

A simple program to conduct a hand-run double auction in the classroom

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The double auction is one of the most popular classroom experiments. It's fun for students and easy to conduct. The double auction can be used in a variety of settings to illustrate a number of basic economic concepts. You do not need access to a computer lab to run a double auction. In fact, the hand-run environment is typically more enjoyable for the students. This web page contains all the material you need to conduct a double auction in the classroom. What is unique about the material on this page is that, in addition to the usual instructions and parameters, you can also download:

- a simple program called HandDA that displays bids, asks and trades, and saves the data,
- an Excel spreadsheet that will easily plot supply and demand step functions, and class results.

HandDA replaces the blackboard as a means of displaying trades and storing the data. The program is very simple and intuitive—just start typing in the trades as they occur. When connected to a laptop projector, the program projects this information onto an overhead screen. HandDA automatically saves the data in a simple text file from which you can plot results. The program is very easy to use. HandDA has been successfully tested with the following operating systems: Windows 95, 98 and XP Professional.

Excel does not plot step functions very well, unless you "trick" it. The site contains a spreadsheet that plots supply and demand step functions, and displays the results from three trading sessions. Immediately after trading is complete, you can quickly display the results to students, providing them with instant feedback. This spreadsheet will plot any set of supply and demand steps, so you might find it useful even if you choose not to use the HandDA program.