

Demo: Civics Alive Foundations and Functions

Lesson 2 – Section 5 Economic Systems Around the World page 50-53 8th grade

This is the definition of Capitalism according to this lesson:

“The term capitalism is often used to describe a market system. Under capitalism, individual investors, or capitalists, own the means of production, such as farmland or factories. Workers provide labor in exchange for wages or a salary”.

This is misleading and false. It should read:

Capitalism is a widely adopted economic system in which there is private ownership of the means of production. Modern capitalist systems usually include a market-oriented economy, in which the production and pricing of goods, as well as the income of individuals, are dictated to a greater extent by market forces resulting from interactions between private businesses and individuals than by central planning undertaken by a government or local institution. Capitalism is built on the concepts of private property, profit motive, and market competition.

The entire lesson downplays capitalism and doesn't mention the millions of people who have been lifted out of poverty under this economic system.

In this section of the lesson, they call Mao Zedong's communist controlled economy “stagnation” leaving out the fact that an estimated 65 million Chinese died as a result of it.

“In contrast, China has had a government-controlled economy since the Communist Party took control of its government in 1949. Over decades, government control of the economy led to economic stagnation, or little or no growth”.

The lesson also speaks of the great strides China has made by its move to “market socialism” economic system in 1970, but has nothing about the US or any other countries prosperity under a free market economy.

“In 1990, the Human Development Index (HDI) ranked China as having medium development. Today, it is ranked as having high development. These economic changes are also reflected in the size of China's middle class. In 2002, only 4 percent of the population was middle class. By 2018, more than half the population was”.

This lesson's objective was to teach the advantages of capitalism and the free market in the United States over government-controlled economic systems (e.g., socialism and communism) in regard to economic freedom and raising the standard of living for citizens and this is the entire lesson text on it.

“Communism is a political theory developed by German philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 1800s. Marx's goal was a society that provides equality and economic security for all. To accomplish this, he called for shared ownership of land, factories, and other resources. Many see communism as an outgrowth of socialism, a political and economic system in which the government owns the means of production. This meant that the wealth of a society would belong to the workers who made the goods responsible for that wealth”.

“The theory of communism appealed to many people in the 1900s. In practice, however, it led to the creation of totalitarian states—first in the Soviet Union and later in other countries, such

as China, Vietnam, and Cuba. In these states, dictators (another form of autocrats) such as Joseph Stalin used spies, secret police, and the government to stop all opposition”.