

The Family Heritage Series

A weekly discussion of Americanist truths and traditions for those "heirs of all the ages" who will have to preserve that most important inheritance of all – freedom. Produced by the Movement To Restore Decency.



Volume II

Lesson Eighty-Three

I, Pencil

LESSON IDEA

To show how the free enterprise system works in an almost miraculous way, coordinating thousands of different activities, to produce goods and services for us.

PREPARATION

Have on hand enough wooden lead pencils, with erasers, to give one to each family member.

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DO YOU RECALL the story of "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp"? If so, you will remember that it tells of a young boy who found a magical lamp containing a genie with the power to grant the wish of whoever rubbed the lamp.

This story from *The Arabian Nights* is, of course, mythical. But the fact is that we in America today have access to a *real* Aladdin's Lamp, which is also capable of supplying in abundance just about any material desire we may have. It is called the "free enterprise system," and it has proven itself magically capable of coordinating human energy with natural resources in a manner which has given our nation the highest standard of living of any country in the history of the world.

At first, it may seem an exaggeration to imply that the free enterprise system works in a magical way. But it is not, as we shall now see. [*At this point, hand everyone in the family a wooden lead pencil.*]

Do you believe any man or woman could make a pencil? [*Give everyone an opportunity to express an*

opinion.] At first, it would seem rather easy, wouldn't it? Especially when compared with what it would take to make something more complex, such as a television set or refrigerator. But before we jump to any conclusions, let's get a pencil's-eye view of what is involved.

If this pencil could tell us about itself, here is what it would say.

I AM A lead pencil – the ordinary wooden pencil familiar to all boys and girls and adults who can read and write. Writing is both my vocation, and my avocation; it is all I do.

You may wonder why I should tell you about myself. Well, to begin with, my story is interesting. And, next, I am a mystery – more so than a tree or a sunset or even a flash of lightning. But, sadly, I am taken for granted by those who use me.

Simple though I appear to be, I merit your wonder and awe, a claim I shall attempt to prove. In fact, if you can understand me, if you can become aware of the miracle I symbolize, you can help save the freedom mankind is so unhappily losing. I have a profound lesson to teach. And I can teach this lesson better than can an automobile or an airplane or a mechanical dishwasher. Why? Precisely because I do seem to be so simple.

Simple? Yet, *not a single person on the face of this earth knows how to make me.* That sounds fantastic, doesn't it? Especially when you realize that about one and one-half billion of my brothers

