Sprawl-Busters, and consultant to the Pink Flamingos
- Sharon McKinley, supporter of Wal-Mart in Ashland, whose husband and daughter are already employed by Wal-Mart
- A student should also be designated as the "moderator/host" who runs the talk show and perhaps ensures that participants are given equal time to speak.

It is also suggested that students have an opportunity to expand on a mark made at the 24:30 point in the

program that Wal-Mart is the largest music seller in the U.S., however, the policy of Wal-Mart is to sell "edited" music without objectionable lyrics.

Other roles may be added or eliminated from the list above, depending on class size and amount of time the teacher wishes to use on this lesson.

The teacher may decide to include a "representative high school student" from the Ashland community who would be opposed to this policy.

It is also suggested that audience members (the rest of the class, for example) be allowed to ask questions based on affidavits created either from the Web resources listed in the first activity, as well as the program itself. This not only would give an incentive for the participants to "know the roles", but it would also give the audience a feeling of involvement in the talk show through asking questions.

Conducting the talk show:

Students should be prompted that while they may see some interesting (and sometimes outlandish) behavior on television talk shows, inappropriate behavior should not be acceptable in this format. The teacher may want to advise the students that the purpose of their "appearing" on the talk show is to sway public opinion to their view, and that inappropriate behavior will only serve to turn public opinion against their character and their view.

The classroom or area should be arranged in a manner that best fits the format. For example, the teacher may wish to bring in a group of chairs for the participants rather than using student desks. In addition, if technical facilities are available, the teacher may also wish to have the talk show set in a manner that the moderator might use a microphone (preferably a wireless microphone) to allow the audience to ask questions and the participants to answer those questions in a manner similar to professionally produced shows. Also, if facilities allow, students might also be utilized as "technical crewmembers", assisting in such areas as lighting, sound, continuity and so on. If the teacher wishes to save the "show" in archival form, or wishes to duplicate the assignment with several classes, videotaping the show might be desirable.

Participants in the show as well as the audience should be well briefed as to what the facts and issues in the Wal-Mart/Ashland case concern. Obviously, the panel guests will need to have a sufficient knowledge of the roles they have been assigned in order to effectively convince the audience that they "are" that character.

The participants in the talk show may desire to make an opening statement prior to the question/answer period.

4. Method of Assessment:

The teacher will want to develop some sort of strategy for assessing student work in this exercise. Perhaps the best way might be to grade participants on the skills they exhibit in actually "becoming" the character they represent in the talk show. The teacher could also require the remaining students to submit questions to ask the participants prior to the talk show, which could be graded.

It may also be desirable for the teacher to develop a "rubric" to allow for easier grading and identification of criteria for assessment. While the teacher may wish to develop their own rubric and own criteria, a [sample rubric](#) is included as a guideline.

5. Author Bio:

Michael Hutchison is a social studies teacher at Lincoln High School in Vincennes, Indiana. He has been recognized nationally for his use of cable television technology in the classroom, and has been recognized as a "Champion Teacher" by *Cable in the Classroom*. He has contributed several lessons featured on PBS Web pages, and is a member of the PBS TeacherSource Advisory Group.

LESSON THREE: Should We Let Them In?: A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Allowing a New Chain Store Into Town

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Standards](#)
3. [Related resources](#)
4. [Method of activity](#)
5. [Method of assessment](#)
6. [Extensions/Adaptations](#)
7. [Author bio](#)

1. Introduction

It's a good bet that your students have already performed an informal cost-benefit analysis (or perhaps a "pro-con" chart) to help them make an important decision. This lesson has them conduct this type of analysis to determine whether a town should allow a large chain store to open within its borders. They'll consider the arguments made by both sides of the debate in the STORE WARS documentary, and they'll look at some Web sites that provide further information about the topic. They'll create a chart that summarizes the possible costs and benefits in economic, social, and environmental terms, and they'll summarize their opinions in reports to the town's mayor.

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- List the large chain stores in their area and discuss their opinions of these stores.
- Watch video segments and discuss Wal-Mart's strategies and its opponents' viewpoints.
- Define and discuss the terms "costs" and "benefits."
- Discuss different types of costs and benefits.
- Discuss the advantages of conducting a cost-benefit analysis to help make a decision.
- Use information from the video and Web sites to conduct an informal cost-benefit analysis related to a potential new chain store.
- Discuss their charts.
- Pretend they've conducted the cost-benefit analysis at the request of a town's mayor, and write recommendations explaining whether they think a large chain store should be allowed to be located in the town.

Materials Needed

- VCR and TV
- Computer with Internet connection
- One copy of the [Student Handout](#) for each student or pair of students

Estimated Time

4-5 class periods

2. Relevant National Standards

This lesson addresses the following national content standards established by McREL at <http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>:

Civics Standards

- Understands ideas about civic life, politics and government
- Understands the role of diversity in American life and the importance of shared values, political beliefs and civic beliefs in an increasingly diverse American society
- Understands the character of American political and social conflict and factors that tend to prevent or lower its intensity
- Understands issues concerning the disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life
- Understands the formation and implementation of public policy
- Understands issues regarding the proper scope and limits of rights and the relationships among personal, political and economic rights
- Understands how participation in civic and political life can help citizens attain individual and public goals

Economics Standards

- Understands that scarcity of productive resources requires choices that generate opportunity costs
- Understands the roles government plays in the United States economy

Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

(listed at the National Council for the Social Studies Web site:

<http://www.ncss.org/standards/2.0.html>)

- **Individuals, Groups, and Institutions:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups and institutions.
- **Power, Authority and Governance:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority and governance.
- **Production, Distribution and Consumption:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services.
- **Civil Ideals and Practices:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.

3. Related Resources

Wal-Mart official home page (be sure to link to "Investor Relations")

<http://www.Wal-Martstores.com>

The Home Depot official home page (link to "Company Info.")

<http://www.homedepot.com>

Target official home page (link to "Company")

<http://www.target.com/>

Office Depot official home page (link to "Company Info.")

http://www.target.com/target_group/company/company_main.jhtml

Sprawl-Busters

<http://www.sprawl-busters.com>

Hibbing, Minn., Opens A 'Monster' Wal-Mart

http://www.office.com/newscatcher/show_article/1,3806,65_59120,00.html

Ready or Not, Here Comes Wal-Mart

<http://www.norfolk-county.com/users/claytons/Wal-Mart2.html>

Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union's Wal-Mart Dispute Page

<http://www.rwdsu.on.ca/Wal-Mart.htm>

The Benefits of Doing Business Locally

http://www.reclaimdemocracy.org/community_based_business/local_business_benefits.html

4. Method of Activity

1. Ask students to list the names of as many large chain stores as they can think of. They might mention Wal-Mart, K Mart, Target, Home Depot, or Office Depot, just to name a few. Ask them how many of these stores are located in or near their home town. What do they think of these stores? What do their parents or other adults think of these stores?
2. Provide students with a brief introduction to the video by explaining that it's a documentary set in Ashland, Virginia. Ashland was approached by Wal-Mart to open a new store on the town's outskirts. This proposal sparked a significant controversy in the community.
3. Show students the following segments of the video, or have them view the entire program. After viewing, ask them to answer the questions below in a class discussion:

Video segments:

Timecodes	Summary
9:52-11:50	summary of the different points of view, including that of the Pink Flamingos
17:26-18:23	description of Wal-Mart's "saturation strategy"

Questions to answer:

- What is Wal-Mart's "saturation strategy"?

- What is meant by "one-stop shopping," and what role does Wal-Mart play in this type of shopping? Can this type of shopping be done downtown?
- Why are the Pink Flamingos concerned with Wal-Mart's strategies and opposed to an Ashland Wal-Mart?

4. Ask students to define the words "cost" and "benefit." Under what circumstances would they compare the costs and benefits of something? They might mention that they consider costs versus benefits when they're shopping for something expensive or when they're deciding whether to sign up for a club or athletic team.

5. Ask students if, in their own lives, costs and benefits are always measured in terms of money. Can they think of other types of costs and benefits? Inform them that although many people think of costs and benefits strictly in financial terms, a decision can also have social or environmental costs or benefits. Social costs and benefits relate to how a decision will affect social interactions and culture in the place where it is implemented (e.g. how the decision will affect where and how people are able to make new friends or meet old ones; how the decision will affect the town's architecture; how the decision will affect residents' "sense of community"). Environmental costs and benefits relate to how the decision will affect the natural environment (e.g. how the decision will affect levels of pollution or the availability of natural animal and plant habitats).

Note: The definitions above are not strict definitions used by economists but lend themselves well to the issues raised in the video. If you're teaching advanced economics students, inform them that different economists have different ways to define these types of costs and benefits. For example, environmental costs and benefits are often considered a subset of social costs and benefits.

6. If you're teaching high school economics, inform students that social, environmental, and some economic costs are forms of externalities. An externality is "A cost or benefit that's not included in the market price of a good because it's not included in the supply price or the demand price" (from the Economic GLOSSary: http://www.amosWeb.com/cgi-bin/gls_dsp.pl?term=externality). In other words, an externality is a cost or benefit that's a side effect of an action or investment, affecting people or groups of people who have not directly contributed to the investment. In the dog park example below, neighborhood residents would experience costs and benefits from the park even if they did not invest directly in the financing or construction of the park.

7. To illustrate different types of costs and benefits, ask students to imagine that their town or neighborhood council has proposed to convert a vacant lot into a dog park. Some examples of costs and benefits include the following. Can students think of others?

- economic costs: it will cost money to clear the land, put in the grass, and build a fence
- economic benefits: people may bring their dogs into the neighborhood and then shop in local stores; the existence of a park as opposed to a vacant lot may raise local property values
- social costs: barking and other park noise may decrease the neighborhood's peace and quiet and make residents feel "stressed out"
- social benefits: the park may provide a new place to meet people and a renewed sense of neighborhood pride
- environmental costs: dog excrement may pollute the area, including the water supply, if it's not cleaned up
- environmental benefits: grass is generally better than pavement, since it cools the neighborhood and absorbs water that would otherwise run off

8. Explain that businesses, governments and other organizations and individuals often perform cost-benefit analyses when trying to make important decisions. This type of analysis is similar to a pro/con list that students may have made in the past in which they list the pros and cons of making a certain decision. Ask students to explain why they think this type of analysis might be helpful in determining whether to locate a chain store in a town.

9. Ask students to imagine that they live in a town that doesn't yet have a large chain store such as Wal-Mart. The executives of one of these retail companies want to open a store in the town. The Mayor has hired your students to perform a cost-benefit analysis to assess the pros and cons of allowing the chain store to open. They may assume the store is a Wal-Mart, or they may select another retail chain to use as their example.

10. Give each student or pair of students a copy of the [Student Handout](#), which contains a cost-benefit chart. Have them watch the video segments and visit the Web sites listed above. As they go through these resources, ask them to list on the cost-benefit chart the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits that they think would be incurred if this new chain store were allowed to open.

Students should be as specific as possible when creating their charts and should provide numbers and examples from the video and Web resources. For example, in the Economic section, they might state as a cost that, between 1983 and 1993, businesses in Iowa lost more than \$603 million in sales (according to a study cited at <http://www.sprawl-busters.com/caseagainstsprawl.html>) and as a benefit that Wal-Mart contributed \$22.8 million to the state of Iowa in the fiscal year ending 1/31/2001 (according to Wal-Mart's Web site: <http://www.Wal-Martstores.com> - link to "Investor Relations" and "Economic Impact").

Note: Be sure to make students aware that they will most likely not be able to directly compare the numbers they find for the economic costs and benefits. For example, the numbers stated above for Iowa refer to different measurements (sales losses versus state tax contributions) as well as different time periods. It is not likely that students will be able to gather monetary figures that they can directly compare. Instead, when they're drawing their final conclusions about the costs versus benefits (see step 12), they should analyze the significance of the individual figures and try to determine which ones carry the most weight based on the evidence they've seen in the video and Web sites. If they were economists who were seriously studying this problem, they'd have to compare costs and benefits in the same measurements and units. However, finding this type of information would require more advanced research and calculations than is practical for this lesson.

Video Segments:

Timecodes	Summary
9:52-11:50	summary of the different points of view
13:03-17:18	Al Norman's viewpoint (the consultant from Sprawl-Busters)
19:20-23:04	the Mayor and Councilman research the effects of Wal-Mart on a neighboring town
32:34-34:13	Wal-Mart's director of community affairs explains his company's position

34:13-35:19	the professor denies making the claims that appear in the Wal-Mart ad
35:19-36:40	a discussion of the possible economic benefits Wal-Mart will provide
36:40-37:23	a discussion of Wal-Mart's employment situation
40:50-45:11	town council meeting, with a description of possible economic costs and benefits

11. Discuss students' cost-benefit charts as a class. Did they tend to come up with the same costs and benefits for each category, or were there notable differences between students or pairs of students? Ask more advanced students (upper high school) to think about the ways in which the cost-benefit analyses might look different for different towns. What factors do they think might affect whether or not a town benefits from a new chain store? Might some towns suffer greater costs or incur greater benefits than others? Why or why not?

12. Ask students to write their recommendations to the Mayor, expressing their opinions based on their assessment of the cost-benefit analysis. Their letters should provide specific examples from the chart and the resources they've looked at.

5. Assessment Recommendations

Since every class is different, every teacher will assess students in slightly different ways. However, areas of consideration should include the following:

- Participating in class discussions.
- Carefully following all directions.
- Completing the charts with specific facts, figures and opinions they've heard on the video or read on the Web sites.
- Writing recommendations to the Mayor that clearly explain their decision and provide specific examples to justify their opinion.

6. Extensions/Adaptations

- (grades 6-12) Have students list the items they have purchased at large chain stores such as Wal-Mart. Then have them list the things they've bought at independent stores, such as the ones in downtown Ashland. How much of their shopping do they do at large chains versus smaller independent stores? Why do they think they choose certain stores or types of stores over others? If they're not yet old enough to drive, how much does access to transportation affect their shopping decisions? Where do they think they'll shop when their adults, and why?
- (grades 6-12) Have students draw a map of their town or print out from MapQuest (www.mapquest.com) or Yahoo! Maps (<http://maps.yahoo.com>). Ask them to label the locations of the major chain stores, such as Wal-Mart or Home Depot, on the map. Also have them label the locations of as many independently-owned businesses as they can think of, either downtown or in the town's outskirts. If students live in a large city, have them concentrate on their home neighborhood.

Have them use the Internet to research other chain stores that aren't yet located in their town. Ask them to predict which chain stores might be the next to move into their area. They should write paragraphs explaining their predictions and label the possible future store locations on the map.

- (grades 8-12) Have students search an online news source, such as CNN (<http://www.cnn.com>), to find articles about some of the large retail companies. They might type in the keywords Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Target, etc. Ask them to list the types of news stories that have recently been reported about these stores. Then have them choose three stories and write paragraphs summarizing what the articles say about the companies and explaining whether the articles appear to favor or oppose the expansion of these stores into new areas.
- (grades 11-12) Refer students to the segment of the video when an Ashland resident calls a professor to verify her quote in Wal-Mart's newspaper advertisement (34:13-35:19). Ask them to find other examples of academic research being quoted in advertising. They can look in newspapers, magazine or TV ads. Have them record the ad's sponsor, date of publication or airing, and the research it cites. Then ask them how they can verify whether this information is true. Have them conduct research on the Internet or in print resources to find out if the actual research supports the claims made in the advertisement. Discuss the reasons why companies and organizations quote academic research. Do students think the companies have an obligation to verify their claims with the researcher, or is it OK to use the research out of context, as Wal-Mart apparently did in its Ashland ad?

7. Author Bio

Betsy Hedberg is a teacher and freelance curriculum writer who has published lesson plans on a variety of subjects. She received her Secondary Teaching Credential in Social Studies from Loyola Marymount University and her Master of Arts in Geography from UCLA. In addition to curriculum writing, she presents seminars and training sessions to help teachers incorporate the Internet and other technologies into their classrooms. She recently presented a seminar entitled *The World Wide Web Can Help Your Students Think Critically* at the California Council for the Social Studies 1998 annual conference. In 1997, she founded Curriculum Adventures, a curriculum development, publishing and consulting business.

Student Handout

	Costs (what the town loses if Wal-Mart opens)	Benefits (what the town gains if Wal-Mart opens)
Economic		
Social		
Environmental		