Episode 3: Building Futures

Lesson Title: Living the Entrepreneurial Spirit

Author: Whitney Gaskill

Episode Description:

Building Futures: Entrepreneurship & Identity traces the entrepreneurial spirit of Coloradans who forged economic pathways despite discrimination, limited capital, and systemic barriers. These stories reveal how enterprise, labor, and innovation built communities and created lasting cultural legacies.

Throughout the episode, children's voices—including students from immigrant families, Indigenous, Black, Latino, and neurodivergent youth—reflect on work and identity, connecting historical entrepreneurship to modern opportunities. Utilizing archival materials and visual sequences, Episode 3 emphasizes that Colorado's economic development has always been driven by diverse individuals who carved opportunity from challenge.

Episode Inquiry Questions:

1. How did early entrepreneurship in Colorado reflect the diverse backgrounds of the Indigenous Peoples and others who come to Colorado?
2. What cultural factors and systemic barriers influenced the development of the entrepreneurial spirit in Colorado communities?

Lesson Description:

Building Futures: Entrepreneurship & Identity highlights some of Colorado's early entrepreneurs and how they turned difficulties into opportunities. In this lesson, students will participate in a short simulation to experience what it is like to start a new business and then break into groups to do further research into some of

the interesting entrepreneurs featured in the video. The lesson culminates in the creation of a poem about the entrepreneurial spirit in Colorado history.

Grade Level/Time Needed:

4th grade/1 - 1.5 hrs

Lesson Inquiry Questions:

1. What are some examples of choices, opportunity cost, and systemic barriers that a person may face starting a business, today or in the past?
2. What were some systemic barriers faced by the person you are researching? What choices did they make as they strove to balance opportunity costs? How did they overcome them or even turn them into opportunities?

Supporting Questions:

1. What is the definition of opportunity cost?
2. What does it feel like to start a business?

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Analyze scenarios of choices, including opportunity cost.
2. Understand that entrepreneurs balance opportunities, choices and even systemic barriers to build new businesses.
3. Name some of Colorado's early entrepreneurs, what obstacles they faced, and how they overcame them.

Background Knowledge / Contextual Paragraph for Teachers:

In the decades following Colorado's territorial and early statehood era, entrepreneurship was rarely a level playing field. Discriminatory laws, exclusionary practices, and limited access to capital meant that immigrants and people of color built businesses and community institutions against real structural headwinds—yet they did so with remarkable ingenuity. Chin Lin Sou, one of Denver's most prominent Chinese American residents, rose to leadership in the local mining and railroad economy at a time when anti-Chinese sentiment and

exclusionary laws limited opportunities for Chinese immigrants across the American West. Formerly enslaved cowboys like Nat Love, and entrepreneurs like Paul W. Stewart, carved out economic and cultural space for Black Coloradans, including preserving and teaching the often-overlooked history of Black cowboys. Amache Ochinee Prowers, a Cheyenne woman married into a prominent ranching family, navigated both Cheyenne and Victorian-era Anglo-American worlds to help build a successful ranching operation on the Eastern Plains. Frances Wisebart Jacobs, a Jewish immigrant known as Denver's "Mother of Charities," helped found what would become the United Way and addressed the health crises facing many Jewish immigrants who came to Colorado seeking treatment for tuberculosis. Together, these stories help students see that entrepreneurship in Colorado's history was never separate from questions of identity, discrimination, and community need since the individuals featured in Episode 3 made their choices against a backdrop of far higher stakes and fewer options than many entrepreneurs face today.

This lesson allows students to explore personal finance standards alongside learning history. Some useful definitions include:

- Choice- In economics, choice refers to the decision-making process of selecting one option from a set of alternatives
- Opportunity Cost- the values of the next best opportunity you give up when you make a choice

Building Background Knowledge for the Student

In Episode 3 you saw some early pioneers who turned obstacles into opportunities to create businesses or charities. First, you will get a chance to understand what it is like to start a business, then you will learn more about these important people.

Lesson Sources:

1.  Biography of Chin Lin Sou. Source: History Colorado.

2.  If students are most interested in Nat Love, invite them to explore the legacy of Paul W. Stewart, an enterprising barber who used his barbershop to tell the history of black cowboys.

3.  "Understanding Amache: Using Archaeology to Understand a Victorian-Era Cheyenne Woman," from Colorado Magazine explores how an archaeological dig helped reveal more about Amache Ochinee Prowers.

4.  Biography of Frances Wisebart Jacobs. Source: Colorado Women's Hall of Fame.

Lesson Materials Needed:

1. Printable materials for the Lemonade Stand Simulation (one per group)
2. Copies of all biographies
3. KWL Chart

Lesson Instruction:

1. Inform students that, just like they saw in Episode 3, many people have come to Colorado to take advantage of opportunities and build businesses that improve their own lives and that of others. Tell them that they will get a chance to experience what it is like to start a business through a lemonade stand simulation.

2. Break up the class into groups of four and pass out the printable materials for the Lemonade Stand Simulation (ledger sheet, set up game board, option cards, and spinner).
3. Inform students that like some early Coloradans, they will be building a business with limited resources. Each team begins with $20, as noted at the top of their ledger sheet.
4. Next, tell students that they are going to make some choices about how to set up their business. Give them time to decide which card from the option cards they will place onto their set up game board (options go in the corresponding color rectangle). The price for each item is noted on the card and should be reflected in the ledger.
5. Once students have decided how they would like to set up their business, they can use a paperclip and pencil to take turns spinning to see how much money they earn or lose in the course of having their lemonade stand open. They will also keep track of the community bonuses they have generated by tracking stars in their ledgers.
6. Bring students back together as a class to debrief some of the choices and opportunity costs they experienced in the game and their feelings that arose as different scenarios came up in the game. This lesson requires students to turn and talk with partners, review good practices for this protocol at the Teacher Toolkit.
7. Ask students to identify some barriers to success they experienced in the game. Ask them to imagine what other barriers or opportunities that could have come up that didn't come up in the game.
8. Inform students that some barriers run deeper than what they experienced in the simulation. Ask them to think back to what they learned in the episode and ask them to identify systemic barriers. Guide them until they understand that racism or discrimination was a barrier that many of the immigrants and entrepreneurs coming to Colorado faced.
9. Ask students to list some of the entrepreneurs they met in the episode. Once you have a running list posted somewhere in the classroom ask students to turn and talk with a partner to discuss the following questions:

a. Which entrepreneur from the film would you most like to meet and why?
b. What would you ask them?

10. Inform students that they will now get a chance to further research some of the people featured in the film.
11. Break students into groups based on their choice for whom they'd like to research further. Once students have made their choices, give them their chosen biography.
12. Have students use the KWL chart to guide their research. Each group should report to the group at the end of their research period by answering the following questions:
    a. What was something new (and interesting) you learned that wasn't featured in the episode?
    b. What systemic barriers did this person face?
    c. What are some choices that they made? What might it have cost them?
    d. What is an example of them turning an obstacle into an opportunity?
    e. How did their original business or idea grow and become something more in their community?
13. Close by discussion the following questions:
    a. Earlier in the lesson you were asked to come up with a question you would have liked to ask one of these historical figures. Based on your research, how do you think they would have answered it?
    b. Today, you experienced what it might be like to start a lemonade stand, but everyone we researched developed their ideas based on needs they saw in their community. Can you think of a need that exists in your community that you could solve with entrepreneurship?

Strategy Instruction Differentiation:

1. Consider how you might create heterogeneous groups for the Lemonade Stand Simulation.

2. During the biography research part of the lesson, allow students to choose to research independently, with a partner, or with the help of a teacher.

Assessment:

Ask students to revisit the biography that they researched and highlight key phrases that they can use in a poem about the entrepreneurial spirit in Colorado history. This is kind of a reverse version of blackout poetry which you can learn about at the Writing Cooperative.

Allow students to combine their own feeling words from the simulation and their highlighted words from the biography to create a poem that shows what they have learned about the entrepreneurial spirit in Colorado's history.

2022 Social Studies Standards:

- SS.4.1.GLE 1.EO.d: Identify and describe how political and cultural groups have affected the development of the region. Included but not limited to: African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Indigenous Peoples, Europeans settlers and religious groups.
- SS.4.5.GLE 1.EO.a: Define choice and opportunity cost.
- SS.4.5.GLE 1.EO.c: Analyze scenarios of choices including opportunity cost.

2020 Reading, Writing, and Communicating Standards:

- RI.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- W.4.3.D Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.

Extension Activities:

1. If you want to spend more time exploring the idea of entrepreneurship, perhaps give students a chance to develop a business plan based on ideas they came up with to address needs in their community.
2. Here are some examples of kid-friendly business plans:
    a. Business Plan Template for Kids
    b. Business Plan Template

Additional Resources:

- Learn more about the legacy of healing by Jewish immigrants to Denver in this video: Tuberculosis brought Jewish immigrants to Colorado; They Left a Legacy of Healing.
- A biography of Chin Lin Sou. Source: Denver Public Library.
- Paul W. Stewart African American History Collection. Source: The University of Northern Colorado.
- Frances Wisebart Jacobs - Mother of Charities. Source: Great Colorado Women at Rocky Mountain PBS.

Understanding Amache: Using Archaeology to Understand a Victorian-Era Cheyenne Woman. By Bonnie J. Clark.
March 5, 2021

Abridged for this curriculum in September 2025

Taken around 1870, the photograph portrait of Amache Ochinee Prowers is a window into her complex world. Amache's direct gaze at the camera exudes a confident strength. She looks at home in her Anglo surroundings, her garb fitting for a white woman of that era, complete with heavy jewelry and a ruffled dress. Yet the careful observer might note that she lacks the foundation for proper women's dress of that time: a corset. This, and her distinctly Indigenous facial features, let us know that she was no ordinary wife and mother. Amache was a full-blood member of the Cheyenne nation.



Born in the mid-1840s, Amache was the daughter of Lone Bear, also known as Ochinee (One-eye) / O'kenehe', a Southern Cheyenne traditional leader. Once semi-sedentary farmers in territories on the edges of the plains, the Cheyenne became increasingly mobile when they acquired horses in the 1700s. By the time Amache was born, the Cheyenne were premier bison hunters and valued participants in the fur trade. Typically, men hunted the bison while women engaged in the labor-intensive task of turning hides into robes. This involved staking and scraping hides with a series

of stone tools, including the flesher: a stone (or, later, sometimes metal) blade set in an elk horn handle. Fleshers were such valued tools that they were often passed from mother to daughter. Women also spent much of their time gathering the wild plants of the prairie, both for food and as raw materials important for products like medicines and dyes. The physical tools for that endeavor were digging sticks and baskets, but most critical was an intimate knowledge of the landscape and resources of the prairie—something that was also passed through the generations.

As the daughter of a community leader, Amache would have been well trained in the arts of Cheyenne women. That social position also put her in contact with individuals who sought out her father. One of these was John Prowers, a young Anglo-American man from Missouri who traded on the Santa Fe Trail circuit. When Amache was a teen, Prowers began to court her. He began the series of gifts needed to make the courtship legitimate, a process that could take up to three years. However, this connection with Amache was worthwhile for Prowers as it would secure a solid connection with her tribe, and with it a source of valuable buffalo robes to trade. Amache and John Prowers were married in 1861 and moved to Bent's Fort, an important trade center.

In 1867 John Prowers built on his trading experience by opening a store in Boggsville, Colorado. Like other sites on the Santa Fe Trail, Boggsville represents a crossroads—geographically, culturally, economically.
Much of Amache's time at Boggsville was likely devoted to her immediate family. When she and John moved to the settlement they had two young daughters, but the family quickly grew by three more children. Added to her duties as a mother

were those of a hostess. Hundreds of travelers made their way to Boggsville during that last decade before the railroad was built beside the Santa Fe Trail. Because John's store was located in the Prowers house, Amache would often host these travelers. She also hosted her own visiting Cheyenne family, her band pitching their tipis next to her house for a time before they moved on.

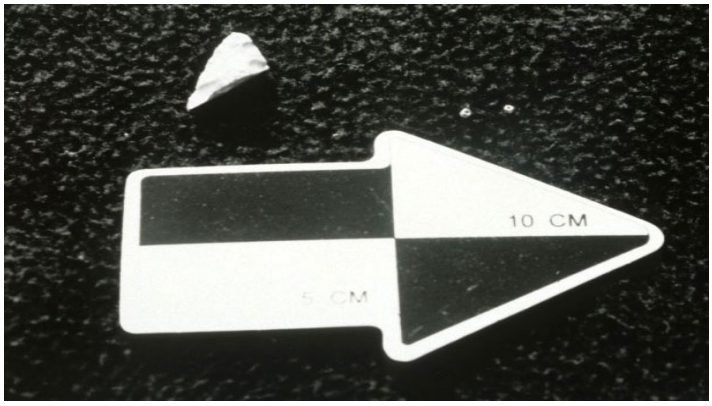
Amache lived at a time of great change for the Cheyenne and for the country. The choices she made—including the one to marry outside her tribe but to continue relations with her tribespeople—placed her in a delicate position. If individual lives can contribute to our understanding of history, Amache's is certainly one of importance.

But history alone cannot tell her story. Although Amache could fluently speak three languages—Cheyenne, English, and Spanish—she could not read or write. To truly understand her as a person, we must look beyond traditional historical documents and look at other sources.

This is where archaeology, or the study of objects, comes in. As someone who could not write down her own story, studying the objects Amache left behind becomes very important.

A series of excavations (digs) both inside and surrounding the Prowers house at Boggsville have yielded many important artifacts. While photographs and documents may show her as a wife who fully assimilated into the life and culture of her white husband, the objects tell a different story.

Artifacts recovered from archaeological digs at the Prowers house include the tip of a stone tool and two tiny glass beads of a kind often traded to Plains groups like the Cheyenne. Stone tools and debris from sharpening those tools were recovered from inside the Prowers house.



These objects match the stories and memories Mary Prowers Hull, Amache's oldest daughter, shared with *The Colorado Magazine* in 1945. She described Cheyenne foods Amache made or gathered—her use of wild plums and chokecherries in preserves, pickling prickly pears, and gathering fresh wild greens like lamb's quarters. Amache also used wild plants important in Cheyenne medical practices.

Small glass beads found throughout the house and yard suggest that Amache probably continued to both produce and wear beaded clothing. Her children recalled that when her family visited, Amache wore traditional Cheyenne clothing. Some of the recovered beads could have dropped from the clothing she wore on those occasions.

The artifacts found at the Boggsville site help us see Amache Prowers as a woman adapting to a new way of life, while also working to keep her cultural practices and connections alive.

Original article: Understanding Amache: The Archaeobiography of a Victorian-Era Cheyenne Woman. Source: History Colorado Center.

CHIN LIN SOU

When: 1836–1894

Where: Born in China, settled in Denver, Colorado.

Why Important: Chin Lin Sou was a leader in the Chinese American community and a successful businessperson in Denver.



CHIN LIN SOU

Chin Lin Sou was born in 1836 in southern China. Chin heard stories of opportunities in the American West. He moved to the United States in 1859 to work on the transcontinental railroad.

Chin was fluent in Chinese and English. He was also over six feet tall! Because he was so tall, he was able to get a better job on the railroad as an overseer. The transcontinental railroad was completed on May 10, 1869. It meant better communication and travel for Americans. But it also meant the end of work for the Chinese laborers. Many, including Chin, left to look for work in gold mines.

Chin moved to Black Hawk, Colorado in 1871. He was one of the first Chinese immigrants in Colorado. Chin became a supervisor in a mine. Miners toiled all day and rarely found gold. As a supervisor, however, Chin earned good money. With the money he earned, he was finally able to bring his wife to Colorado. They had been apart for ten years! He became very rich when he discovered two profitable mines and sold them.

Chin and his family eventually moved to Denver. During this time, Chinese workers faced discrimination. Many Euro-Americans thought that the Chinese were stealing American jobs. Anti-Chinese violence erupted in many cities, including Denver. Using his fluent English, Chin tried to find jobs for fellow Chinese but it was difficult. In 1882 the U.S. government made it even harder. It passed a law prohibiting Chinese immigrants from becoming citizens, which meant they could not defend themselves in court.

Chin opened a successful trading company in Denver. The company imported food, clothing, and furniture from China. He became a well-known leader and was called the "Mayor of Chinatown." Chin fell ill and died in Denver on August 10, 1894. His children also became leaders in the Chinese community of Colorado. Many of his descendants still live in the Denver area. Chin was honored with a stained-glass portrait in the old Supreme Court room in the Colorado State Capitol.

Sources:

Adapted from "Chin Lin Sou: A Pioneer in More Ways than One." By Laura Perille, Colorado Historical Society.

"Chin Lin Sou." Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chin_Lin_Sou

"Hall of Fame Stained Glass (Rotunda)." Colorado State Capitol. Colorado State Capitol Virtual Tour. http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/doit/archives/cap/rotunda.htm

Grinstead, Steve and Ben Fogelberg, eds. Western Voices: 125 Years of Colorado Writing. Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2004.

Origin of the Black American West Museum & Heritage Center



Paul Wilbur Stewart was born in 1925 in Clinton, Iowa, where Stewart's family was one of only a few African American families in the county. Growing up, his white playmates told him he had to play the "Indian" when they played “Cowboys and Indians” because there was no such thing as a Black cowboy. Paul joined the Navy after high school and served his country during World War II. After serving, he earned a certificate from Moler Barber College in 1947 and worked as a barber for more than a decade.

In the early 1960s, Paul traveled to Denver to visit his cousin Earl Mann, the first Black legislator in Colorado. While Mann was showing his cousin around the city, Paul noticed a Black man dressed in full cowboy attire: boots, chaps, gun belt, spurs, and cowboy hat. Paul dismissed the cowboy due to his past interactions with friends, popular culture, and history books. To Paul’s surprise, Mann explained that the man was a well-known rancher and that this was not an uncommon sight in Colorado. Paul would come to learn that Black cowboys were often taken out of history—a mistake Paul would seek to correct.

The Black American West Museum & Heritage Center grew out of Stewart’s personal passion for collecting materials that would document the rich cultural

heritage of those African American heroes and everyday people who settled the West.

As Stewart's collection quickly outgrew his barbershop, the Black American West Foundation was established in 1971. At this time, the museum operated partly out of Stewart's barbershop and the other part out of an old saloon in Five Points. Around 1973, urban renewal pushed the museum out of the saloon and into Clayton College, and in 1975, Stewart closed his barbershop to become a full-time educator and curator. The museum successfully operated out of Clayton College for close to 10 years before it moved back to the heart of Five Points. A major factor for this move was the difficulty visitors had in finding the museum.



Paul’s knowledge and collection became so established at schools, libraries, churches, and universities that he began to be invited to lecture about Black Western history. More notable interviews took place on television programs, including Good Morning America and The Today Show.

During the latter part of the 1970s, Paul worked with the Denver Public School system where he taught students about the history of Black cowboys and the

tales their history books left out. He brought in artifacts and shared stories with the kids; he also taught them the secret cowboy handshake, which became his trademark.

In addition to preserving these histories, today the museum also works to protect and interpret Dearfield, a historic African American agricultural colony founded by O.T. (Oliver Toussaint) Jackson in the early 1900s. Located 90 miles northeast of Denver, Dearfield represented a powerful “back to the land” movement and stood as a symbol of Black self-sufficiency and perseverance in the face of systemic challenges.

While the museum is widely known for celebrating the legacy of the Black cowboy, our storytelling goes far beyond the ranch. We honor the miners, soldiers, ranchers, homesteaders, educators, blacksmiths, lawmen, and entrepreneurs—African Americans who played vital roles in building and shaping the Western frontier.



Original Source: [Black American West Museum & Heritage Center]

FRANCES WISEBART JACOBS

When: 1843-1892

Where: Central City and Denver

Why Important: She helped establish the Jewish Hospital Association of Colorado, now called National Jewish Hospital.



http://www.cogreatwomen.org/jacobs.htm

FRANCES WISEBART JACOBS

Frances Wisebart Jacobs was born March 29, 1843 in Kentucky to Bavarian immigrants. The family later moved to Cincinnati, Ohio where her father Leon Wisebart worked as a tailor. Frances and her six siblings attended public schools. She married Abraham Jacobs in 1863.

The couple moved to Central City, Colorado, and had three children: Benjamin, Evelyn, and a child who died early. Benjamin became a lawyer and Evelyn became a teacher.

In 1870, the family moved to Denver. Frances saw a lot of poverty, suffering, and sickness in the Jewish Community and wanted to help. In 1872, she founded the Hebrew Ladies' Relief Society. However, Frances soon saw that people from all backgrounds were affected by the same issues. So, she formed the Denver Ladies' Relief Society. Then she founded the first free kindergarten in Denver, and later the Charity Organization Society, later called United Way. Jacobs became known as Denver's "mother of charities."

In addition, Frances helped people suffering from tuberculosis. She visited patients and brought them food, clothing, and house supplies. She was not afraid to touch a sick person and did not flinch at the sight of blood. Jacobs worked to create a hospital for tuberculosis in order to treat the large numbers of patients living in the Denver area.

On October 9, 1892, the Jewish Hospital Association of Colorado was founded to treat tuberculosis - her dream came true! Frances died one month later. The Hospital was named the Frances Jacobs Hospital in her honor. In 1900 the name was changed again to the National Jewish Hospital. The hospital is located today at Colfax and Colorado Boulevard in Denver; it still specializes in tuberculosis.

KWL Chart

Name: _____

Date: _____

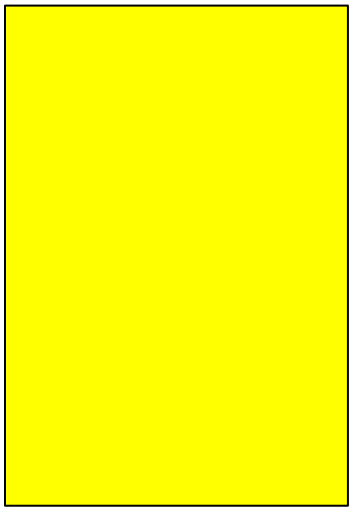
Topic: _____

Know	Wonder	Learned
What do you think you already know about this topic?	What do you wonder about this topic? Write your questions below.	After you complete your project, write what you learned.

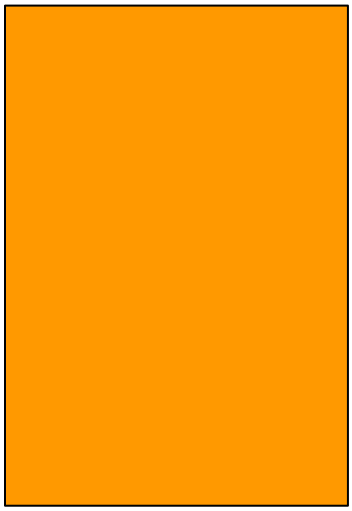
Setting Up Your Lemonade Stand:

Place one option card on each rectangle.

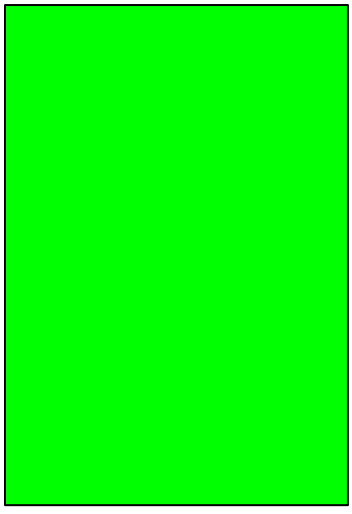
Ingredients:



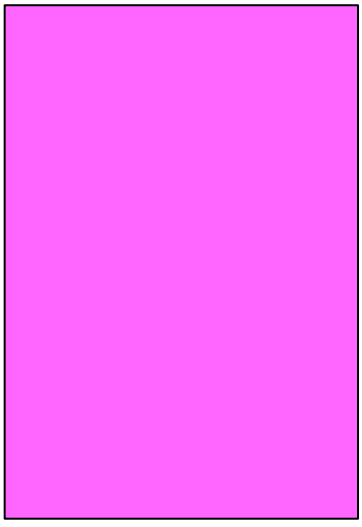
Materials:



Marketing/Advertising:



Pricing:

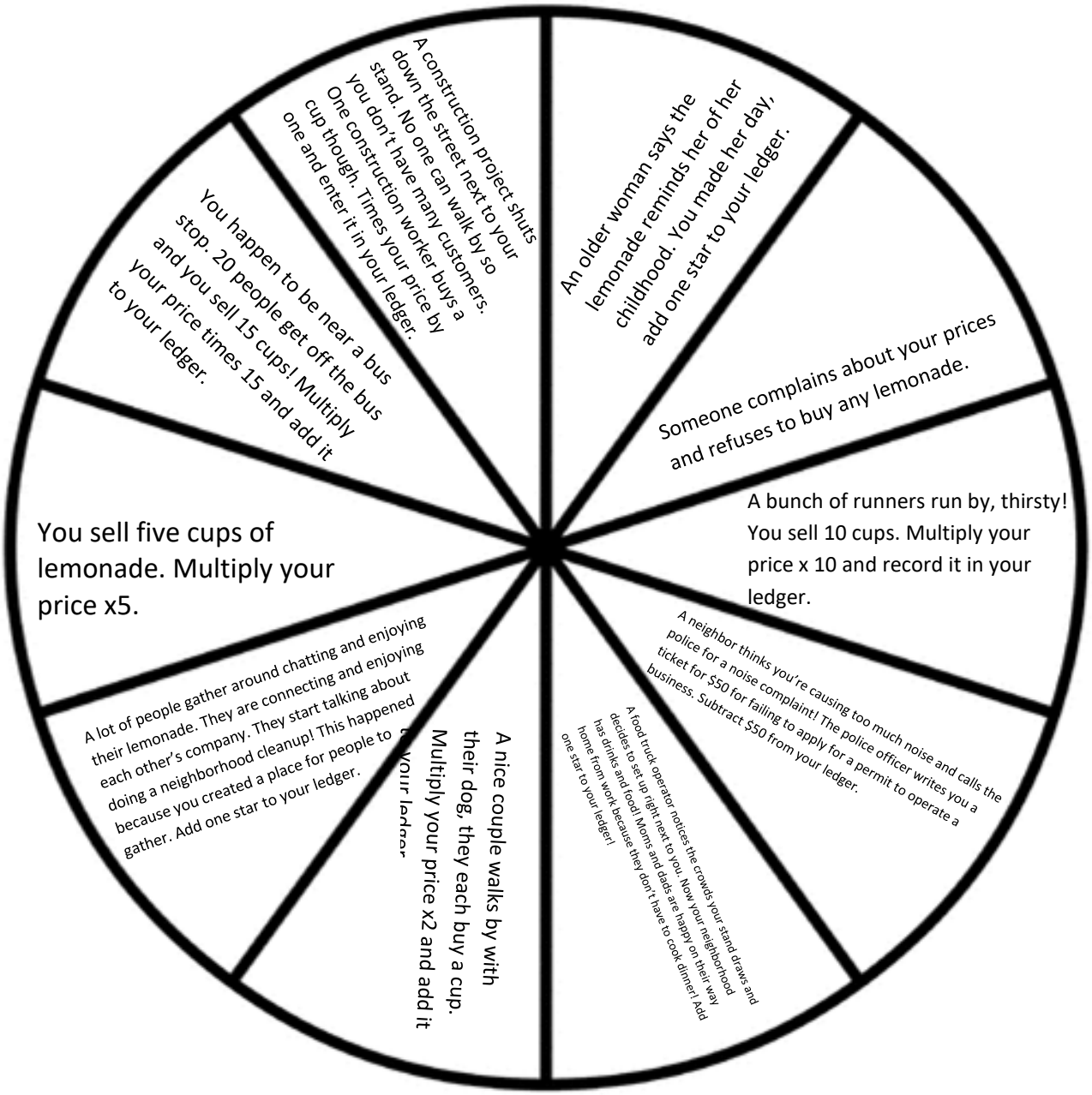


Option Cards:

You decide to splurge on organic lemons and pure cane sugar for the healthiest, highest quality product. You figure people will pay more for a better lemonade! Subtract $10	You want to make fresh squeezed lemonade, but you buy the most affordable lemons and sugar you can! You can still call it fresh squeezed, even if it's not organic! Subtract $5	You decide to buy a big tub of lemonade powder mix. It won't be fresh, but you can make a lot with a little amount! Subtract $2
You borrow a table from your mom for free. You buy a really cute lemon tablecloth, lemon napkins, lemon cups, and yellow straws! Subtract $10	You borrow a table from your mom for free. You buy affordable, recyclable plastic cups. Subtract $5.	You borrow a table from your mom and make a sign that says, "Save the Earth- Bring Your Own Cup" Subtract $0
You design a sign on your computer and go to the local library to have it printed. Subtract $2	You paint a really nice sign yourself with paints you already had. You spill some paint, so your mom charges you $1 of your allowance. Subtract $1	You ask your friend to run around and tell people about the lemonade stand. They work for free, but you have to give them some lemonade. Subtract $0
This is some good lemonade! You ask for $5 a cup!	You want a nice fair price, not too high and not too low! You ask for $2 a cup!	You want EVERYONE to buy some! You figure, if it's cheap, they might even buy more than one cup! You ask for 50 cents per cup!

What Will Happen:

Use a paperclip and pencil in the center of the spinner to take turns and see what will happen. The game ends after 8 spins no matter what!



Your Ledger to Keep Track of Your Budget:

Action	Value	Community Bonuses (add a star for each one you earn)
Starting Budget	$20	
Balance AFTER setting up your business:		
Start to add or subtract from your budget after every turn. Record the action and whether it adds or subtracts from your total.		
Ending Budget:		(total number of stars)