

World Cup in Qatar

This Month in the Economy Exercise

Instructor's Guide

This Month in the Economy Exercises

These teaching packs are designed for 30-minute (online or offline) sessions that can be included within any lecture or tutorial class. They are designed to be suitable for university students, but could easily be adapted for higher or lower levels. Every month, we will publish at least one exercise that you can use to engage your students with current events. The main aims of these exercises are to give students practice in relating economic ideas to the real world and their own lived experiences.

Newspaper articles or videos are used as the entry point to an economic topic, which is then expanded upon by the instructor before the students are broken into small groups to engage in an activity. This will help students to develop the skills required to work as economists in the real world, and all the materials you need are provided for you. These teaching packs are published as creative commons (CC BY) and can be freely used and adopted.

The Economics of a World Cup in Qatar

It is important for students to understand that economic activities have more than just financial costs and benefits. There are also political, social, and ecological consequences – both positive and negative – and these impacts are rarely spread equally.

The 2022 FIFA World Cup (including the construction work required for it) provides a clear example of economic activity that has taken place despite the financial costs to the Qatari state being an order of magnitude larger than the financial benefits it will receive. Whilst this is a fairly extreme case in terms of how many different costs and benefits are involved and how unequally they have been spread, many economic decisions are more complicated than mere financial calculations and it is therefore vital for students to be able to think about multiple dimensions involved in economic decisions.

Lesson Plan

Learning Objectives

- Understand the different types of costs and benefits of economic activity.
- Connect the World Cup to different interest groups.

Transferable Skills Developed

- Present opinions in an articulate manner.
- Outline and connect multiple relevant dimensions when studying an issue.
- Analyse concrete economic realities.

Prior to session

Students should read the article about the cost of the World Cup: [The Most Expensive World Cup in History](#).

The instructor should prepare the PowerPoint slides and if online the breakout rooms for the group exercise.

Plan of Activities

Duration	Teacher Activity	Student Activity
5 min	Introducing the topic (slides 1 to 3)	
10 min	Show the slide 4 and give instructions to students.	Identify the costs and benefits linked to the event.
10 min	Show the slide 5 and give instructions to students.	Associate the costs and benefits to different interest groups and reflect on it.
5 min	Conclude by naming the take-away from the discussion (slide 6)	
Total: 30 min		

Student preparation work

Before the exercise, students should read [The Most Expensive World Cup in History](#).

The instructor can also recommend students watch [Qatar World Cup: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver](#). The video is 25 minutes long, and the most relevant sections start at 5 minutes into the video. Please be advised that the video contains strong language, including many curse words.

Presentation by the instructor

Slide 2 presents a number of the controversies surrounding the Qatar World Cup. The instructor can briefly introduce each of the topics listed, but does not need to go into much detail on any. The students will be invited to further explore the topics in the discussion.

Slide 3 refers to the required reading for the exercise. The instructor can point to the large gap between the expected costs (\$220 billion) and the expected economic benefits (\$20 billion). This implies that for whoever decided to host the World Cup in Qatar, there were benefits other than pure financial gain. In this case, the simple net financial benefit is misleading.

Slides 4 and 5 introduce the student activity (see below). To shape the discussion, the teacher can host the discussion with the whole group or invite students to gather in groups of 3 with their closest neighbours.

Slide 6 concludes with some takeaways. The instructor is also free to add or subtract points from this slide if there are other aspects of the exercise they would like to stress.

Student exercise

The exercise is two-fold. First, students are invited to list the costs and the benefits associated with the World Cup in Qatar. Costs can include: building the stadiums, violation of human rights with unpaid work and poor conditions of the foreign labour force, environmental costs, negative net financial cost of the event, lack of a free press and violence against journalists, absence of LGBTQ+ rights, and corruption of the host selection process. The benefits can include: technological innovation, international visibility, affirmation of Qatari participation in the global sport industry, profits of individual business, demonstration of political power, economic diversification, pride of fans in Qatar and across North Africa and Southwestern Asia, sharing of Arab culture...

Second, students are invited to reflect and identify interest groups to the different costs and benefits. They must associate a social group to each cost and benefit and then reflect on the following questions: "How do you think the decision was made? Do you think some groups worked together for Qatar to host the Cup? To resist it?" Here the students shall identify the 'winners and losers' of the holding of the event. Some national Qatari benefited especially those with interest in political visibility and in the sport industry. The foreign workers, the LGBTQ+ community, journalism (media and citizens seeking for information) and the environment are bearing the cost of the event.