The Maze Runner

Time required: 2-3 class periods
Suggested Grade Level: 9

Arkansas Standards of Learning – Social Studies

EDM.1.E.1: Evaluate the roles of scarcity, incentives, trade-offs, and opportunity cost in decision making (e.g. PACED decision making model, cost/benefit analysis)

EM.2.E.1: Identify various allocation methods used in different circumstances, countries, and economies (e.g. price, auction, lottery, fiat)

GE.7.E.1: Analyze the role of comparative advantage in trade and global markets using available data and a variety of sources

PFM.8.E.1: Analyze the impact of education, training, and other factors on productivity and income potential (e.g. interpersonal skills, workforce readiness skills, ethics)

Common Core State Standards – Reading, Literature, and Writing

CCSS.ELA – Literacy.RL.9-10.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA – Literacy.RL.9-10.7: Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.

CCSS.ELA – Literacy_CCRA.SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA – Literacy_CCRA.SL.5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCSS.ELA – Literacy.W.9-10.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
Economic Concepts:

**Allocation Method** – method by which goods and services are distributed in an economy

**Benefit** – an advantage or profit gained from something

**Capital** – the stock of equipment and structures used in production

**Comparative Advantage** – ability to produce an item at a lower opportunity cost than another producer

**Cost** – the effort, loss, or sacrifice necessary to achieve or obtain something

**Fiat** – allocation method in which an authority figure decides how resources will be allocated

**Opportunity Cost** – highest value alternative that must be given up when scarce resources are used for one purpose instead of another

**Production Possibilities Curve (PPC)** – diagram showing production possibilities for an economy

**Scarcity** – result of an inability to satisfy unlimited wants with limited resources

**Specialization** – production of a limited variety of products by a person, firm, or region

**Trade-Off** – a choice that involves giving up one thing to have more of another

**Traditional Economy** – economic system in which traditions, customs, and beliefs shapes the goods and services produced, as well as the rules and manner of their distribution
Activity #1: The Role of Capital

Baggers – guards/police that enforce rules and maintain the peace

Builders – architects; construction workers; carpenters

Med-jacks – emergency medical responders

Runners – run through maze and avoid Grievers

Question: List the capital resources needed for each job? Is training necessary to complete the tasks? What skills/training do you have to prepare you for each occupation? How would the salaries compare among occupations?

Activity #2: Groupwork and Presentation

Recall the four occupations listed in Activity 1: Baggers, Builders, Med-jacks, and Runners. Split the class into 4 groups and create collages to describe the social and economic role that each occupation fulfills in the economy of the Glade. Students must present these collages to the class explaining their selected decorations as well as their reasoning. Materials needed for this activity include:

- Posterboard
- Markers/Pens
- Glue
- Construction paper (various colors)
- Diverse selection of magazines/mailings
- Scissors
- Glitter/stickers/accessories

Part b. Consider a longer project where groups illustrate the same concepts/themes using a digital platform of their choosing.
Activity 3: Cost-Benefit Analysis

In The Maze Runner, Thomas and the other Glade members must decide if they should remain in the Glade where their subsistence needs are met, or risk everything and attempt to escape through a portal found in the maze. Help them decide by filling in this chart with some of the advantages and disadvantages of their two possible choices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advantages or Good Points</td>
<td>Stay Within the Glade</td>
<td>Attempt Escape through Portal</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantages or Bad Points</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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**Writing Assignment:** Explain your decision in your own words using examples from the chart above.
Activity 4: Allocation Methods

There are many ways in which resources can be allocated. These allocation methods include:

- First Come, First Served
- Lottery
- Contest
- Auction
- Personal Characteristic
- Authority/Fiat
- Voting/Majority Rules

Question: Assume you were designated as the central planner for the Glade. Resources such as food, water, clothing, housing, and medical supplies must be allocated among the population. What allocation method would you employ for distributing these resources among the people? Please explain your answer by referencing the text.

Activity #5: Production Possibilities

Assume the two main goods produced in the Glade include Bread and Fruit salad. The three producers of these goods include Frypan, Winston, and Zart. Each individual can produce a limited amount of bread loaves or fruit salads in a day (but not both). For example, Frypan can produce 1 bread loaf OR 5 fruit salads per day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bread</th>
<th>Fruit Salads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frypan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winston</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zart</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions:

Create a Production Possibilities Curve for the production of fruit salad and bread in the Glade.

Which producer has a comparative advantage in bread production? Please explain.

Which producer has a comparative advantage in producing fruit salad? Please explain.
**Part b.** Now assume a fourth worker is added to production. Individual production levels are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bread</th>
<th>Fruit Salads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frypan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuck</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winston</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zart</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Questions:

Show the effect this increase in labor would have on the Production Possibilities Curve for the Glade using your diagram from part a.

Assuming labor must be divided between the two types of production, which individuals would specialize in bread production? Why?

Which individuals would specialize in fruit salad production? Why?

For additional practice with production possibility curves, see the Federal Reserve lesson at [www.stlouisfed.org/education_resources/production-possibilities](http://www.stlouisfed.org/education_resources/production-possibilities).
Activity #6: Crossword Puzzle

Complete the crossword of economic concepts using the descriptions below.

Across
1. Production of a limited variety of products by a person, firm, or region.
2. Describes a choice one makes to give up one thing for another.
3. The economic system observed in the Glade based on traditions, customs, and beliefs.
4. The result of an inability to satisfy unlimited wants with limited resources.
5. An advantage or profit gained from engaging in some given activity.
6. Curve showing possible production combinations for an economy.

Down
1. Allocation method in which an authority figure decides how to distribute resources.
2. Method by which goods and services are distributed in an economy.
3. The ability to produce an item at a lower opportunity cost than another producer.
4. The stock of equipment and structures used in production.
5. The effort, loss, or sacrifice necessary to achieve or obtain something.
6. The highest valued alternative that must be given up when scarce resources are used for one purpose instead of another.
Activity #7: Media Platforms

Watch *The Maze Runner* on video. Does the video portrayal of Thomas differ from the one illustrated in the book? Please explain in your own words.