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Planet Money Courseware

Eric Svendsen – VP/Editor at W.W. Norton

1. Discuss the origin of the idea
2. Project Goals
3. Look at Prototypes

Podcasts as a Teaching Tool

- **Increased engagement**
  (Moryl, 2013; Moryl & Jiang, 2013, Luther 2015; Vidal 2020)
- **Perceived learning**
  (Choi et al., 2024)
- **Diversified assessment**
  Moryl, 2016; Coon & Vidal, 2021; Trendafilov & Mihal, 2025; Leenheer 2026

Podcasts as a Teaching Tool

- I ask students to read and listen to different articles before we start each week's lesson.
- 2-3 questions appear in class each week about the readings & podcasts.
- 4-5 broad (understanding) questions about the readings show up on the exam.

Week #	Lesson Topic	Pre-Lesson Material (Complete by 9 AM on Monday)
#1	Foundations	Pre-Lesson Prep: Intro to Economics Reading: There's no such thing as a free Italian ice Textbook: Chapters 1 and 2 (section 3)
#2	Supply and Demand	Pre-Lesson Prep: Supply and Demand Reading: The Psyche 16 Asteroid Isn't Worth $10,000,000,000,000,000,000 Textbook: Chapter 3
#3	Elasticity	Pre-Lesson Prep: Marginal Analysis, Roller Coasters, Elasticity, and Van Gogh Reading: The Diamond-Water Paradox in Retail Security Textbook: Chapter 6
#4	Economic Efficiency	Pre-Lesson Prep: Markets, Efficiency, and Price Signals Reading: Cuba's Economic Makeover 🇨🇺 Textbook: Chapter 4 (sections 1, 2, and Appendix)

What do students say about them?

(spoiler: almost nothing)

What did the instructor do that most helped in your learning?

- The podcasts, readings, and textbook came together to create a strong understanding of the material.
- I like the pre lesson preps a lot.

What could you have done to be a better learner?

- studied more for tests, did the pre lesson readings.
- I also should have been more on top of my pre-lesson assignments.
- I could have focused more on the pre-lesson materials, like the prep videos and readings. If I had read them, I would have had a base level of understanding before class instead of

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Principles of Economics instructors—something exciting is coming! 🌎 💸

Norton Economics is collaborating with NPR’s *Planet Money* podcast on materials for the Principles of Economics course. **If you’re interested in learning more and getting a sneak peek, we’ll get you on our mailing list. Sign up for updates below!**

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SPECIAL SERIES

Planet Money makes a book

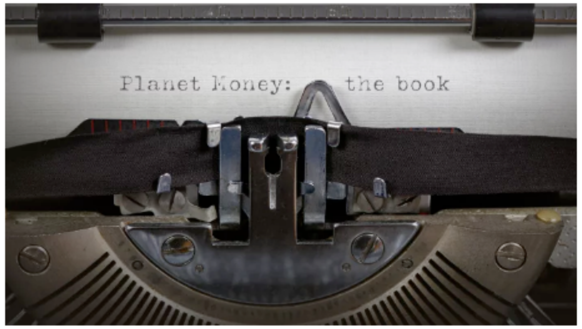
Books are one of the most influential technologies ever invented. From "The Wealth of Nations" to "Das Kapital," books have the power to shape whole economic systems... and everything else in our world. The market for books can determine which ideas make it to the masses. Planet Money learns how the book publishing industry works... by publishing our own book.

SUBSCRIBE TO PLANET MONEY NEWSLETTER

PLANET MONEY

Inside a BOOK auction

March 20, 2026 • In the age of TikTok and Polymarket, it can be easy to overlook the humble book. But books are one of the most influential technologies ever invented. From "The Wealth of Nations" to "Das Kapital," books have the power to shape whole economic systems... and everything else in our world. The market for books can determine which ideas make it to the masses.



Jackie Lay/NPR

LISTEN · 43:11 + PLAYLIST

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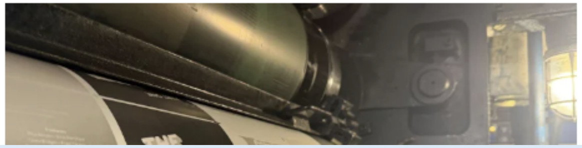
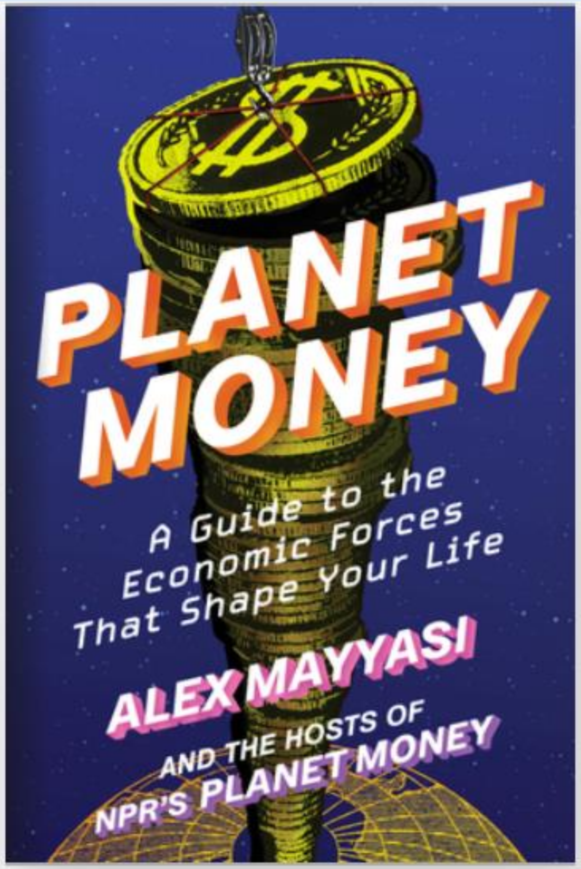
Our BOOK vs. the global supply chain

March 25, 2026 • When you come across a book at a yard sale or a bookstore, you might pay more attention to the words between the





IM Available !

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- Start with 10 Modules Appropriate for Principles, Macro and Micro
- Work with Economists to Develop Lessons
- Create an Assignable Lesson Students Can Do in 20ish Minutes
- Deliver Through Instructor LMS
- For Sale with both Norton and Non-Norton Products

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Jadrien Wooten – Virginia Tech

Emi Nakamura – UC – Berkeley

Laura Gee – Tufts

Ben Ho – Vassar

Kim Holder – University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Casey Abdington – Northwest Missouri State University (IM for the Trade book)

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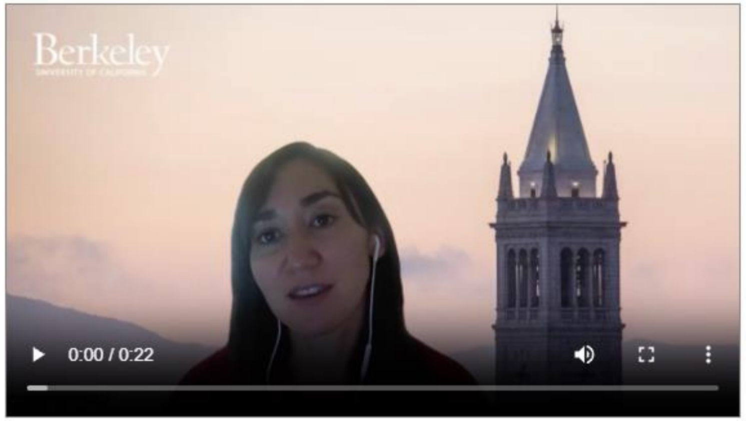
First Prototype

Pricing in the Real World . . . Prices and the Consumer Price Index (CPI)

Introduction



In this module:

- Part 1 – Podcast and Take A Poll
- Part 2 – Concepts and Interactives
- Part 3 – Skill Practice

OBJECTIVES: AFTER COMPLETING THIS MODULE STUDENTS WILL:

- Know what the CPI is, and how the government measures prices to determine it
- Describe how Supply and Demand influences why and how often prices change
- Give examples of why, how, and if prices adjust and change that are

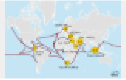
Part 2. Concepts And Interactives

This section has brief videos, concept decks, interactives, and questions, teaching you more about prices and the CPI. Complete each to move on.

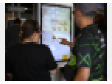
Video: What Can we learn from the Prices of Breakfast? (Part 1)
Looks at the price of Cheerios and the overall economy

Video: What Can we learn from the Prices of Breakfast? (Part 2)
Get into supply and demand factors using coffee as an example

Concept Deck 1: Measuring Prices and the CPI
lorem ipsum



Interactive 1
Explore the impact of a supply shock



Concept Deck 2: Do Prices Only Increase - How are prices changing?
lorem ipsum

Interactive 2
How basic supply and demand predicts a price would change in a certain situation.

Video: Five Facts About Prices
lorem ipsum

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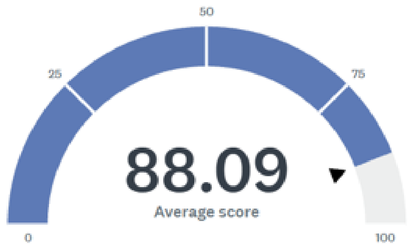
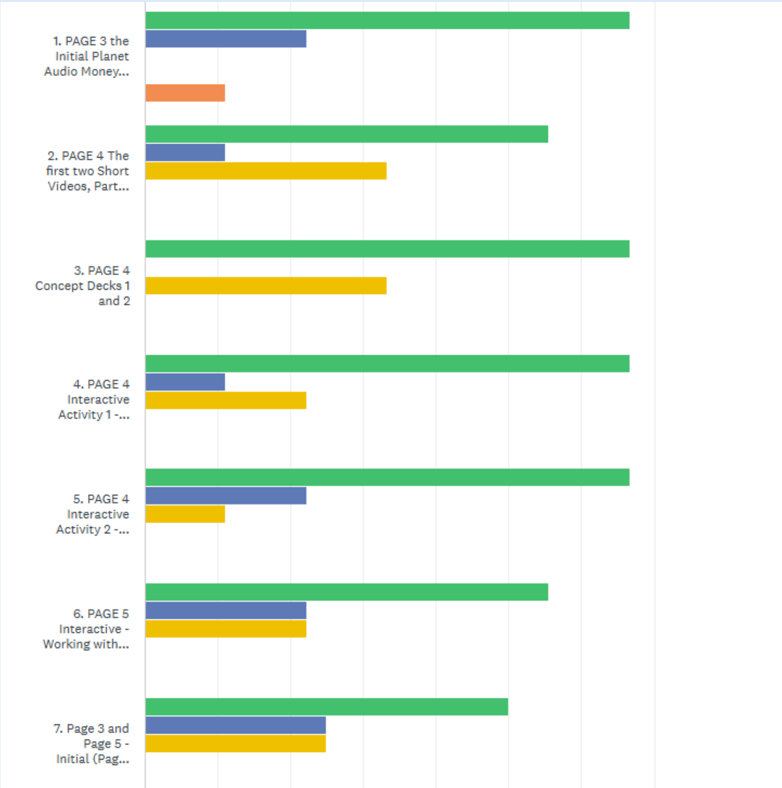
Imagine you learn in an advertisement about "a new set of ten interactive education modules available to use in your Principles of Economics course, designed with Planet Money and top economists. It integrates real world stories and media, comes with built in assessment and will work in your LMS." Please rate your interest in learning more about these materials.



Basic statistics

Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
75.00	100.00	85.00	88.09	11.18

If Element is Included



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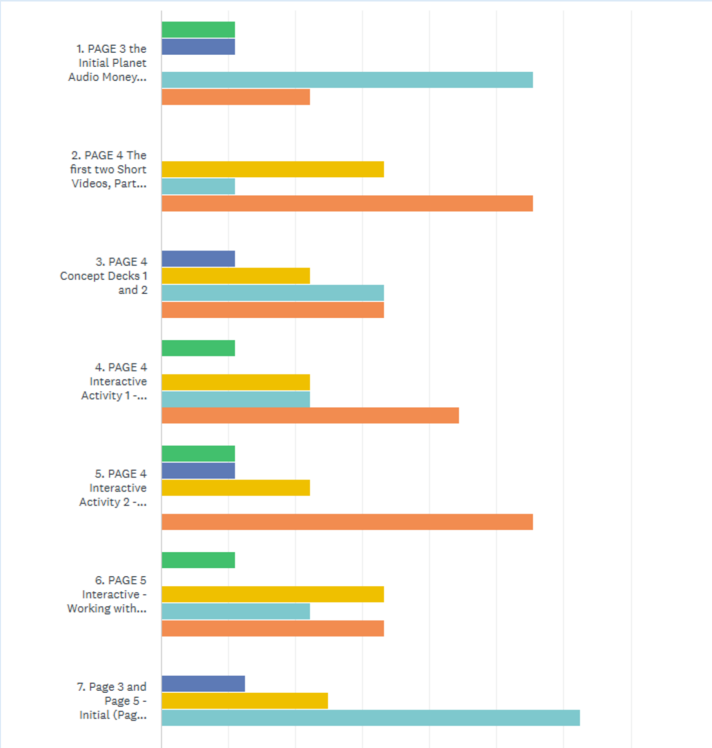

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This is a great concept and I enjoyed exploring the prototype. It is clearly valuable, but adoption depends on it's value over lab or class assignment/acticity that it would be replacing. That varies by professor. Some of the parts of the module were text heavy. I personally enjoyed it and can see how it's necessary, but I'd be concerned my students might be tempted to start skimming.

1/18/2025 05:37 PM View full response Add tags

I really like the concept and I think this is a good start. It is not far from being read to implement or at least test in a real class. I can see this approach working with many other topics.

1/17/2025 11:22 PM View full response Add tags

Students already pay a lot for etexts and hw platforms. It would be ideal to bundle this with those (such as MobLab within MindTap). I think instructors would be very hesitant to ask students to purchase access to this in addition to the e-text and homework platform. In my case, I didn't use MobLab in Principles of Micro until it was bundled with MindTap.

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Third Prototype

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Listen to Podcast

Emi Nakamura is an economist at the University of California at Berkeley. She has done a lot of research into prices and what they mean. In this podcast, she talks more about prices, the invisible hand, how prices change or adjust, and how she has done some of her breakthrough research.

As you listen to the podcast, there are several breaks to ask you questions and help clarify what you just heard. When you are done with the podcast, go the next page to answer a poll.

Key Clip: Discusses how prices reflect changes in the economy

00:00 -08:54

[CYU Placeholder or Audio Checkpoint]

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Objectives. After completing this module you will:

- Explain what Prices can tell us about the broader market
- Describe how Supply and Demand influences why and how often prices change
- Know what the CPI is, and how the government measures prices to deter

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Interactive Activity

Description
We just learned about the how macroeconomics changes or shocks are reflected in prices. In this activity, let's explore further the impacts of supply shocks and demand shocks— unexpected events that cause a sudden change in the supply of a product or service.

Start

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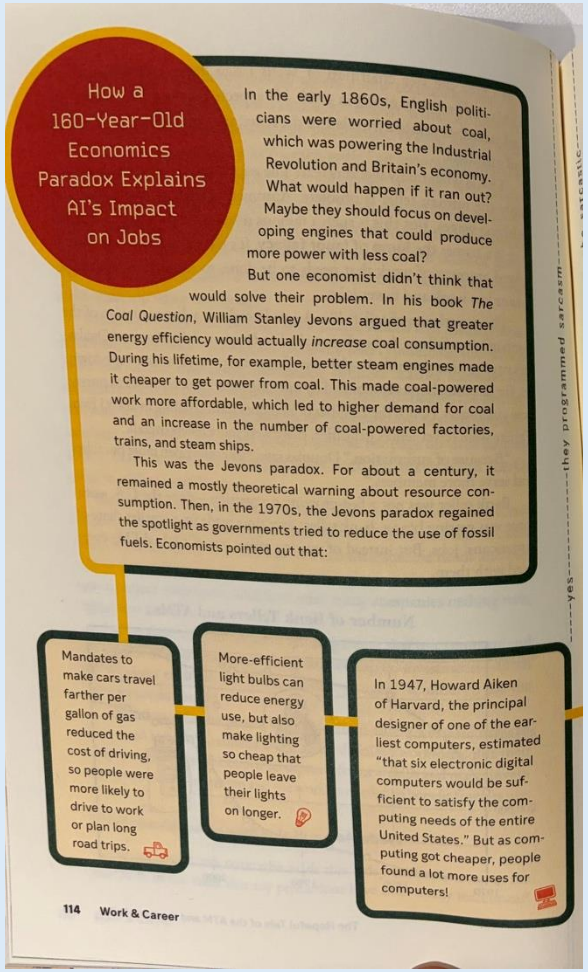


How a 160-Year-Old Economics Paradox Explains AI's Impact on Jobs

In the early 1860s, English politicians were worried about coal, which was powering the Industrial Revolution and Britain's economy. What would happen if it ran out? Maybe they should focus on developing engines that could produce more power with less coal?

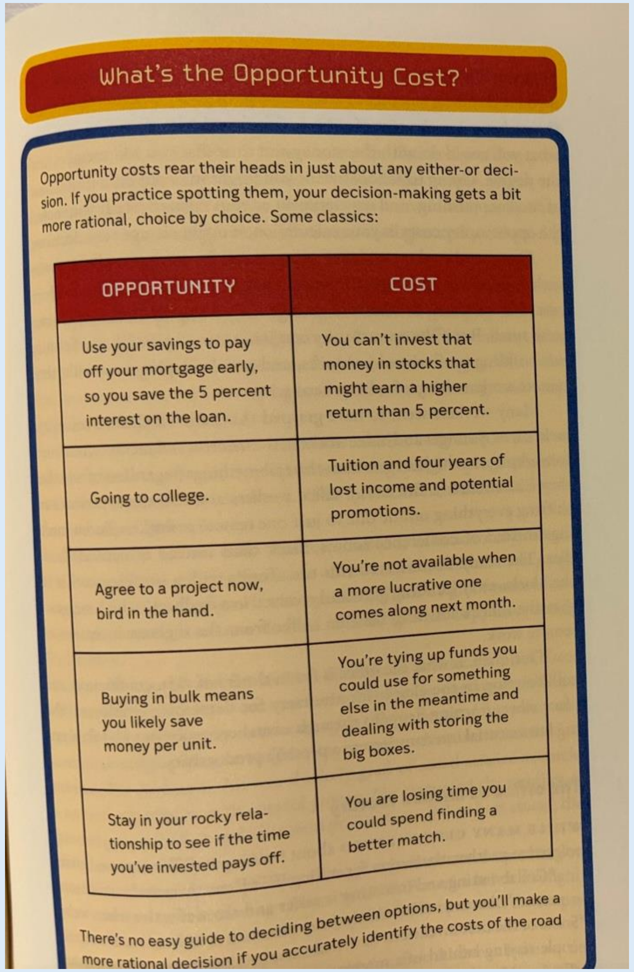
But one economist didn't think that would solve their problem. In his book *The Coal Question*, William Stanley Jevons argued that greater energy efficiency would actually *increase* coal consumption. During his lifetime, for example, better steam engines made it cheaper to get power from coal. This made coal-powered work more affordable, which led to higher demand for coal and an increase in the number of coal-powered factories, trains, and steam ships.

This was the Jevons paradox. For about a century, it remained a mostly theoretical warning about resource consumption. Then, in the 1970s, the Jevons paradox regained the spotlight as governments tried to reduce the use of fossil fuels. Economists pointed out that:

Mandates to make cars travel farther per gallon of gas reduced the cost of driving, so people were more likely to drive to work or plan long road trips.

More-efficient light bulbs can reduce energy use, but also make lighting so cheap that people leave their lights on longer.

In 1947, Howard Aiken of Harvard, the principal designer of one of the earliest computers, estimated "that six electronic digital computers would be sufficient to satisfy the computing needs of the entire United States." But as computing got cheaper, people found a lot more uses for computers!



What's the Opportunity Cost?

Opportunity costs rear their heads in just about any either-or decision. If you practice spotting them, your decision-making gets a bit more rational, choice by choice. Some classics:

OPPORTUNITY	COST
Use your savings to pay off your mortgage early, so you save the 5 percent interest on the loan.	You can't invest that money in stocks that might earn a higher return than 5 percent.
Going to college.	Tuition and four years of lost income and potential promotions.
Agree to a project now, bird in the hand.	You're not available when a more lucrative one comes along next month.
Buying in bulk means you likely save money per unit.	You're tying up funds you could use for something else in the meantime and dealing with storing the big boxes.
Stay in your rocky relationship to see if the time you've invested pays off.	You are losing time you could spend finding a better match.

There's no easy guide to deciding between options, but you'll make a more rational decision if you accurately identify the costs of the road

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1. Teaching with Podcasts
2. Interactivity that's Measurable
3. Learning that's Gated
4. AI Driven Review

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