



# **PRE-SIMULATION ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS**

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Share these vocabulary words with students to help them deepen their engagement with the civics content in *Lives in Balance*.

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The annotated version of a fictional letter from the President to the Deputy Secretary of Commerce spelling out economic goals to prioritize in the Coalition meetings.

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The annotated version of New Mexico's fictional revenue projections, as impacted by the pandemic.

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### **USA GDP GROWTH CHART 10**

The annotated version of the fictional graph that shows how the pandemic is projected to impact GDP in the U.S.

### **NAVAJO NATION 11**

A U.S. map showing an overlay of Navajo Nation territory.

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You and students can use this rubric to assess data-driven decision-making before, during, and after *Lives in Balance*.

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Use this simple activity to prime students for noticing how their emotions influence their interactions and decisions in *Lives in Balance*.

To view a black and white, printer-friendly version of this packet, click [here](#).

The vocabulary words below will be helpful for students to know prior to playing *Lives in Balance*.

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## ARTICLE 1, SECTION 8

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A part of the Constitution that says Congress has the power to regulate commerce between the U.S. and foreign nations, among states, and with Native American tribes.

## CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)

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A part of the federal Department of Health and Human Services; works to protect people from health threats.

## COALITION

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An alliance of two or more people or groups who agree to work together temporarily to achieve a common goal. In this simulation, the fictional Southwest States **Coalition** is made up of four states: California, Arizona, New Mexico and Nevada.

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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An executive department of the federal government focused on economic growth and development.

## INTERSTATE COMMERCE

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The purchase, sale, or exchange of commodities, money, or goods between different states, regulated by the federal government.

## COMMERCE LETTER

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Secretary of Commerce  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20230

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author of the  
letter works.**

Dear Secretary,

As we both have discussed recently, the on-going coronavirus pandemic has impacted our economy in devastating ways. I am pleased to see the opening of our country start to take place. This is positive for our country and our great citizens.

I ask that you and your team continue to support all states in the forward progress of opening. While we hope they continue to do so under the guidance of the CDC Guidelines, it is imperative that we focus on improving individual states' economies at this time.

Regarding the opening of Major League Baseball in Arizona and the National Football League in Nevada, these deals are especially important to our economy and the morale of our nation. Please do everything in your power to assist the states in making these deals happen.

You have this Administration's full support in these endeavors. Keep us in the loop if your team requires any assistance.

Sincerely,  
President of the United States  
  
cc: Deputy Secretary of Commerce

**This is the title of  
the author of the  
letter. The title tells  
you what they do.**

This graphic contains fictional data and is intended for educational purposes only.

## NEW MEXICO FEDERAL FUNDS LETTER

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

New Mexico Governor  
490 Old Sante Fe Trail Room 400  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

**This is where the  
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letter works.**

Dear Governor,

We are in receipt of your request for coronavirus funding related to medical needs for residents of New Mexico and the tribal lands.

We understand the severity of the matter and are actively looking at avenues to provide you with funding support. We are investigating the potential use of a grant to make the delivery of funds as easy as possible.

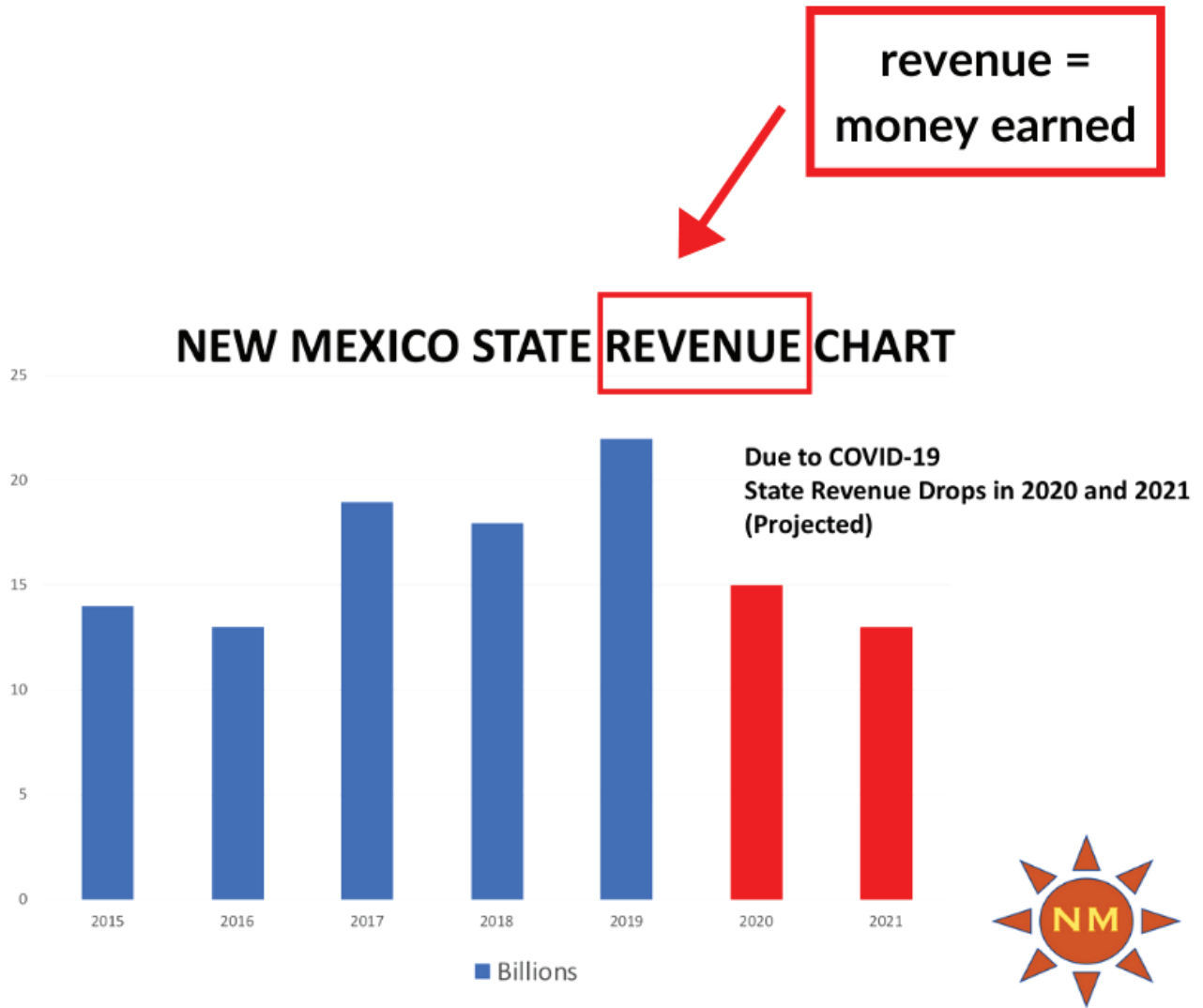
We appreciate your patience as we work through the funding avenues.

Sincerely,  
Director, Office of Management and Budget

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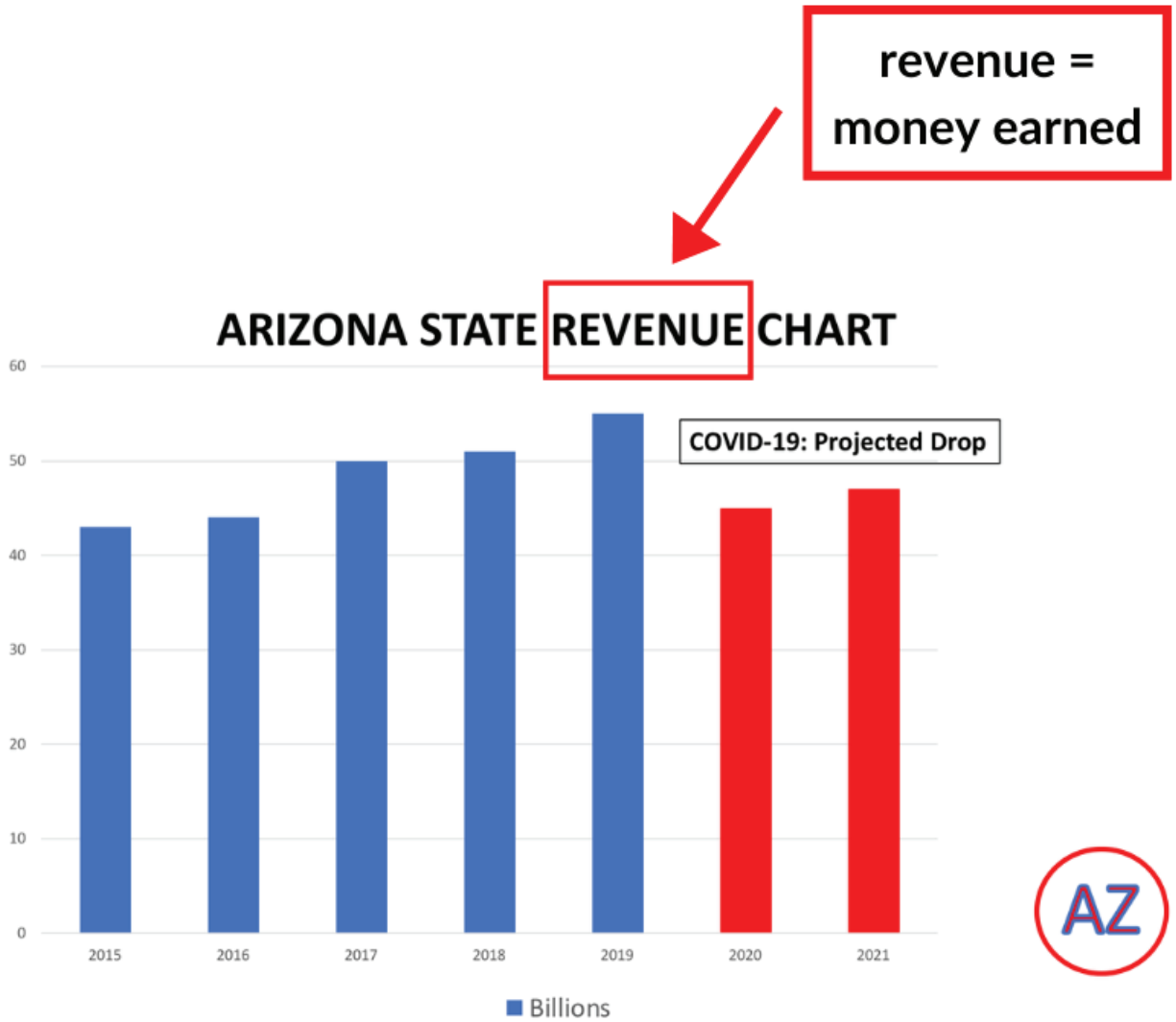
## NEW MEXICO STATE REVENUE CHART



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## ARIZONA STATE REVENUE CHART

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## SOUTHWEST STATES UNEMPLOYMENT CHART

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**Unemployment Rate = the percentage of people looking for work who are unable to find it**



Southwest States Coalition: **Unemployment Rate** - Virus Impact (Last 2 Months)



Note: Rates shown are a percentage of the labor force. Data refer to place of residence. Estimates for the current month are subject to revision the following month.

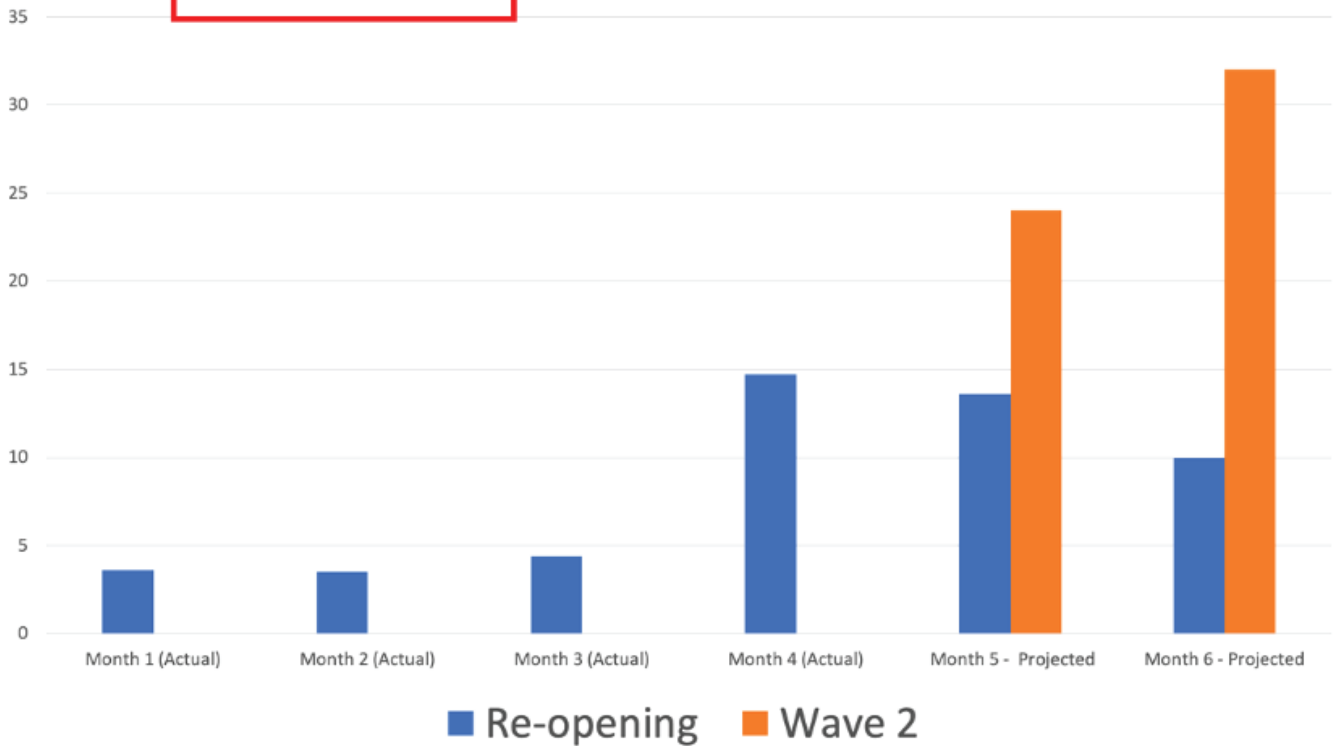


## USA UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

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**Unemployment Rate = the percentage of people looking for work who are unable to find it**

**USA: Unemployment Rate** - Reopening vs. Virus Impact (Projection for Wave 2)



Note: Rates shown are a percentage of the labor force. Data refer to place of residence. Estimates for the current month are subject to revision the following month.

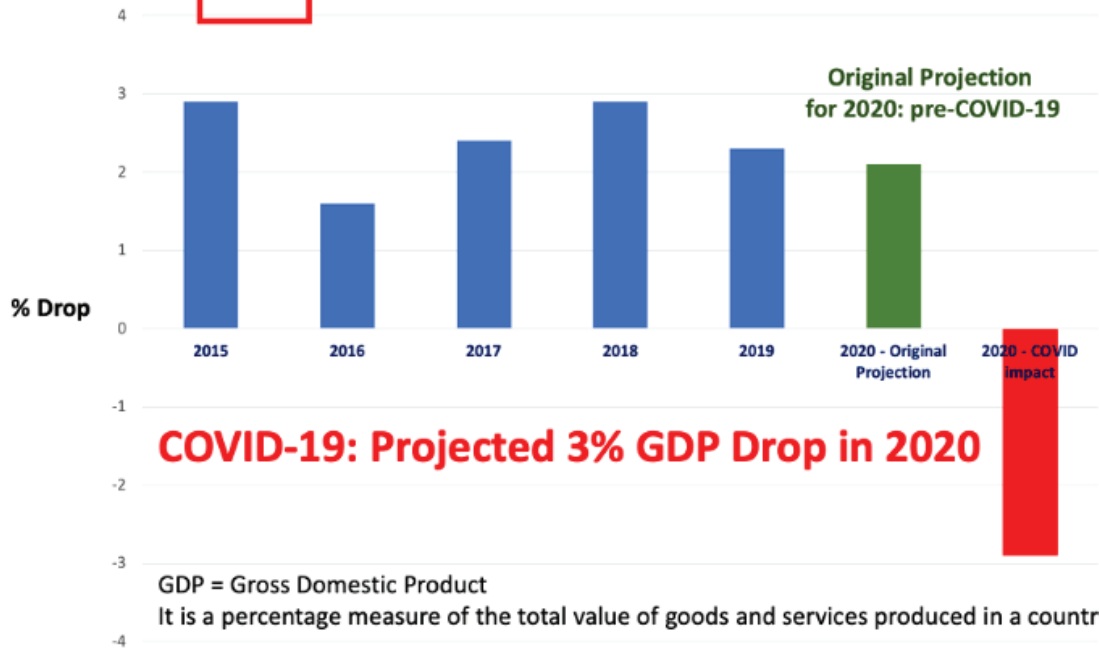
## USA GDP GROWTH CHART

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**GDP = Gross Domestic Product**

The GDP is a measurement of how healthy our economy is. If the GDP goes up, that's a good sign!

### USA **GDP** GROWTH – SHARP DROP DUE TO PANDEMIC



## NAVAJO NATION



|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>THEME</b>        | <b>Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)</b>   |
| <b>OVERVIEW</b>     | <p>Work with students to agree upon a set of key norms that are important to everyone to observe during an interactive and unscripted play session that happens over video. Having agreements in place before the simulation happens can help build connection and investment and prevent misunderstandings. It also gives students language and tools to advocate for themselves. It emphasizes that responsibility for making the simulation a success belongs to all class members.</p>   |
| <b>OBJECTIVE</b>    | <p>The role-playing team(s) create and agree on norms for communication and behavior during the simulation to support everyone's enjoyment and learning.</p>   |
| <b>TIME</b>         | 25 minutes   |
| <b>SEQUENCE</b>     | <p>Set norms before playing the simulation. Teams of six can decide on norms for their own role-play, or you may choose to do this activity all together as a class.</p> <p>This activity is a natural set-up for deeper conversations about classroom climate. We recommend using this activity with either <a href="#">Post-Simulation Activity: Social Contract</a> or <a href="#">Post-Simulation Activity: Supporting Virtual Connection with iThrive Sim</a>.</p>  |
| <b>INSTRUCTIONS</b> | <p><b>STEP 1:</b> Facilitate a discussion using the following prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's different for you in your experience of learning when we are together in the classroom compared to when we are together virtually?</li> <li>• What do you know you need to do to stay alert and engaged as we play the simulation?</li> <li>• How will we signal to each other that something isn't okay and needs to change?</li> <li>• What do we each commit to doing to support a virtual simulation where we can all participate and learn?</li> </ul> <p><b>STEP 2:</b> As a class, vote on and rank the most important norms.</p> <p><b>STEP 3:</b> Make a list of the key behaviors, strategies, and signals the class has agreed are most important. Consider "pinning" this list in the chat box of your video conferencing software or other shared online space so everyone can revisit it regularly during the simulation.</p> |

## THEME

**Civics**

## OVERVIEW

Use this reflection on two major founding documents (in class or as homework) to help put into context why Americans value a balance of local and central government control. The balance of state and federal power is a key issue for how players negotiate across states and with federal officials in *Lives in Balance*.

## OBJECTIVE

Articulate the purpose of the Articles of Confederation, their shortcomings, and how their aims compare to those of the U.S. Constitution.

## TIME

20–30 minutes

## SEQUENCE

Offer this optional activity in class or as homework before playing *iThrive Sim: Lives in Balance* to prepare students for a deeper dive into the concept of federalism.

## INSTRUCTIONS

Have students complete the worksheet [here](#).

## THEME

Civics

## OVERVIEW

In *Lives in Balance*, students act out the interplay between state-level and federal-level decision-making, negotiation, and influence. This activity (used in class or as homework) helps students to refine their understanding of states' powers and make a personal connection by finding evidence in their own communities of the way states exert and institutionalize their power.

## OBJECTIVE

Describe powers that belong to the states, and identify institutions that exemplify those powers.

## TIME

15-20 minutes

## SEQUENCE

Offer this optional activity before playing *iThrive Sim: Lives in Balance* to prepare students for a deeper dive into the concept of federalism.

## INSTRUCTIONS

Have students read the article and complete the worksheet [here](#).

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <h2>THEME</h2>        | <p><b>Civics, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)</b></p>   |
| <h2>OVERVIEW</h2>     | <p><i>iThrive Sim: Lives in Balance</i> requires students to demonstrate the social and emotional learning competency of responsible decision-making. In it, students make decisions with high stakes for the financial and physical health of individuals, communities, states and the nation as a whole during a global pandemic. One goal of the simulation is for students to think critically about how decisions are made in these circumstances, and to reflect on their personal decision-making approaches, preferences, and tendencies. The goal of this reflection is to consider a data-driven approach to decision-making, identify factors besides data that weigh in people's decisions, and frame up the simulation in a way that helps students build awareness of their decision-making approach.</p>   |
| <h2>OBJECTIVE</h2>    | <p>Students reflect on and describe factors that impact decision-making before participating in the simulation.</p>   |
| <h2>TIME</h2>         | <p>25 minutes</p>   |
| <h2>SEQUENCE</h2>     | <p>Use this activity prior to playing <i>Lives in Balance</i>. We recommend using this activity in combination with <a href="#">Post-Simulation Activity: Assessing Decision-Making</a> and the <a href="#">iThrive Sim: Decision-Making Rubric</a>.</p>  |
| <h2>INSTRUCTIONS</h2> | <p><b>STEP 1:</b> Orient students to the largely cognitive steps involved in decision-making in the <a href="#">iThrive Sim: Decision-Making Rubric</a>, including identifying the question/issue at hand, finding relevant information and sources, identifying multiple options, thinking through the consequences of those options, and making and justifying the decision based on those previous steps.</p> <p><b>STEP 2:</b> The rubric conveys one approach to decision-making – it emphasizes dealing with data and information. Of course, facts are not all that's involved in decision-making.</p> <p>Ask students to identify and discuss elements of decision-making that are not included in the rubric. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How do our emotions influence our decisions?</li> <li>● How do our values influence our decisions?</li> <li>● How do our relationships influence our decisions?</li> </ul> <p><b>STEP 3:</b> Frame up the simulation by sharing with students that as they play, they should try to notice how they're going about making decisions that are informed by data and information.</p> <p>Importantly, since they'll be playing a character, ask them to notice if trying to act as that character causes them to use an approach to decision-making that "goes against grain" for them (that does not feel natural).</p> <p><b>OPTIONAL:</b> Also, tell students that they'll be assessing themselves using the <a href="#">iThrive Sim: Decision-Making Rubric</a> after the simulation, not for a grade but to increase their awareness of how they go about making decisions.</p> |

For instructions on how to apply this rubric to *iThrive Sim: Lives in Balance*, see [Teacher Observation Log](#), [Pre-Simulation Activity: Decision-Making Reflection](#), and [Post-Simulation Activity: Assessing Decision-Making](#).

|                                  | 0                                     | 1  | 2   | 3   |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Identifies Questions             | Does not identify the question.       | Identifies the question with no elaboration.                   | Identifies the question with some elaboration.                                    | Clearly defines the question, displaying an understanding of information.               |
| Finds Relevant Information       | Does not find relevant information.   | Identifies a limited number of relevant sources.               | Identifies a moderate number of relevant sources and evaluates some for accuracy. | Identifies sources of information and evaluates them for accuracy and quality.          |
| Examines Options                 | Does not identify or examine options. | Identifies options but does not evaluate options.              | Identifies options and somewhat discusses the pros and cons of options.           | Identifies options and thoroughly evaluates pros and cons.                              |
| Predicts Consequences            | Does not predict consequences.        | Lists potential consequences but does not describe reasoning.  | Lists potential consequences but describes reasoning in a limited way.            | Describes potential consequences and thoroughly provides reasoning for predictions.     |
| Communicates Choice and Thinking | Does not communicate choice.          | Communicates choice but does not describe examples or sources. | Communicates choice and describes examples and sources in a limited way.          | Effectively communicates choice. Describes thinking with multiple examples and sources. |



|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <h2>THEME</h2>        | <p><b>Civics, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)</b></p>  |
| <h2>OVERVIEW</h2>     | <p>Supporting interpersonal connection (warmth, belonging, feeling seen and respected) in virtual environments requires some different strategies than we use when we're in person. Participating in an <i>iThrive Sim</i> scenario offers an opportunity to reflect on the behaviors and ways of showing up to a virtual session -- including civic values like civil discourse -- that impact everyone's experience of belonging, engagement, and connection. Using this activity prior to the simulation can help to focus attention on how each class member can contribute to an inclusive and engaging virtual space.</p>  |
| <h2>OBJECTIVE</h2>    | <p>Students and teachers reflect on what supports authentic connection in the virtual classroom and play a simple game called Mute-iny to practice paying attention to each other before engaging in the simulation.</p>   |
| <h2>TIME</h2>         | <p>25 minutes (for each group of six)</p>  |
| <h2>SEQUENCE</h2>     | <p>You can use this activity prior to any <i>iThrive Sim</i> scenario. We recommend using this activity in combination with <a href="#">Post-Simulation Activity: Supporting Virtual Connection with iThrive Sim</a>.</p>  |
| <h2>INSTRUCTIONS</h2> | <p><b>STEP 1: Reflect and discuss.</b> Share with students that to stay connected from a physical distance in the virtual classroom, you might need to use some different strategies than you use when you're together in person. Ask students to reflect and share:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does feeling connected mean to you?</li> <li>• Over the summer (during social distancing), how did you stay connected to friends and family?</li> </ul> <p><b>STEP 2: Tune in through play.</b> Introduce the lip-reading game Mute-iny and orient students to it with something like, "Let's see how closely we can pay attention to one another."</p> <p>Play Mute-iny, a simple game that works with any video conferencing software with video and chat functions. Have each student who'll be playing prepare one sentence that they will say on mute while others try to guess what they are saying.</p> <p><b>TIP:</b> You may want to have each role-play group of six play this game together in breakout rooms (if that is allowed in your school). If you want to play as a whole class, ask six students to volunteer to say sentences while the rest of the class guesses what they're saying.</p> <p><b>Directions</b> (Source: <a href="http://www.zoomjam.org">www.zoomjam.org</a>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Everyone is muted, and the volume is turned down.</li> <li>2. Pick an order for people to go (for instance, number each person 1, 2, 3, 4....)</li> <li>3. One person starts by counting down from 3, then says a sentence really slowly.</li> <li>4. Everyone else - type and send your response to the group chat and see what everyone else said.</li> <li>5. Have the next person signal or post in the chat that they're starting, and repeat steps 3-5 until everyone has had a chance.</li> <li>6. Once everyone has finished their turn, unmute yourselves and reveal your sentences.</li> </ol> <p><b>STEP 3: Briefly discuss.</b> Ask students to reflect and share:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you notice about how we connected and tuned into each other while we played Mute-iny?</li> </ul> <p><b>STEP 4: Set the stage for play.</b> As we play <i>iThrive Sim</i>, pay attention to what we're doing when we feel connected, and what things prevent us from feeling connected.</p> |

## THEME

### Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

## OVERVIEW

While engaging in the simulation, students will play characters with goals, traits and values that may differ from their own. As a result, they will likely interact with their classmates in new ways. They also will need to make difficult decisions under time pressure. Noticing and identifying emotions is one critical step in the process of managing the emotions that may arise during the simulation. We encourage all class members to practice building this awareness regularly over time. It will pay off for interactions in the class beyond the simulation, too.

## OBJECTIVE

Students and teachers practice building awareness of how they experience emotions in the body, and how emotions impact their interactions and decision-making in the simulation and beyond.

## TIME

15 minutes

## SEQUENCE

You can use this activity prior to any *iThrive Sim* scenario. We recommend using this activity in combination with [Post-Simulation Activity: Supporting Emotional Awareness with iThrive Sim](#).

## INSTRUCTIONS

**STEP 1:** *Introduce “emotions as information.”* Share with students that we often think of emotions as good or bad depending on how they feel. But all emotions are really just information – *important* information.

**STEP 2:** *Invite students to notice and name emotions.* Share with students that emotions show up pretty consistently in different places of the body. Ask students to notice and share in the chat how they feel right now.

- **Anger** tends to show up in the upper back, neck and jaw.
- **Fear** tends to show up in the belly.
- **Sadness** tends to show up in the throat.
- We usually feel **joy** all over.

**STEP 3:** Briefly discuss:

- How do emotions impact your interactions with other people?
- How do emotions impact the decisions you make?

**STEP 4:** *Set the stage for play.* Orient students towards noticing emotions as they play the simulation. Say something like:

**As we play *iThrive Sim*, pay attention to your emotions and how they’re changing and where you notice them in your body.**

**OPTIONAL:** The teacher or facilitator can pause the gameplay anytime during an *iThrive Sim* scenario. For this lesson, pause the game at a couple of key moments and remind students to notice how they feel and jot down a note for themselves. Places to consider pausing for an emotional check-in:

- Before making a big decision.
- After making a big decision.
- After a lively or tense debate.
- After players make a significant compromise or come to an agreement.



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A U.S. map showing an overlay of Navajo Nation territory.

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## ARTICLE 1, SECTION 8

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## CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)

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A part of the federal Department of Health and Human Services; works to protect people from health threats.

## COALITION

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An alliance of two or more people or groups who agree to work together temporarily to achieve a common goal. In this simulation, the fictional Southwest States **Coalition** is made up of four states: California, Arizona, New Mexico and Nevada.

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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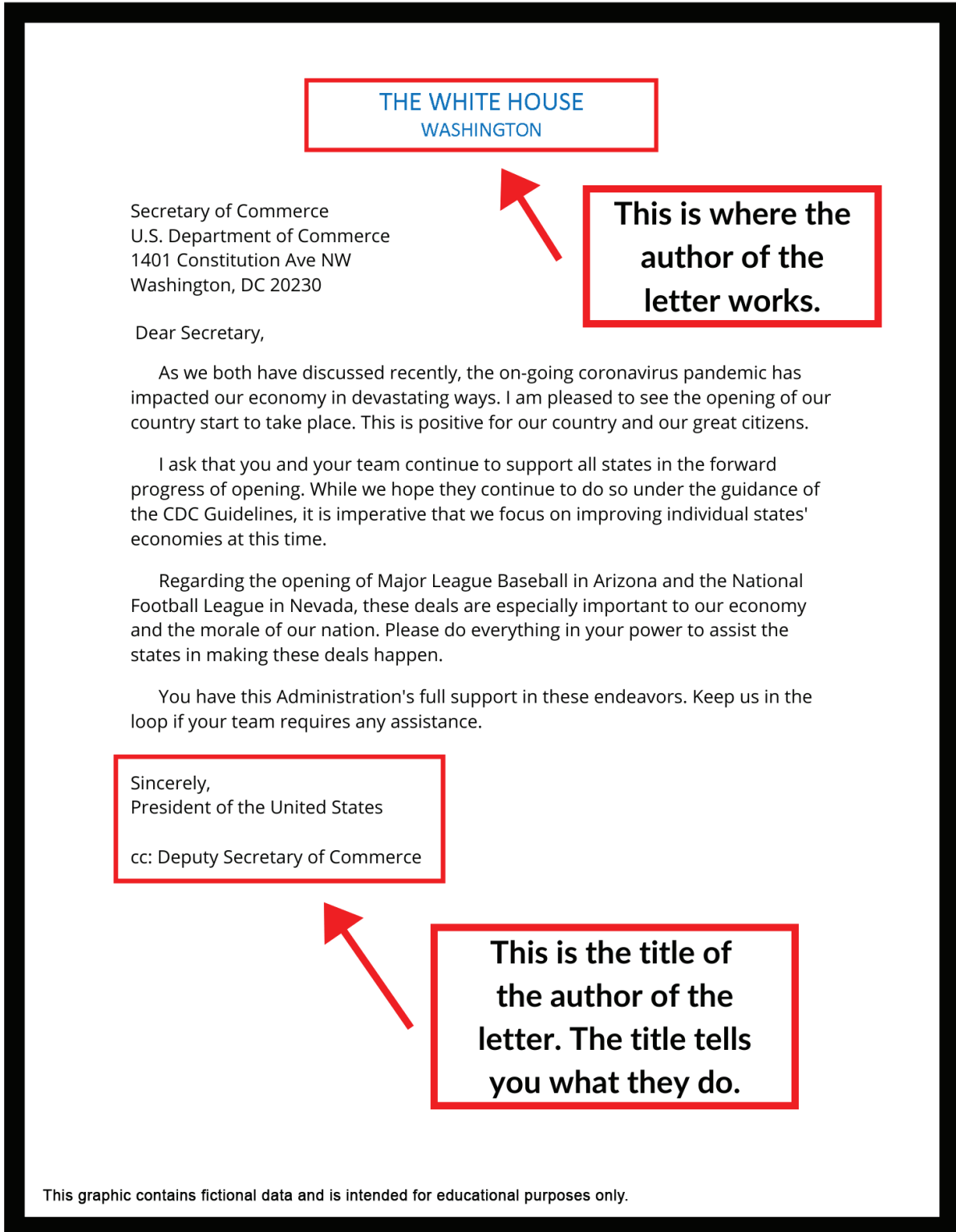
An executive department of the federal government focused on economic growth and development.

## INTERSTATE COMMERCE

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The purchase, sale, or exchange of commodities, money, or goods between different states, regulated by the federal government.

## COMMERCE LETTER



The diagram shows a letter with several key elements highlighted in red boxes. A box at the top center contains the address "THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON". A red arrow points from a box on the right, containing the text "This is where the author of the letter works.", to the address box. Another red arrow points from a box at the bottom right, containing the text "This is the title of the author of the letter. The title tells you what they do.", to a box on the left containing the signature "Sincerely, President of the United States" and the distribution list "cc: Deputy Secretary of Commerce".

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Secretary of Commerce  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20230

**This is where the author of the letter works.**

Dear Secretary,

As we both have discussed recently, the on-going coronavirus pandemic has impacted our economy in devastating ways. I am pleased to see the opening of our country start to take place. This is positive for our country and our great citizens.

I ask that you and your team continue to support all states in the forward progress of opening. While we hope they continue to do so under the guidance of the CDC Guidelines, it is imperative that we focus on improving individual states' economies at this time.

Regarding the opening of Major League Baseball in Arizona and the National Football League in Nevada, these deals are especially important to our economy and the morale of our nation. Please do everything in your power to assist the states in making these deals happen.

You have this Administration's full support in these endeavors. Keep us in the loop if your team requires any assistance.

Sincerely,  
President of the United States

cc: Deputy Secretary of Commerce

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## NEW MEXICO FEDERAL FUNDS LETTER

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

**This is where the author of the letter works.**

New Mexico Governor  
490 Old Sante Fe Trail Room 400  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Governor,

We are in receipt of your request for coronavirus funding related to medical needs for residents of New Mexico and the tribal lands.

We understand the severity of the matter and are actively looking at avenues to provide you with funding support. We are investigating the potential use of a grant to make the delivery of funds as easy as possible.

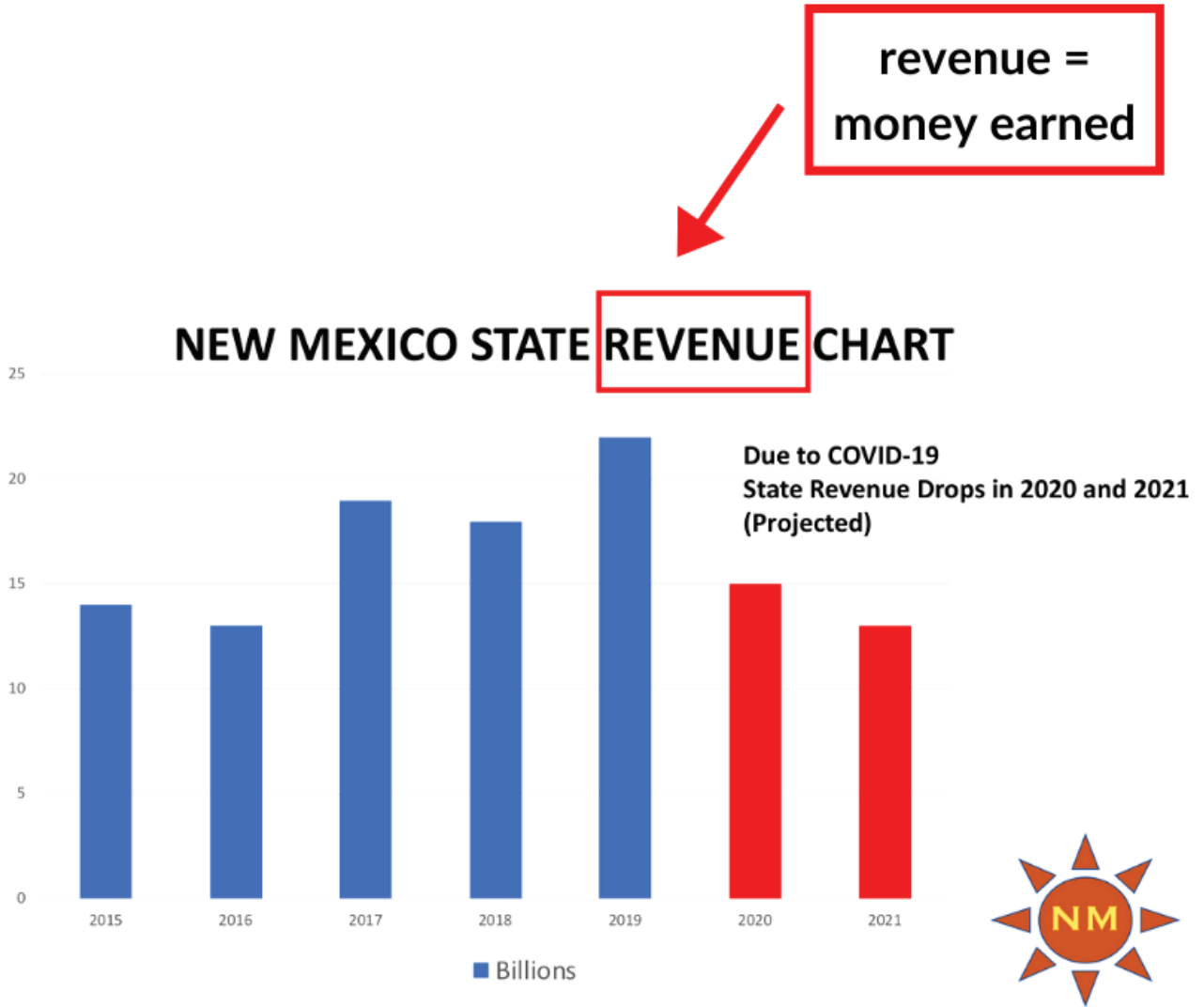
We appreciate your patience as we work through the funding avenues.

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# NEW MEXICO STATE REVENUE CHART

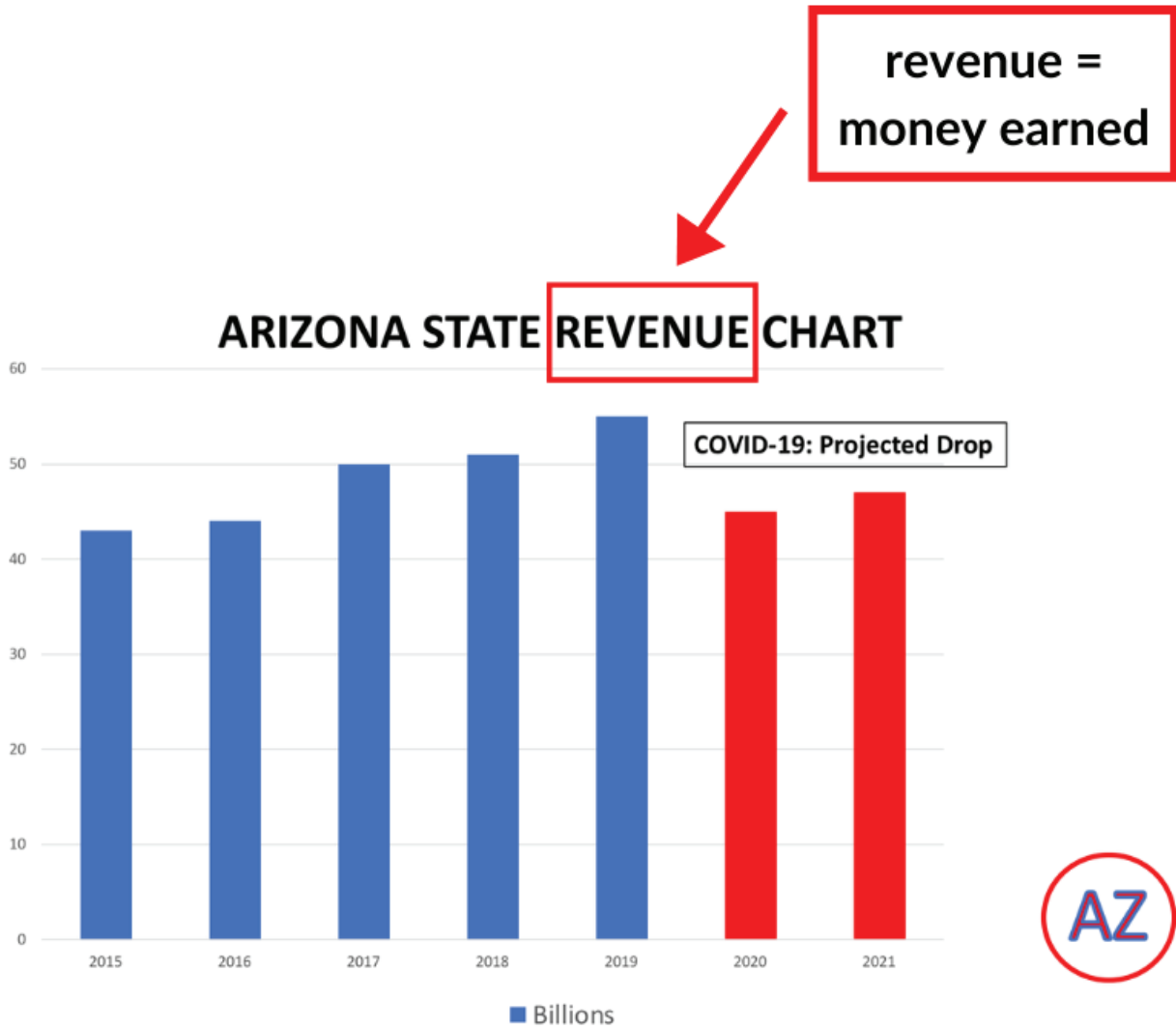


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## ARIZONA STATE REVENUE CHART

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## SOUTHWEST STATES UNEMPLOYMENT CHART

This graphic contains fictional data and is intended for educational purposes only.

Unemployment Rate = the percentage of people looking for work who are unable to find it



Southwest States Coalition: Unemployment Rate - Virus Impact (Last 2 Months)



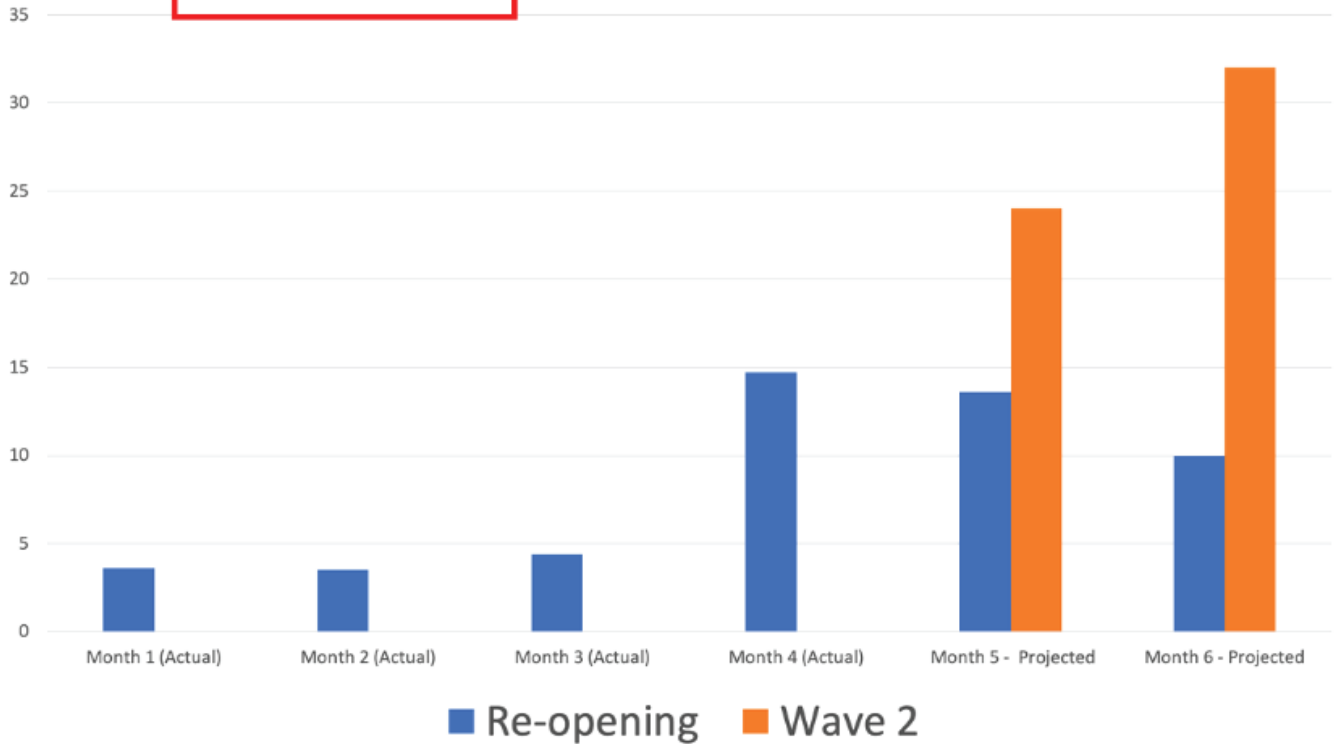
Note: Rates shown are a percentage of the labor force. Data refer to place of residence. Estimates for the current month are subject to revision the following month.

## USA UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

This graphic contains fictional data and is intended for educational purposes only.

Unemployment Rate = the percentage of people looking for work who are unable to find it

USA: Unemployment Rate - Reopening vs. Virus Impact (Projection for Wave 2)



Note: Rates shown are a percentage of the labor force. Data refer to place of residence. Estimates for the current month are subject to revision the following month.

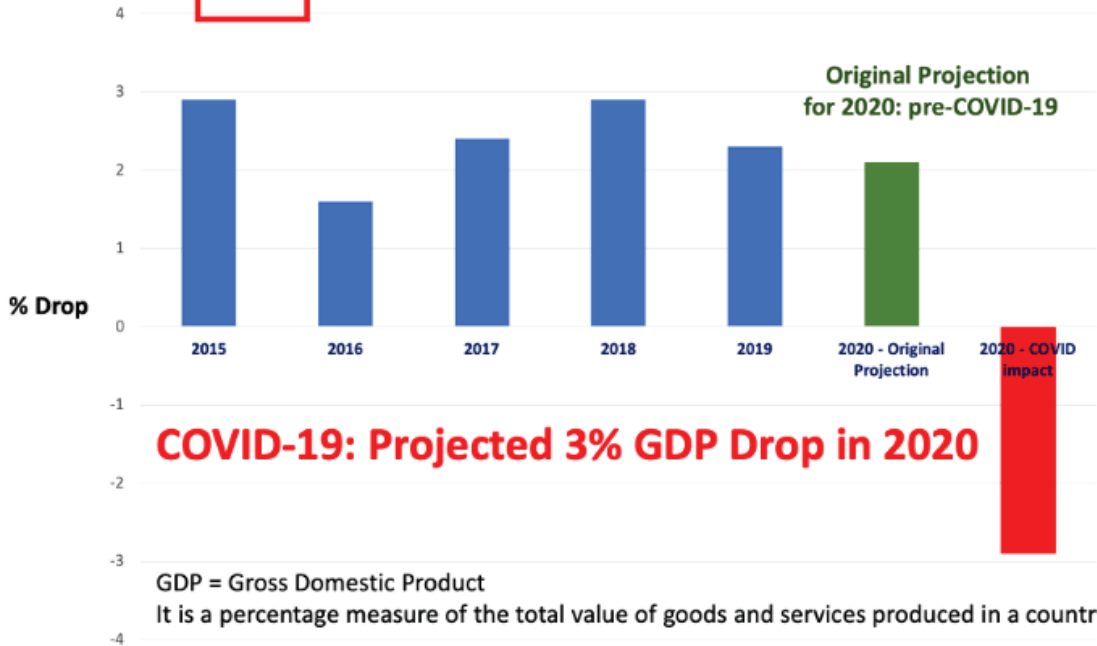
# USA GDP GROWTH CHART

This graphic contains fictional data and is intended for educational purposes only.

**GDP = Gross Domestic Product**

The GDP is a measurement of how healthy our economy is. If the GDP goes up, that's a good sign!

## USA **GDP** GROWTH – SHARP DROP DUE TO PANDEMIC



# NAVAJO NATION



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| <b>THEME</b>        | <b>Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)</b>   |
| <b>OVERVIEW</b>     | <p>Work with students to agree upon a set of key norms that are important to everyone to observe during an interactive and unscripted play session that happens over video. Having agreements in place before the simulation happens can help build connection and investment and prevent misunderstandings. It also gives students language and tools to advocate for themselves. It emphasizes that responsibility for making the simulation a success belongs to all class members.</p>   |
| <b>OBJECTIVE</b>    | <p>The role-playing team(s) create and agree on norms for communication and behavior during the simulation to support everyone’s enjoyment and learning.</p>   |
| <b>TIME</b>         | 25 minutes   |
| <b>SEQUENCE</b>     | <p>Set norms before playing the simulation. Teams of six can decide on norms for their own role-play, or you may choose to do this activity all together as a class.</p> <p>This activity is a natural set-up for deeper conversations about classroom climate. We recommend using this activity with either <a href="#">Post-Simulation Activity: Social Contract</a> or <a href="#">Post-Simulation Activity: Supporting Virtual Connection with iThrive Sim</a>.</p>  |
| <b>INSTRUCTIONS</b> | <p><b>STEP 1:</b> Facilitate a discussion using the following prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What’s different for you in your experience of learning when we are together in the classroom compared to when we together virtually?</li> <li>• What do you know you need to do to stay alert and engaged as we play the simulation?</li> <li>• How will we signal to each other that something isn’t okay and needs to change?</li> <li>• What do we each commit to doing to support a virtual simulation where we can all participate and learn?</li> </ul> <p><b>STEP 2:</b> As a class, vote on and rank the most important norms.</p> <p><b>STEP 3:</b> Make a list of the key behaviors, strategies, and signals the class has agreed are most important. Consider “pinning” this list in the chat box of your video conferencing software or other shared online space so everyone can revisit it regularly during the simulation.</p> |

**THEME****Civics****OVERVIEW**

Use this reflection on two major founding documents (in class or as homework) to help put into context why Americans value a balance of local and central government control. The balance of state and federal power is a key issue for how players negotiate across states and with federal officials in *Lives in Balance*.

**OBJECTIVE**

Articulate the purpose of the Articles of Confederation, their shortcomings, and how their aims compare to those of the U.S. Constitution.

**TIME**

20-30 minutes

**SEQUENCE**

Offer this optional activity in class or as homework before playing *iThrive Sim: Lives in Balance* to prepare students for a deeper dive into the concept of federalism.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Have students complete the worksheet [here](#).

**THEME****Civics****OVERVIEW**

In *Lives in Balance*, students act out the interplay between state-level and federal-level decision-making, negotiation, and influence. This activity (used in class or as homework) helps students to refine their understanding of states' powers and make a personal connection by finding evidence in their own communities of the way states exert and institutionalize their power.

**OBJECTIVE**

Describe powers that belong to the states, and identify institutions that exemplify those powers.

**TIME**

15-20 minutes

**SEQUENCE**

Offer this optional activity before playing *iThrive Sim: Lives in Balance* to prepare students for a deeper dive into the concept of federalism.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Have students read the article and complete the worksheet [here](#).



## THEME

**Civics, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)**

## OVERVIEW

*iThrive Sim: Lives in Balance* requires students to demonstrate the social and emotional learning competency of responsible decision-making. In it, students make decisions with high stakes for the financial and physical health of individuals, communities, states and the nation as a whole during a global pandemic. One goal of the simulation is for students to think critically about how decisions are made in these circumstances, and to reflect on their personal decision-making approaches, preferences, and tendencies. The goal of this reflection is to consider a data-driven approach to decision-making, identify factors besides data that weigh in people's decisions, and frame up the simulation in a way that helps students build awareness of their decision-making approach.

## OBJECTIVE

Students reflect on and describe factors that impact decision-making before participating in the simulation.

## TIME

25 minutes

## SEQUENCE

Use this activity prior to playing *Lives in Balance*. We recommend using this activity in combination with [Post-Simulation Activity: Assessing Decision-Making](#) and the [iThrive Sim: Decision-Making Rubric](#).

## INSTRUCTIONS

**STEP 1:** Orient students to the largely cognitive steps involved in decision-making in the [iThrive Sim: Decision-Making Rubric](#), including identifying the question/issue at hand, finding relevant information and sources, identifying multiple options, thinking through the consequences of those options, and making and justifying the decision based on those previous steps.

**STEP 2:** The rubric conveys one approach to decision-making – it emphasizes dealing with data and information. Of course, facts are not all that's involved in decision-making.

Ask students to identify and discuss elements of decision-making that are not included in the rubric. For instance:

- How do our emotions influence our decisions?
- How do our values influence our decisions?
- How do our relationships influence our decisions?

**STEP 3:** Frame up the simulation by sharing with students that as they play, they should try to notice how they're going about making decisions that are informed by data and information.

Importantly, since they'll be playing a character, ask them to notice if trying to act as that character causes them to use an approach to decision-making that "goes against grain" for them (that does not feel natural).

**OPTIONAL:** Also, tell students that they'll be assessing themselves using the [iThrive Sim: Decision-Making Rubric](#) after the simulation, not for a grade but to increase their awareness of how they go about making decisions.

For instructions on how to apply this rubric to *iThrive Sim: Lives in Balance*, see [Teacher Observation Log](#), [Pre-Simulation Activity: Decision-Making Reflection](#), and [Post-Simulation Activity: Assessing Decision-Making](#).

|   | <b>0</b>                              | <b>1</b>   | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Identifies Questions</b>             | Does not identify the question.       | Identifies the question with no elaboration.                   | Identifies the question with some elaboration.                                    | Clearly defines the question, displaying an understanding of information.               |
| <b>Finds Relevant Information</b>       | Does not find relevant information.   | Identifies a limited number of relevant sources.               | Identifies a moderate number of relevant sources and evaluates some for accuracy. | Identifies sources of information and evaluates them for accuracy and quality.          |
| <b>Examines Options</b>                 | Does not identify or examine options. | Identifies options but does not evaluate options.              | Identifies options and somewhat discusses the pros and cons of options.           | Identifies options and thoroughly evaluates pros and cons.                              |
| <b>Predicts Consequences</b>            | Does not predict consequences.        | Lists potential consequences but does not describe reasoning.  | Lists potential consequences but describes reasoning in a limited way.            | Describes potential consequences and thoroughly provides reasoning for predictions.     |
| <b>Communicates Choice and Thinking</b> | Does not communicate choice.          | Communicates choice but does not describe examples or sources. | Communicates choice and describes examples and sources in a limited way.          | Effectively communicates choice. Describes thinking with multiple examples and sources. |

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| <b>THEME</b>        | <b>Civics, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)</b>  |
| <b>OVERVIEW</b>     | Supporting interpersonal connection (warmth, belonging, feeling seen and respected) in virtual environments requires some different strategies than we use when we're in person. Participating in an <i>iThrive Sim</i> scenario offers an opportunity to reflect on the behaviors and ways of showing up to a virtual session -- including civic values like civil discourse -- that impact everyone's experience of belonging, engagement, and connection. Using this activity prior to the simulation can help to focus attention on how each class member can contribute to an inclusive and engaging virtual space.  |
| <b>OBJECTIVE</b>    | Students and teachers reflect on what supports authentic connection in the virtual classroom and play a simple game called Mute-iny to practice paying attention to each other before engaging in the simulation.   |
| <b>TIME</b>         | 25 minutes (for each group of six)  |
| <b>SEQUENCE</b>     | You can use this activity prior to any <i>iThrive Sim</i> scenario. We recommend using this activity in combination with <a href="#">Post-Simulation Activity: Supporting Virtual Connection with iThrive Sim</a> .   |
| <b>INSTRUCTIONS</b> | <p><b>STEP 1:</b> <i>Reflect and discuss.</i> Share with students that to stay connected from a physical distance in the virtual classroom, you might need to use some different strategies than you use when you're together in person. Ask students to reflect and share:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does feeling connected mean to you?</li> <li>• Over the summer (during social distancing), how did you stay connected to friends and family?</li> </ul> <p><b>STEP 2:</b> <i>Tune in through play.</i> Introduce the lip-reading game Mute-iny and orient students to it with something like, "Let's see how closely we can pay attention to one another."</p> <p>Play Mute-iny, a simple game that works with any video conferencing software with video and chat functions. Have each student who'll be playing prepare one sentence that they will say on mute while others try to guess what they are saying.</p> <p><b>TIP:</b> You may want to have each role-play group of six play this game together in breakout rooms (if that is allowed in your school). If you want to play as a whole class, ask six students to volunteer to say sentences while the rest of the class guesses what they're saying.</p> <p><b>Directions</b> (Source: <a href="http://www.zoomjam.org">www.zoomjam.org</a>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Everyone is muted, and the volume is turned down.</li> <li>2. Pick an order for people to go (for instance, number each person 1, 2, 3, 4...)</li> <li>3. One person starts by counting down from 3, then says a sentence really slowly.</li> <li>4. Everyone else - type and send your response to the group chat and see what everyone else said.</li> <li>5. Have the next person signal or post in the chat that they're starting, and repeat steps 3-5 until everyone has had a chance.</li> <li>6. Once everyone has finished their turn, unmute yourselves and reveal your sentences.</li> </ol> <p><b>STEP 3:</b> <i>Briefly discuss.</i> Ask students to reflect and share:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you notice about how we connected and tuned into each other while we played Mute-iny?</li> </ul> <p><b>STEP 4:</b> <i>Set the stage for play.</i> As we play <i>iThrive Sim</i>, pay attention to what we're doing when we feel connected, and what things prevent us from feeling connected.</p> |

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| <p><b>THEME</b></p>        | <p><b>Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)</b></p>  |
| <p><b>OVERVIEW</b></p>     | <p>While engaging in the simulation, students will play characters with goals, traits and values that may differ from their own. As a result, they will likely interact with their classmates in new ways. They also will need to make difficult decisions under time pressure. Noticing and identifying emotions is one critical step in the process of managing the emotions that may arise during the simulation. We encourage all class members to practice building this awareness regularly over time. It will pay off for interactions in the class beyond the simulation, too.</p>   |
| <p><b>OBJECTIVE</b></p>    | <p>Students and teachers practice building awareness of how they experience emotions in the body, and how emotions impact their interactions and decision-making in the simulation and beyond.</p>   |
| <p><b>TIME</b></p>         | <p>15 minutes</p>  |
| <p><b>SEQUENCE</b></p>     | <p>You can use this activity prior to any <i>iThrive Sim</i> scenario. We recommend using this activity in combination with <a href="#">Post-Simulation Activity: Supporting Emotional Awareness with iThrive Sim</a>.</p>   |
| <p><b>INSTRUCTIONS</b></p> | <p><b>STEP 1:</b> <i>Introduce “emotions as information.”</i> Share with students that we often think of emotions as good or bad depending on how they feel. But all emotions are really just information – <i>important</i> information.</p> <p><b>STEP 2:</b> <i>Invite students to notice and name emotions.</i> Share with students that emotions show up pretty consistently in different places of the body. Ask students to notice and share in the chat how they feel right now.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Anger</b> tends to show up in the upper back, neck and jaw.</li> <li>• <b>Fear</b> tends to show up in the belly.</li> <li>• <b>Sadness</b> tends to show up in the throat.</li> <li>• We usually feel <b>joy</b> all over.</li> </ul> <p><b>STEP 3:</b> Briefly discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do emotions impact your interactions with other people?</li> <li>• How do emotions impact the decisions you make?</li> </ul> <p><b>STEP 4:</b> <i>Set the stage for play.</i> Orient students towards noticing emotions as they play the simulation. Say something like:</p> <p><b>As we play <i>iThrive Sim</i>, pay attention to your emotions and how they’re changing and where you notice them in your body.</b></p> <p><b>OPTIONAL:</b> The teacher or facilitator can pause the gameplay anytime during an <i>iThrive Sim</i> scenario. For this lesson, pause the game at a couple of key moments and remind students to notice how they feel and jot down a note for themselves. Places to consider pausing for an emotional check-in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before making a big decision.</li> <li>• After making a big decision.</li> <li>• After a lively or tense debate.</li> <li>• After players make a significant compromise or come to an agreement.</li> </ul> |