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## E.V. students to vie in stock competition

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*MARKET LESSON: Jordan Bellows, left, and Derek Bell look up stock information for McDonald's while learning about the stock market Thursday in Cheri Compton's class at Desert Ridge High School. National Bank of Arizona's Jeff Pickles came in to teach the lesson to the students who will compete in the Stock Market Challenge on Thursday in Phoenix.*

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A fictitious Colorado burger company wants to open restaurants in the state and is issuing \$5 million in stock. What questions to ask before buying stock in the company was the scenario discussed by a senior internship class at Mesa's Desert Ridge High School in the Gilbert Unified School District. The students said they would want to know how successful the business is, where the restaurants will be located and how much money the company is investing in advertising.

Jeff Pickles, a small business administration loan specialist with National Bank of Arizona, led the class in the stock market discussions to prepare the students for this week's Junior Achievement Stock Market Challenge. The competition is Thursday at the Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa in Phoenix. "The stock market is part of life," said Pickles, who has been in banking since 1966. "The kids need a realization there is a stock market out there, that they have an opportunity to invest in the economy of America. "Students need to understand the economics to understand what's going on now. One of the shortcomings in education is they don't teach enough economics."

In the challenge, high school teams from around the Valley will compete to see who can make the most money in one morning using a fictitious New York Stock Exchange. Students will start with \$500,000 in mock stock, and then spend the morning buying and selling stock while receiving news releases and hot tips. Whoever has the biggest portfolio by lunch wins.

Desert Ridge will have nine teams at the challenge. Last year, one of the school's teams won third place, said business teacher Cheri Compton, who is taking her accounting and business internship students to the competition this year.

As the real stock market took a dive last week and investors wondered how they would recover, the students learned how to read a stock table, learned what dividend and yield mean, and played stock bingo.

Senior Derek Bell said he's interested in learning about the stock market so he can get ahead in business. He plans to go to culinary school and open his own restaurant. The 17-year-old first learned about the stock market from his dad, who was offered stock options when taking a new job. "I just hope I can get my group high above the rest," said Bell, a team leader in Thursday's Stock Market Challenge.

Senior Stephany Cedeno learned more about the stock market by looking up online the companies that she's interested in, such as Starbucks, Dillard's and Nordstrom. "I'm interested in learning how (the stock market) works, how it ends, and the good and the bad," said the 16-year-old, who wants to be a registered nurse. "I want to know how to get started and how (the stock) are in their place right now."