Dear Stock Market Game Teachers and Participants:

Ebola continues to occupy the headlines. A doctor who worked in West Africa with Ebola patients was in an isolation unit in New York City on Friday after testing positive for the virus, becoming the fourth person diagnosed with the disease in the United States and the first in New York City. In the wake of the news, the Dow Jones Industrial Average on Thursday eased off its highs, but U.S. stocks advanced on Friday, buoyed by gains in Microsoft and Procter & Gamble after their quarterly results were reported. The World Health Organization also eased some investors’ fears after it announced this morning that millions of doses of experimental Ebola vaccines will be produced by the end of 2015 and healthcare workers on the “frontline” in West Africa could receive them as soon as December of this year.

For those new to The Stock Market Game program, teaching students how to research is one of the greatest challenges faced during the semester. While investment guru Peter Lynch encourages the “buy what you know” strategy, students may also be ready to expand their search into different sectors or industries. A market sector is a subdivision of the economy. Each sector includes companies that provide the same types of products or services and often compete with each other for customers.

For example, the utility sector includes companies that provide consumers with electric power, natural gas, water, or a combination of these services. The sector may also include companies who produce power and those that trade it. Though they may generate electricity in different ways or drill for natural gas across the globe, these companies are all affected by changes in energy supplies, fluctuating prices, and government regulation.

To assist your students in researching sectors, the Global Industry Classification Standard (GICS) includes the following in their sector list: energy, materials, industrials, consumer discretionary, consumer staples, health care, financials, telecommunications services, information technology, and utilities. Be sure to also check out the Sector/Industry worksheet in the Teacher Support Center. Click “Teachers Guide” under the Getting Started section. The worksheet is located on page 15, “Where Do I Begin My Research.” Google Finance also allows the students to search by sectors at the bottom of their homepage. To view, click here. With the current Ebola news, perhaps your students should consider the healthcare sector?

And finally, want a great excuse to visit New York City this Fall? Look no further than the SIFMA Foundation’s Financial Education Workshop: Connecting Community & Classroom. The workshop is scheduled for Election Day, Tuesday, November 4, 2014, from 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM. The agenda includes a panel discussion with financial professionals fresh from the classroom thanks to the Invest It Forward program. The SIFMA Foundation staff will be at your disposal to answer questions, help you get started or enhance your current program. Click here for more information and how to register for the event. PD credits will be available!