

## Activity 5 - Learning the 7 Principles of Cooperatives

- Time:** 30 minutes
- Objective:** Students will be introduced to the 7 principles of cooperatives and learn to summarize each one in less than 10 words.
- Step 1:** Ask each material handler to pick up one the 7 principles of cooperatives handouts. Each handout will have a different principle. If there are fewer than 6 groups, give one group two at a time. Saving one of the principles as a “model” (see step 3).
- Step 2:** Explain to the cooperative groups that their task is to guess what each principle is about by reading the title before asking for help.
- Step 3:** Model for the group by writing a sample on the board, such as “Autonomy and Independence.” Then as a class ask if anyone has a synonym for the word “autonomy or independence.” If not, guide them through each word. What does the root word, “auto” mean? Write down as many words as possible.
- Step 4:** Instruct the cooperative groups that they will have three minutes to brainstorm as many words or phrases that they think describe their principle. Walk around to each group and keep them on task.
- Step 5:** **Before you have them start brainstorming, show this YouTube video on the history of cooperatives, which explain the 7 principles:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sS3sdHXZTA&list=UUhlkVQo3WjpcKoF2YrMVyjA>. Instead of typing in the entire site, you could search on Google for the following, “The Electric Cooperative Story” by OurEnergyOurFuture youtube video. (Time: 3:27)
- Step 6:** At the end of three minutes call time. Then have each material handler pass their paper to the team on their right. Each cooperative should have a new paper. Tell them that they should read over what the other team came up with and add anything else that they can think of. Each group will now have two minutes.
- Step 7:** At the end of two minutes, stop them and have the material handler pass their paper to the right again. Each team should have a new paper. Repeat the process, but each team will only have one minute to add to the principle.
- Step 8:** At the end of the one minute, have each material handler, retrieve their original paper.
- Step 9:** Instruct students that they will now need to explain their principle in 10 or fewer words, along with a picture. It must be in simple terms, so that a child in second grade can understand it. In order to complete this task, you may use the **7 Cooperative Principles Explained** handout to help you. Have students take this handout out of their folders.

## Activity 5 - Learning the 7 Principles of Cooperatives (continued)

- Step 9:** Model this activity for students using the same example as you used at the beginning of this task, such as “autonomy and independence”. Have students give suggestions for the 10 words or less, while others can be sketching a sample picture idea. *Examples:* Cooperatives must be able to work by themselves. A sample picture may be a building standing by itself in the middle of a cityscape.
- Step 10:** Give each group 15 minutes to complete this task. Walk around to each group and keep them on task and going in the right direction.
- Step 11:** At the end of the 15 minutes, the reporter from each cooperative will recite their 10 word summary of their assigned principle, while another cooperative member from the same group shows their picture.
- Step 12:** As each group is reporting their 10 word summary, each student should be writing it down on their **7 Cooperative Principles Explained** worksheet. Tell them that they are encouraged to also draw the picture next to each principle to help them remember.
- Step 13:** As each group finishes, have the reporter come to the front of the room and “hang up” or “post” their answers somewhere so that all the teams can see it. You may have the students write the 10 word summary on the bottom of the picture for ease of “posting”. If any student isn’t able to, or didn’t write down the 10 word summaries, find a time for them to look at the postings and finish this task.

**Directions:** As a team, brainstorm words or phrases that define the following principle.

## Cooperative Principle 1 - **Voluntary and Open Membership**

**Directions:** As a team, brainstorm words or phrases that define the following principle.

## Cooperative Principle 2 - **Democratic Member Control**

## Cooperative Principle 3 - **Members' Economic Participation**

## Cooperative Principle 4 - **Autonomy and Independence**

## Cooperative Principle 5 - **Education, Training and Information**

## Cooperative Principle 6 - **Cooperation among Cooperatives**

## Cooperative Principle 7 - **Concern for Community**

## 7 Cooperative Principles Explained

Cooperatives around the world generally operate according to the same core principles and values, adopted by the **International Co-operative Alliance** in 1995. Cooperatives trace the roots of these principles to the first modern cooperative founded in Rochdale, England in 1844.

### 1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people able to use its services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

10 words or fewer summary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members—those who buy the goods or use the services of the cooperative—who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

10 words or fewer summary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. This benefits members in proportion to the business they conduct with the cooperative rather than on the capital invested.

10 words or fewer summary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Autonomy and Independence**

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it is done so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintains the cooperative's autonomy.

10 words or fewer summary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Education, Training and Information**

Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. Members also inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives.

10 words or fewer summary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Cooperation among Cooperatives**

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

10 words or fewer summary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Concern for Community**

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of communities through policies and programs accepted by the members.

10 words or fewer summary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_