



Classroom, Inc.

AFTER THE STORM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

UNIT 4: FINANCIAL CRISIS

PRE-GAMEPLAY

Elicit Background Knowledge

To prepare students for playing “Financial Crisis” of *After the Storm*, stimulate a discussion about the factors involved in a financial crisis and how an online magazine makes money by asking these questions:

1. If you heard someone say “Hurricane Dante really hurt Port Douglas’s economy, so fewer businesses are hiring,” what would you say the word *economy* means?

(Answers will vary, but students should understand that

economy has something to do with money coming in and going out.) In this unit you’ll find out more about how Dante affected the economy of Port Douglas. In what ways do you think a major hurricane would be likely to affect an economy? (e.g., A hurricane could cause transportation slowdowns that make it hard for people to get to work and also cause transportation providers to lose money; physical destruction of businesses could force temporary closing and employee layoffs; storm victims would have less money to spend because they’re spending a lot on rebuilding and/or temporary housing.)

2. When you go to a website, it’s common to see banner advertisements for products or services there. What are some ads that you’ve seen on websites? (Answers will vary.) What happens if you click on a banner advertisement? (e.g., I get taken to the website of the company advertising.)
3. Why would an online magazine feature advertisements? (to make money) What is another way online news sources such as *The Daily Byte* can make money? (e.g., They can charge people to access their articles.)



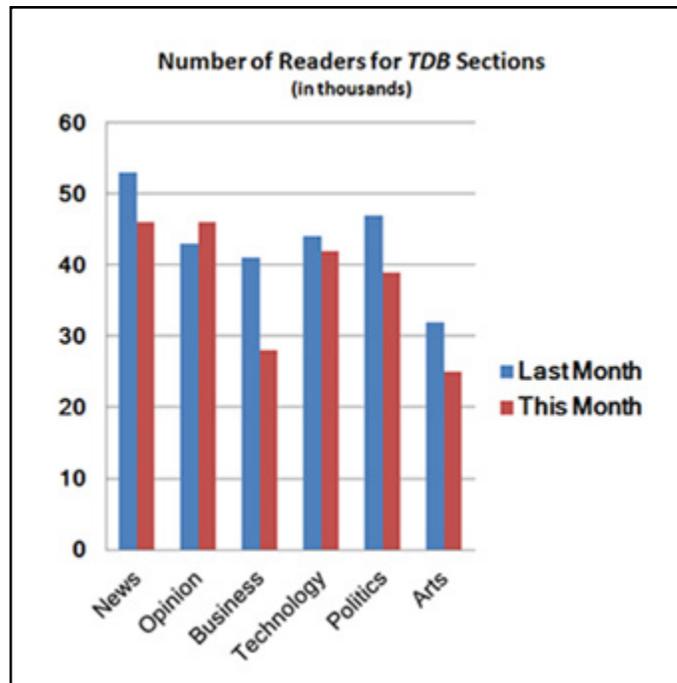
POST-GAMEPLAY

Explore Meaning

To encourage students to delve deeper into their experience of Unit 4, direct students to their Student Packets to answer the following questions after completing each session of “Financial Crisis.”

“MORNING” SESSION

1. Why are fewer people visiting *The Daily Byte* website this month than visited it last month? (Answers will vary, e.g., Since the storm, a great many people cannot access the Internet; people are too busy to read the news.)
2. Grace tells you that fewer site visitors means less money coming in from advertisers. What does she mean? (e.g., Too few visitors are seeing advertisements and ultimately buying the products or services of advertisers. When readership drops significantly, advertisers pay *The Daily Byte* less or drop their advertisements entirely.)
3. Grace’s report is based on the monthly *analytics* she got. What are *analytics*? (*Analytics* are reports showing statistics such as how many visitors a website gets and where they go on that site.) Why are analytics useful to any organization that has a website—and especially to online businesses such as *The Daily Byte*? (e.g., The information presented in a site’s analytics show businesses if their customer base is growing or shrinking, what is of most interest to their customers, etc. Organizations and businesses use the data from analytics to improve their service.)
4. You were very professional in how you handled LaDonna’s request for a raise. Do you think LaDonna was professional in the way she asked for it? (Answers will vary, but most students will realize that LaDonna could have used better timing in her request and might have taken a less challenging tone.)
5. Grace presented a graph showing the number of visitors to each section of *The Daily Byte* and asked you to draw a *conclusion*—a judgment based on reasoning and available information. What was the “available information” that enabled you to use the chart to draw a *conclusion*? (a color key, different colored bars denoting last month’s and this month’s numbers, a breakdown of *TDB*’s site by section, and the number of readers up to 60,000.) Note: If students struggle with the question, you might want to draw the graph (see top of next page) on the board to remind them of its elements, filling in one of the two categories if you don’t have colored chalk or markers.



Was the information enough for you to draw a conclusion? (Yes) Why or why not? (I could easily compare the difference in number of visitors to each section between the two months.)

“MIDDAY” SESSION

1. In this session, LaDonna continues to ask you for a raise. Is her persistence one of the factors you should have weighed in deciding whether or not to give her a raise? (No.) What major questions should a manager ask her or himself when deciding whether or not to give an employee a raise? (e.g., Can my organization afford this raise, i.e., can we give the raise with little or no sacrifice in another area? How valuable is this employee’s skills to the organization? How hard does this employee work? What unique contributions does this employee bring to the organization?)
2. LaDonna’s husband was laid off from his job last week. Is this relevant to whether or not you gave her a raise? (No.) Why or why not? (LaDonna introduced information that, while it might have made me feel bad, should not factor into my decision. The personal situations of employees should not affect my salary decisions.) *Note: If students don’t understand why LaDonna’s husband’s hard luck has nothing to do with her getting a raise, you might ask: If LaDonna’s husband was a multimillionaire, does that mean she should not get paid at all? (No.)*
3. After you gave LaDonna your decision about her raise, she told you that other magazines had approached her about working with them. What was her purpose

in telling you that? (e.g., She wanted me to change my mind and give her a raise.) Why did you not change your mind in light of this new information? (e.g., I don't want to lose a great reporter to another magazine, but **1.** it's possible LaDonna was using that as a strategy but hadn't actually been contacted by other magazines; **2.** it doesn't change the most important factor that went into my decision—*The Daily Byte* is having a financial crisis.)

“AFTERNOON” SESSION

1. After you tell LaDonna she can't have the raise she tells you she will stay on at *The Daily Byte* on one condition. What is that condition? (LaDonna wants more of a voice in the direction of the magazine.) What was your response to LaDonna's condition? (I agreed to it and told her she'll even be on the executive board and have more of a say in what the magazine publishes, and that she will help me make decisions about how *The Daily Byte* can stand out from other magazines.)
2. In the handout “Decision-Making in Tough Times,” you read the advice, “Before doing anything else, make sure that you are the one who should be addressing this problem.” Why is this good advice? (Answers will vary slightly, but students should recognize that in a collaborative workplace people have different areas they specialize in, different skills, and different ways of communicating information. A good leader knows who among staff is most qualified to handle a given task well.)
3. Which cost-cutting option did you choose: freezing salaries or asking readers to pay for content? Why? (Whichever choice students made, they should see pros and cons of each option. Pros of asking readers to pay for content include near-term income for *TDB*. Cons include the risk that readers will go to a news source that doesn't ask them to pay. Pros of freezing salaries include not having to layoff any employees. Cons include lowering office morale.)
4. At the beginning of the party, you shared difficult news with your staff about cutting costs at *The Daily Byte*. Was this the best time to share this news? (No.) Why or why not? (Sharing news like this was likely to darken the mood at the party.) What were some other ways you could have shared the difficult news? (e.g., called a meeting a few days after the party, told staff members individually, written an e-mail to all staff giving them the news but telling them that you were open to their questions or concerns.)