

## 3 Billy Goats Gruff—Taxation Happens

The story centers on orphaned goats that are raised by their Granny. Granny is an old Nanny Goat, whose conversations are strung together with odd bits of wisdom and old sayings. It bothers Granny that the trolls are going to raise the toll for the bridge. Each of the goats has a distinct personality and some unique ways of viewing the situation. As no government currently directs the citizens, each goat tries his/her hand at running an economy.

The oldest, Mavis, is opinionated, bossy and rude. Mavis becomes angry when she hears about the price increase being raised in order to cover the costs of repairing the bridge. Encouraged by her friend Foxy, she chases away the posse of trolls who have manned the bridge for generations, and sets up camp at the bridge as the new leader of a **command economy**. At first, her friends humor her by participating in her little ruse, but as Mavis becomes more and more dictatorial, her friends and neighbors decide that they do not like having all their financial decisions (including their occupations) chosen for them. Mavis is removed from her position against her will, thus vacating the leadership position.



Her beatnik sister Franny is quick to volunteer. Franny believes in peace and love, and is certain that returning to a **traditional economy** would benefit everyone by helping them reconnect with nature. Money is replaced by a system of trading and bartering, and males and females assume traditional “hunter and gatherer roles.” This new system especially irritates the “Nannies,” a group of fussy consumers, who resent “gathering” and long to return to their more carefree days of “power shopping.” Franny steps down, disappointed that many choices without a specific system of currency (money) makes her world too complex to support traditional trading.

Meanwhile high in the mountains above, a wise old goat named Agatha observes the various economic systems and notes the progress in the valley below. She comments to her apprentice, “You can learn much about people by how they manage their economic resources.” Agatha encourages her student to also observe and evaluate before making decisions.

Finally, Danny, the youngest goat, calls a town meeting to discuss the economic needs of the village. During the meeting, he makes a case for a market economy and a system of taxation to pay for services that are needed for all, like upkeep of the bridge. The townspeople vote him in as the new leader. At Danny’s insistence, the town returns to dollars as a uniform system of currency. According to Danny, a market economy allows people to decide on what and how they will spend their money. Choices of occupation and shopping are restored and supply and demand will now determine the prices. The story closes with the townspeople in agreement. **Market economy** is not a perfect system, but it allows the most choices for individuals. Taxes pay for the protection they desire as citizens. The play closes with the entire cast singing “Supply and Demand” conferring that a market economy is the best option for them.

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