

# Understanding Financial Literacy through "The Berenstein Bears' Trouble with Money"

**Objective:** Students will be able to identify the importance of making choices with money, distinguish needs versus wants, and create a simple budget based on the story "The Berenstein Bears' Trouble with Money".

**Assessment:** Students will complete a T-Chart where they list examples of needs and wants from the story and allocate a budget for Mama and Papa Bear's shopping list.

## Key Points:

- Differentiate between needs and wants
- Explore the concept of budgeting
- Reflect on the consequences of making poor financial decisions

## Opening:

Students will engage in a class discussion about the importance of money and decisions we make about how to spend it. They will be asked to think about a time when they had to decide between spending money on something they needed versus something they wanted. *Optional Aid: Bring a bag with photos or props of needs and wants (ie. milk carton, toy car, shoes, shampoo, etc.)*

## Introduction to New Material:

Key points will be introduced through a read-aloud of "The Berenstein Bears' Trouble with Money". The common misconception to anticipate is that more money always means more happiness.

## Guided Practice:

Students will work in small groups or pairs to brainstorm needs and wants in the story. Students should record their responses on sticky notes. Bring students back to the whole group to create a T-chart poster where students are called one at a time to post their sticky notes on the need or want column of the chart. Have students explain their thinking and have the class agree or disagree with the explanation.

Using the items listed on Resource 1 (Family Shopping), and the fake money, work with students to discuss budgeting the money they have as a class family. They will practice creating a simple budget for the Bear family's shopping using play money. Monitoring student performance will involve circulating the room and providing guidance as needed.

## Independent Practice:

Have the students fill out Resource 2 (Needs vs. Wants). Then, take the opportunity to discuss it! The book and brand name shoes may be difficult for students. They may be confused as to whether these are "needs" or "wants." They can be both. Explain that some books are needed, like school books. Reading a book for fun would be a "want," yet we encourage it. Remind the students that the library is available to borrow fun books from! The tennis shoes will likely cause discussion because children think they need clothing, but a specific brand shoe would actually be a want.

## Closing:

As a closing activity, share the quote on the title page of the book "When little bears spend every nickel and penny, the trouble with money is they never have any!" Ask students to turn and talk to their neighbor about the quote and how it relates to the story. You will then call on students to share what their neighbor said.

## Extension Activity:

An extension activity for students who finish early is to create a visual representation (poster, drawing) of the Bear family's problem and the solution of the story.

## Family Extension:

At home, students are encouraged to discuss with their family about needs, wants, and the importance of making choices with money.

## Standards Addressed:

- Common Core State Standard: CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.MD.C.8
- Solve word problems involving dollar bills, quarters, dimes, nickels, and pennies, using \$ and ¢ symbols
- Jump\$tart Coalition National Standards in K-12 Personal Finance Education: Standard 1 – Earned Income

# Family Shopping



\$20.00



\$100.00



\$50.00



\$5.00



\$10.00



\$50.00



\$20.00



\$10.00



\$100.00



\$30.00



\$5.00



\$50.00

# Needs vs. Wants

