

Recommended Instructional Pathway

This instructional pathway organizes the educator resources into five parts that follow the topics and themes of **Scene on Radio: Capitalism**. It offers one way to combine the episodes and the resources into a coherent unit of study. You can follow the pathway in full or select and adapt resources based on your classroom context and instructional priorities.

Part 1 <u>Capitalism Today</u>	Episode 1
Part 2 <u>Capitalism Takes Shape in Europe</u>	Episodes 2, 3, 4
Part 3 <u>Capitalism Accelerates in the US</u>	Episodes 5, 6, 7
Part 4 <u>Capitalism at a Crossroads</u>	Episodes 8, 9, 10
Part 5 <u>The Future of Capitalism?</u>	Episodes 11, 12

Part 1 Capitalism Today

- What is capitalism, and what positive changes and challenges do some people associate with it?
- To what extent do you notice these in your own life, your community, or the wider world?

Listen and Build Understanding

Use the Listening Guide and Features of Capitalism explainer to support students in understanding the economic ideas explored in this episode.

Investigate

Use the Investigation to deepen students' exploration of the episode's ideas.

Episode 1: Market Failure

Introduction to our 7th season: Capitalism. The world's dominant economic system is on trial as it hasn't been for at least half a century. Millions, young people especially, now see capitalism as the problem, not the solution. Others fear throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

- [Listening Guide](#) 
- [Connections to Features of Capitalism](#): Free Market Economy 

Two Stories About Capitalism

Students examine sources that present some of the evidence people point to when making two different arguments about capitalism's impact, while making connections to their lives, their communities, and the wider world. (Episode 1)

- [Source Set](#) 
- [Note-Taking Tool](#) 

Synthesize, Reflect, and Respond

Support students to capture their initial thinking about capitalism.

Students have begun to develop an understanding of capitalism, explore the idea of a free market economy, and recognize that capitalism is a complex and contested system.

- **Support students to interview and be interviewed by classmates.** Use the [Interview Toolkit](#)  to support students to practice the person-on-the-street interview format with one another, using one or more of the questions that begin Episodes 2, 4, 6, and 8. Encourage students to record their responses and preserve them as a baseline they can revisit as their understanding develops throughout the series. (The activity also gives students practice recording interviews before interviewing community members and experts later on.)

Part 2 Capitalism Takes Shape in Europe

- How did capitalism emerge from feudalism, and what political, material, and intellectual developments made this new system possible?
- How did different people around the globe experience these changes?
- What does learning about capitalism's origins make you wonder about the economic system we live in today?

Listen and Build Understanding

Use the Listening Guides and Features of Capitalism explainer to support students in understanding the historical developments and economic ideas explored in these episodes.

Episode 2: BC: Before Capitalism

To fully grasp capitalism, it helps to understand the system it replaced – and the most meaningful differences between feudalism and capitalism. We visit the British Isles of the Middle Ages.

- [Listening Guide](#) 
- **Connections to Features of Capitalism:**
Accumulation and Investment of Capital 

Episode 3: Ships, Swords, and Fences

From the voyages of Columbus and Vasco da Gama to colonial conquest and the Atlantic Slave Trade, to the privatization of land in western Europe: humanity's turn toward the capitalist world we live in now.

- [Listening Guide](#) 
- **Connections to Features of Capitalism:**
Private Ownership, Accumulation and Investment of Capital, Wage Labor 

Episode 4: Invisible Hand Guy?

Economic change happens in a cultural context. We trace the tectonic shifts in the Western mind that made capitalism thinkable – in part through a look at two Enlightenment thinkers: Baruch Spinoza and Adam Smith.

- [Listening Guide](#) 
- **Connections to Features of Capitalism:**
Private Ownership, Accumulation and Investment of Capital, Profit Motive, Free Market Economy, Legal Framework 

Investigate

Choose one or more Investigations to deepen student learning, or invite students to choose among them.

“Officially and Legally Mine”: Enclosure, Wage Labor, and Capitalism

Students examine filmmaker, writer, and political organizer Astra Taylor's interpretation of enclosure to consider how changes in land ownership and work contributed to capitalism's rise – and continue to shape our lives today. (Episodes 2, 3)

- [Source Set](#) 
- [Note-Taking Tool](#) 

Enslavement, Colonization, Industry, and Capital

Students examine evidence from historians and economists to consider the roles enslavement and colonization played in Britain's industrialization and the broader development of capitalism. (Episode 3)

- [Source Set](#) 
- [Note-Taking Tool](#) 

The Natural World, Reimagined

Students examine sources to consider how Western views of nature shifted during the Scientific Revolution, how those shifts may have influenced capitalism's development, and how different ways of understanding nature might shape our relationship with the natural world today. (Episode 4)

- [Source Set](#) 
- [Note-Taking Tool](#) 

Synthesize, Reflect, and Respond

Support students to synthesize and reflect on their learning through one or more of the following options.

Students have explored some of the developments that contributed to capitalism's emergence, examined how recurring features of capitalism took shape over time, and considered competing interpretations of capitalism's origins and early impacts.

- **Ask students to revisit the [Two Stories About Capitalism](#)**  introduced in Episode 1/Part 1 and write or discuss:
 - After exploring Part 2, what new reflections or questions do you have about the two stories people tell about capitalism?
- **Prompt students to revisit the [Features of Capitalism explainer](#)**  and analyze the relationship among the features:
 - Choose two features. How do they sustain or reinforce one another?
 - What concepts or terms recur across multiple features, and what do they lead you to wonder about how capitalism works as a system?
- **Support students to conduct person-on-the-street interviews.** Use the [Interview Toolkit](#)  to support students to gather a range of perspectives in their community using one or more of the "person-on-the-street" questions that begin Episodes 2 and 4. Prompt students to compare those perspectives with the historical evidence and recurring features of capitalism they have examined so far:
 - What new insights or questions emerge?

Part 3 Capitalism Accelerates in the US

- How has capitalism in the United States changed over time, and what major events or forces pushed those changes forward?
- How and why has the role of government in the economy shifted at different moments in history?
- How have shifts and changes in American capitalism affected the economic lives of different people?

Listen and Build Understanding

Use the Listening Guides and Features of Capitalism explainer to support students in understanding the historical developments and economic ideas explored in these episodes.

Investigate

Choose one or more Investigations to deepen student learning, or invite students to choose among them.

Episode 5: A New Thing in Human History

An age of invention and mass production, propelled by a new mechanism – the corporate research lab – leads to a surge in material wealth like the world has never seen. How does a new nation, the United States, overtake its parent as the leader of the capitalist order? And what does it all mean in the lives of ordinary people?

- [Listening Guide](#)  
- **Connections to [Features of Capitalism](#):** Private Ownership, Accumulation and Investment of Capital, Profit Motive, Wage Labor, Legal Framework 

Episode 6: Thirty Glorious Years

How the balance of power shifted, for a time, in the decades after World War II, and led to a better kind of capitalism – if you think prosperity being broadly shared is a good thing.

- [Listening Guide](#)  
- **Connections to [Features of Capitalism](#):** Free Market Economy, Legal Framework 

Episode 7: Gilded Age 2.0

After 40 years of neoliberalism, most Americans of every political stripe agree that the economy is “rigged” in favor of corporations and the wealthy. But we may not know the half of it.

- [Listening Guide](#)  
- **Connections to [Features of Capitalism](#):**

Changing Capitalism: The New Deal and American Prosperity

Students examine FDR’s views of economic freedom, major New Deal laws and programs, and economic data to consider how the New Deal changed American capitalism and how those changes might connect to the decades of broadly shared prosperity that followed. (Episode 6)

- [Source Set](#)  
- [Note-Taking Tool](#) 

Changing Capitalism, Again: The Neoliberal Turn and Its Aftermath

Students examine Reagan’s views of economic freedom, laws and policies associated with the shift toward neoliberalism, and economic data to consider how neoliberalism changed American capitalism again and might have shaped the economic patterns that followed. (Episode 7)

- [Source Set](#)  
- [Note-Taking Tool](#) 

Accumulation and Investment of Capital,
Profit Motive, Free Market Economy, Legal
Framework 

Synthesize, Reflect, and Respond

Support students to synthesize and reflect on their learning through one or more of the following options.

Students have explored how American capitalism has changed over time, noticed how the government helped shape these changes, and considered how different periods of American capitalism affected people's economic lives.

- **Ask students to compare the visions of economic freedom they encountered in speeches by FDR and Reagan** and discuss:
 - Where do their views differ about what the government should do – or not do – to secure economic freedom?
 - Where do you see those different views reflected in the laws and policies you examined?
 - Where, if at all, do you see these different views reflected in America's laws, policies, and economy today?
- **Support students to conduct person-on-the-street interviews.** Use the [Interview Toolkit](#)  to support students to gather a range of perspectives in their community using the "person-on-the-street" question that begins Episodes 6. Prompt students to compare those perspectives with those they encountered in the episodes and investigations:
 - How do people in your community understand economic freedom?
 - Where do their ideas echo – or depart from – the views you encountered in Part 3?
 - What do these perspectives make you wonder about the role the government does or should play in the economy today?

Part 4 Capitalism at a Crossroads

- How have wealth inequality, economic instability, environmental harm, and the effects of colonialism fueled some of the pushback against capitalism?
- What larger questions are these challenges raising about what economies should accomplish for people and the planet? About what economic growth and progress mean?

Listen and Build Understanding

Use the Listening Guides and Features of Capitalism explainer to support students in understanding the historical developments and economic ideas explored in these episodes.

Investigate

Choose one or more Investigations to deepen student learning, or invite students to choose among them.

Episode 8: The People's Pushback

Over several decades, a growing number of people in the United States and elsewhere – especially younger people – have turned against capitalism. The reasons are not hard to find.

- [Listening Guide](#) 
- **Connections to [Features of Capitalism](#):** Free Market Economy, Wage Labor, Legal Framework 

Episode 9: At the Tipping Point

In 1972, a team of young scientists at MIT published a study exploring what would happen to human civilization if people kept pursuing endless economic growth on a finite planet. They weren't just disbelieved, they were ridiculed. The story of Donella Meadows and *The Limits to Growth*.

- [Listening Guide](#) 
- **Connections to [Features of Capitalism](#):** Accumulation and Investment of Capital 

Episode 10: The Extracted

A visit to West Africa and Western Europe to look at the cocoa trade. Did the colonial side of early capitalism – Western countries getting rich at the expense of poorer nations – ever change, or does it continue today?

- [Listening Guide](#) 
- **Connections to [Features of Capitalism](#):** Accumulation and Investment of Capital,

Infinite Growth on a Finite Planet:

The Limits to Growth Today

Students examine contemporary sources about whether new technologies can make continued growth sustainable on a finite planet – and what the global extraction of resources needed for those technologies adds to the debate. (Episodes 9, 10)

- [Source Set](#) 
- [Note-Taking Tool](#) 

Capitalism at a Crossroads:

What's an Economy For? *

Students examine why economic growth is often seen as an important goal, consider different perspectives on economic success, and begin forming their own response to a fundamental question: what's an economy for? (Episodes 8, 9, 10)

- [Source Set](#) 
- [Note-Taking Tool](#) 

** This investigation brings together ideas and questions raised across Episodes 8, 9, and 10. Students can engage with the investigation even if they have not listened to all three episodes; brief context and selected excerpts are provided.*

Synthesize, Reflect, and Respond

Support students to synthesize and reflect on their learning through one or more of the following options.

Students have examined different challenges facing capitalist economies and considered what questions these challenges raise about economic growth, progress, and what an economy should accomplish for people and the planet.

- **Invite students to develop, share, and compare their answers to the question, “What’s an economy for?”** identifying common themes and differences:
 - Where do your ideas about what an economy should accomplish overlap? Where do they differ?
 - What might account for those differences?
 - Do any of the goals you identified seem difficult to achieve at the same time? Why?
- **Invite students to share excerpts or findings from interviews they conducted after listening to [Episode 8](#):**
 - What themes or concerns came up across multiple interviews? Where do perspectives differ?
 - How do these perspectives reinforce, complicate, or differ from ideas explored in Episode 8?
 - What new questions do the interviews raise?
- **Prompt students to revisit the developments that contributed to capitalism’s emergence**, which they explored in Episodes 2-4, and write or discuss:
 - What similarities and differences do you notice between the economic relationships explored in Episodes 8-10 and those you studied earlier in the series?
 - Which historical developments or relationships seem especially important for understanding the challenges explored in Episodes 8-10? Why?

Part 5 The Future of Capitalism?

- How are people and organizations working to improve or reimagine capitalism?
- What trade-offs, tensions, and possibilities emerge as people try to improve or build alternatives to today's economy?
- In Episode 1, the hosts share a quote from Frederic Jameson: "It's easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism." To what extent do you agree, and why?

Listen and Build Understanding

Use the Listening Guides and Features of Capitalism explainer to support students in understanding the economic ideas explored in these episodes.

Episode 11: Better Capitalism

In the first of two episodes looking at responses to capitalism's failings, we look at reforms aimed at making the current economic system more humane, fair, effective, and sustainable.

- [Listening Guide](#) 
- **Connections to Features of Capitalism:** Accumulation and Investment of Capital, Profit Motive, Free Market Economy, Legal Framework 

Episode 12: Reimagined Economies

In our season finale, we visit with people on two continents who are turning core structures of capitalism on their heads – or, at least, sideways.

- [Listening Guide](#) 
- **Connections to Features of Capitalism:** Private Ownership, Accumulation and Investment of Capital, Profit Motive, Wage Labor 

Investigate

Choose one or more Investigations to deepen student learning, or invite students to choose among them.

Experiments in Economic Change

Students study real-world examples of organizations experimenting with different ways of organizing land use, business, and/ or ownership within a capitalist economy before identifying and researching a similar example in their own community. Using the [Interview Toolkit](#) , they are supported to learn directly from people involved in the work and connect larger economic ideas to local economic life.

- [Rethinking Private Land Ownership](#) 
(Episodes 2, 3, 4, 12)
- [Stakeholder Capitalism](#) 
(Episodes 7, 10, 11)
- [Worker Cooperatives](#) 
(Episodes 7, 8, 12)

[Changing Capitalism, Yet Again](#)

Students examine the economic visions and policy proposals of Bernie Sanders and Oren Cass, two people from different political traditions who advocate for significant economic change, to consider how law and policy might be used to reshape capitalism today. (Episodes 1, 6, 7, 8, 11)

[Reimagining Economic Life](#)

Students study the ideas of Kate Raworth (doughnut economics), Robin Wall Kimmerer (gift economies), and/or Marjorie Kelly (democratic economy) – thinkers who are reimagining what an economy is for,

	what economic progress and success entail, and how economic life might be organized. (Episodes 4, 7, 9, 11, 12)
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Synthesize, Reflect, and Respond

Support students to synthesize and reflect on their learning through one or more of the following options.

Students have investigated a range of ideas for reforming, reimagining, or building alternatives to capitalism, noticed the limitations or trade-offs associated with different approaches, and considered how economic life might be organized differently.

- **Invite students to share research findings** through a format that fits your classroom's instructional goals, such as presentations, podcasts, panel discussions, or multimedia exhibits.
- **Support students to compare ideas that surfaced in their research**, identifying common themes, differences, and trade-offs among the organizations, policy proposals, and/or economic models they investigated:
 - Which recurring challenges are these approaches trying to address?
 - Where do they agree or differ?
 - To what extent can the challenges identified in the series be addressed by reforming capitalism? What, if anything, might require more fundamental changes to the economic system?
- **Ask students to revisit Frederic Jameson's quote from Episode 1** and write or discuss:
 - To what extent has your' thinking changed after completing the series?
 - What possibilities, challenges, or unanswered questions do you see for capitalism's future?

Additional Planning Resources

- **Opportunities for Standards Alignment**: See opportunities for alignment with CCSS ELA/Literacy and the C3 Framework