

***Dirt Cheap***  
by Mark Huffmann  
**Opportunity Cost**

**INTRODUCTION:** In this lesson students will learn about making a choice. Just like Birdie, they will have to make a decision, thus giving up other possible choices.

**SYNOPSIS:** Birdie wants a very expensive soccer ball but has no money, so she starts selling dirt and learns some important lessons along the way.

**TIME REQUIRED:** 25-30 minutes.

**OBJECTIVE:**

- The student will be introduced to the concept of opportunity cost: “In a choice, the benefit expected from the highest valued alternative forgone; or ***what you give up*** when you make a choice.”

**MATERIALS:**

- Prepared color sheets (duplicated front-to-back)
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Scissors

**ECONOMIC CONCEPTS:**

Because we cannot have everything we want (scarcity), we must make choices. Each time we make a choice, we give something up. There is always a next best alternative when making any choice. The value of this next best alternative (or second favorite choice) is the opportunity cost.

**PROCEDURE:**

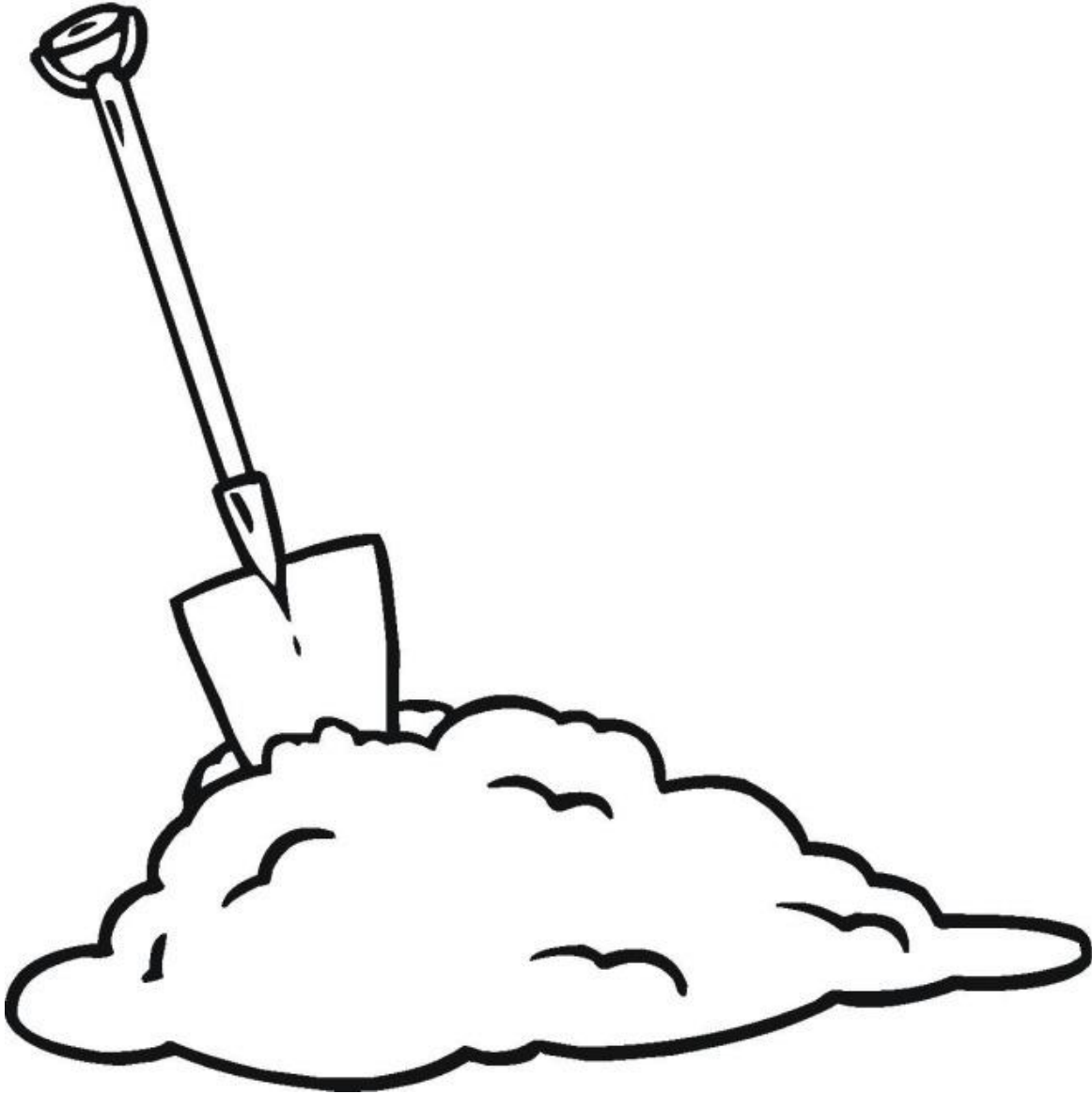
1. Prepare the materials prior to class. Run off the garden color sheets, front to back in different combinations.
2. Introduce the lesson by reading *Dirt Cheap* by Mark Huffmann with the students. Discuss the various decisions Birdie made so that she could earn money to buy a soccer ball.
3. Distribute the activity sheet and coloring tools. Tell the students that these are images of the tools Birdie used in her lawn care business.
4. Instruct the students to color both sides to the best of their ability. When the students are finished, give them a pair of scissors and inform them they must cut out ONE of their colored tools for display. Explain that the other side will be destroyed, so the chance to display that side will be their opportunity cost. (Be prepared for complaints from students. Some will have a difficult time deciding which item to keep.)
5. If possible, display student work on a bulletin board titled “*Dirt Cheap* Opportunity Cost”.

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