



Lesson Plan: "The Costs and Benefits of Licensing in the Economy"

Objective:

Students will analyze the role of licensing and credentials in the economy, evaluating their benefits and costs for individuals, businesses, and society as a whole.

Materials Needed:

- [Game of Thrones clip: Tyrion and Bronn discuss licensing and credentials.](#)
- Handouts summarizing the pros and cons of licensing, with real-world examples (e.g., medical licenses, taxi medallions).
- Data or case studies on industries heavily regulated by licensing.

Lesson Steps:

1. Introduction (10 minutes):

- Introduce the concept of licensing and credentials:
 - Define what licensing is and provide examples from various professions (e.g., healthcare, law, cosmetology).
 - Explain the economic rationale for licensing, including quality assurance and consumer safety.
- Briefly mention controversies, such as barriers to entry and economic inefficiencies.

2. Viewing Clip (5 minutes):

- [Show the Game of Thrones clip where Tyrion and Bronn discuss licensing.](#)
- Set up the context: Relate their discussion to real-world debates about licensing, focusing on its role in creating exclusivity and potential monopolies.

3. Group Discussion (10 minutes):

- Divide students into small groups to discuss:
 - What are the potential benefits of requiring licenses for certain professions?
 - What are the drawbacks or unintended consequences of licensing?
 - How does the *Game of Thrones* example reflect real-world licensing issues?
 - What is the impact on Bronn's value of his new credential (knight)? Why does that credential justify his asking Tyrion for more pay?

4. Concept Application (20 minutes):

- **Case Study Analysis:**
 - Provide real-world examples of licensing and credentials, such as:
 - Taxi medallions in New York City.
 - Medical licenses for healthcare professionals.
 - Tech certifications (e.g., AWS, Microsoft).
 - Ask students to analyze the following for each example:
 - **Benefits:** Improved quality, consumer safety, trust in the profession.
 - **Costs:** Barriers to entry, reduced competition, higher costs for consumers.
 - Discuss how licensing affects wages, job opportunities, and market efficiency.

5. Wrap-Up and Reflection (10 minutes):

- Summarize the key takeaways:
 - Licensing provides consumer protection and professional accountability but can also limit competition and innovation.
- Pose a reflective question: In your future career, how might licensing or credentials impact your opportunities?

6. Activity/Homework (15 minutes):

- **Debate Exercise:**
 - Split the class into two groups:
 - **Pro-Licensing:** Argue that licensing is essential for quality and safety.
 - **Anti-Licensing:** Argue that licensing creates unnecessary barriers and inefficiencies.
 - Each group prepares their arguments and presents a 2-minute case to the class.
 - Facilitate a short discussion on which side they find more persuasive and why.
 - Compare and contrast the desirability of licensing in two professions: electricians and African-style hair braiders.