

Guided Reading Level: M**Genre:** Fiction**Text Features:** illustrations**Lesson Objective: Social Studies**

Students will be able to identify the benefits and consequences of financial decisions and demonstrate effective decision-making strategies.

Essential Question

How can people make good decisions about spending a limited amount of money?

Lesson Objective: ELA

Students will be able to use a dictionary to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Background Knowledge

This text does not have page numbers. For easier reference for vocabulary, textual evidence, and student engagement, please number pages beginning with the title page as page 1, the dedication as page 3, and so on.

Ask students if they've ever heard someone say, "I've got money burning a hole in my pocket." Ask, *What do you think that figure of speech means?* Explain that when money is said to be burning a hole in your pocket, it means you have just gotten some money and are eager to spend it. Ask students if they have ever had money burning a hole in their pocket. Ask, *Did you spend it? If so, how? Were you glad you spent it, or did you wish you hadn't?* Tier Two and Three vocabulary from the book is listed below. Consider previewing selected vocabulary based upon the needs of your students before they read the text.

Vocabulary

absolutely (p. 26)	non-returnable (p. 29)
bubble gum (p. 16)	pennies (p. 23)
college (p. 12)	positively (p. 26)
dime (p. 5)	quarters (p. 5)
dollars (p. 5)	stinks (p. 13)
downtown (p. 13)	stoop (p. 17)
finned (p. 20)	telephone booths (p. 28)
lox (p. 10)	tokens (p. 7)
marble (p. 18)	walkie-talkie (p. 24)
nickels (p. 5)	



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Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday

by: Judith Viorst

Why This Text?

It's easy to feel "rich" when you have just gotten some money. It is also easy to spend it quickly, in unwise ways. In *Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday*, students will see how a boy spends the dollar his grandparents gave him, and why he regrets spending it in the way he does.

Preparing to Read

Explain that this is a fictional story written to teach readers about the importance of thinking carefully before spending money, especially if the money is a limited or small amount. Have students look through the illustrations in the book. Ask, *Who do you think is the main character?* (Alexander) Say, *Based on the illustrations, how does his mood change over the course of the story?* Allow several students to share their observations.

Reading Fiction Text

Discuss with students the value of a dollar, quarter, dime, nickel, and penny. Then divide students into small groups and give each group a dollar in play coins. Have students read through page 16. Have each group give you fifteen cents. Then have them continue reading through page 18. Again, collect fifteen cents from each group. Repeat this process for each of Alexander's expenditures and losses until all groups (and Alexander) have no coins left at all. Ask, *How do you think Alexander feels at the end of the story when he has spent all his money? Do you think he made wise choices?* Discuss Alexander's choices, asking students to support their thinking with text-based evidence.

Connect and Respond

1. *Why do both of Alexander's brothers have more than a dollar?* (Unlike Alexander, they save the money their grandparents give them.)
2. *Why does Alexander have no money at the end of the story?* (He can't seem to stop himself from spending money on things that he wants in the moment, even if they don't really make him happy later.)
3. *What does Alexander want to save money for?* Find evidence from the text to support your answer. ("Mom said if I really want to buy a walkie-talkie, save my money." p.15)

Dictionary Skills

Direct students to the word *tokens* (p. 7), which may be unfamiliar. Ask a student to look up the word *token* in a dictionary and read the definitions aloud. Point out that some of the definitions are for a noun and some are for an adjective. Ask students to identify how the word is being used in the text, whether it is a noun or adjective. Then guide them to choose the correct definition for the context. Encourage students to use a dictionary in this way whenever they encounter a word they do not understand. Divide students into small groups or pairs. Assign each group or pair with a few words from the vocabulary list. Have students find their words and record the definition, and then find the page where each word is used in the text. Allow time for all groups or pairs to complete this exercise. Then have each group or pair share each word they were assigned, where they found it in the text, and what that word means.

Language Arts Activity

Review with students what the “Five w’s and an h” are. (who, what, when, where, why, and how). Write the words and display for all to see. Invite students to look at each illustration in the text and answer the five w’s and an h for each illustration.

Social Studies Activity

Activity 1

Ask students to explain the difference between wants and needs. Discuss several student responses.

- Read aloud page 25. Point out that Alexander said he *needed* the candle, the bear, and the deck of cards, but did he really?
- Where all can see, draw a T-chart. Label one column *Needs* and the other column *Wants*. Say, *We all need certain things to live. What are they?* Write students’ suggestions in the *Needs* column, guiding them toward an understanding of needs as things people cannot survive without. Then say, *We all want some things too. What kinds of things do we sometimes want but don’t really need?*
- Ask, *Are the things that Alexander buys wants or needs?* Ask students to explain how they know if these items are a need or a want.

Activity 2

Explain to students that they are going to practice spending money wisely. Provide each student with \$20 of play money and weekly circulars from a grocery or other stores.

- Provide students with a shopping list of items they *need* to buy for their household. The list should be tailored to what is available in the circulars and what can be bought for less than \$20.
- Tell them that they must use their money to buy all of the things on the list, but they may use what’s left to buy something in the circular that they want rather than need. Have them search the circulars for each item on the list and write down the cost, subtracting it from the \$20 total. Then they should write down the item that they *want* and its price.
- Once students have done their shopping, compare results and discuss.

Materials/Resources Needed

paper
pencils
grocery or other store circulars
play money

Support English Learning

Offer realia, gestures, or photos to support the introduction of new vocabulary.

English learners may be unfamiliar with the names and values of U.S. coins. Provide additional support to assist these students, including the opportunity to interact with real coins.

English learners may be unfamiliar with some idiomatic phrasing and slang used in the text, including *stinks*, *too dumb to be let loose*, *ratty*, *garage sale*, *telephone booths*, and *dopey*. Provide additional support to help them understand these words and phrases.

Some English learners may also be unfamiliar with the tradition of getting money under one’s pillow for a lost tooth. If necessary, explain this tradition when they encounter it in the text.