



Cha-Ching Classroom Activity Please Little Spender, Think

Overview: In this activity, students gain insight into the thought process people should go through before making a decision to spend money. They begin by considering a fictional scenario in which the teacher provides each student with money and takes them to a store. They describe what they would do with the money and how much they would expect to have upon returning. Students then use two financial idioms to characterize their choices. Next, students work in small groups to consider scenarios in which people are faced with a spending or shopping dilemma. They engage in a small-group discussion and then work together to create a way to share their situation and lessons in an engaging way with the class (poster, commercial, text message discussion, or skit). The lesson concludes with students sharing what they created and discussing the lessons they learned.

Target Audience: Grades 3–6

Activity Duration: Two 45–60 minute class sessions (Second session may be needed for students to finish their projects.)

Essential Questions

- Why do people buy things they don't need?
- What should people think about before spending money?
- How do advertisements and/or peers influence a person's decision to spend money?
- What do people give up when they choose to spend money? What are the possible consequences of spending versus saving?

Objectives

Students will:

- Describe their personal spending preferences
- Examine the meaning of common financial idioms
- Consider situations in which people should think before spending money
- Discuss possible consequences of spending money versus saving it
- Prepare a creative presentation on ways people should think before they spend

Activity Vocabulary

- Choices
- Consequences

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- Idiom
- Shopaholic
- Spend

Materials

- Video: [Please Little Spender, Think](#)
- Handout: *A Trip to the Store* (one copy per student)
- Handout: *Penny Pincher Sign* (one copy)
- Handout: *Burn a Hole in Your Pocket Sign* (one copy)
- Handout: *Please Little Spender, Think Situations* (one copy per student of a single situation)
- Optional Handout: *Please Little Spender, Think Lyrics*
- Tape

Optional Materials

- Poster board, construction paper, etc. for making posters or signs
- Markers or crayons for making posters or signs

Other Cha-Ching Episodes Related to Spending Wisely

- [Cha-Cha Choices](#)
- [Grow Money](#)
- [Spend Your Money Wisely My Friend](#)
- [Big Big Waste of Money](#)
- [So Yesterday](#)

Procedure

1. Inform students that you are going to be watching a Cha-Ching video about spending but that you want them to consider a scenario before you do. Tell them to imagine that you are taking the whole class to a store and giving each one \$10 to use how they would like. Suggest a store you believe will have general appeal to your students, such as Target, Walmart, or Five Below. Invite students to think about what they would do with the money you give them.
2. Distribute a copy of *A Trip to the Store* to each student. Direct students to use the top of the page to draw a picture or write a sentence or two about how they would use their money. At the bottom of the page, they should circle how much money they expect to have left when they return to class (\$0–\$10).
3. While students complete the handout, hang the *Penny Pincher* and *Burn a Hole in Your Pocket Signs* on opposite sides of the classroom.

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4. Direct students' attention to the first sign, *Penny Pincher*. Ask if anyone knows what it means to be a penny pincher. Does it mean that a person actually pinches a penny between their fingers?
5. If students are already familiar with various forms of figurative language, ask students if "penny pincher" is a metaphor, idiom, or proverb.
6. Let students know that "penny pincher" is an idiom because it is a group of words having a meaning that you cannot figure out from the individual words. Explain that a penny pincher is someone who does not spend money easily or often.
7. Point out the other sign, *Burn a Hole in Your Pocket*. Tell students this is another idiom. Challenge students to provide a meaning for the phrase. If necessary, explain that the idiom refers to someone who has a hard time saving money. When money is in their pocket, all they can think about is spending it.
8. Return students' attention to their *A Trip to the Store* handout. Direct students who indicated that they would return back to class with no money (\$0) to stand up and move close to the *Burn a Hole in Your Pocket* sign. Ask students who said they would spend no money and return with \$10 to stand near the *Penny Pincher* sign. Direct the remaining students to stand between the two signs in order (from \$1 to \$9).
9. Call on several students to share what they would do with their money, how much they said they would return with, and what they thought about when choosing how to use their money.
10. Continue the conversation by asking students to discuss whether they thought about what they would give up (or not purchase) to buy what they ultimately selected. Ask the following questions:
 - What are the consequences of spending versus saving?
 - What are the consequences of saving versus spending?

Note: Be sure to emphasize that neither spending nor saving is "good" or "bad," but it is important to know that each choice comes with consequences. Consequences might include not having enough money to buy something we need, choosing to go without one thing so we can buy another later, or having money saved to pay for an emergency. (Consider viewing the [Just in Case](#) video at a later time to help students understand this concept.)

11. Have students think about stores they have visited and commercials they have seen. Ask them to discuss any tips or tricks stores and ads use to try to get people to spend money. Engage students in a conversation about techniques such as going-out-of-business sales, one-day-only sales, special deals for members, people looking happy using the product, and so on.
12. While students are still standing, help them count off for future group work (or assign them to small groups using your preferred method). There will be four scenarios to choose from. The same situation can be used for more than one group. Decide how many groups you will want and direct students to count off accordingly. When counting off, be sure to start with one end of the line of students and end at the other. This will help to make sure you have students who responded in different ways (penny pinchers versus those whose money burns a hole in their pockets) when doing their group work later.



13. Show the video [Please Little Spender, Think](#).
14. After the video, ask students if they think Pepper is a penny pincher or if her money was burning a hole in her pocket. If necessary, remind students that Pepper is referred to as a shopaholic in the video. Challenge students to consider how a shopaholic might think about money as burning a hole in their pocket.
15. Ask if any students noticed what Prudence told Pepper at the beginning of the video. Remind them that Prudence cautioned Pepper not to spend all of her money at the store because she would need some of it to buy her concert ticket. Ask students to discuss whether or not Pepper should have gone to the concert (i.e., Were there consequences for her choices? Should there have been consequences? What were the consequences of her choices?).
16. Inform students that they will be working in small groups to consider ways that other little spenders could be encouraged to think before they spend. They should think about how they might counteract the tips and tricks that stores and advertisers use to try to get us to spend money. Direct students to join their group members in a specified area of the room.
17. Distribute a situation and directions from *Please Little Spender, Think Situations* to each student. Members of each group should receive the same situation. *Note: For younger students, make sure there is a strong reader in each group or move to each group and read their situation page to them aloud as they follow along.*
18. Allow students time to collaborate.
19. Invite each group to present their final product. Request that each group read their situation and explain which option they chose for presenting (poster, commercial, text message, or skit). Ask a group member to provide the explanation or additional information associated with their choice for presenting.
20. To close the activity, ask students to reflect on and share their takeaways about what they think they should think about before spending money or going shopping. Over the next few days and weeks, ask students to continue to share examples of advertising tips and tricks they have seen in stores or on television. Ask them to share their thinking about whether or not being aware of the tips and tricks helps them be more thoughtful about their spending.

Optional Extension

Invite students to consider whether sales always save people money. Challenge students to locate ads in which people receive a discount for buying multiples of an item. Grocery store weekly ads are a great place to start one's search. Direct students to "do the math" and determine how much money is saved by purchasing a larger quantity of the item. Discuss what else shoppers should consider when making the decision. For example, is it always a good deal if you aren't sure you can finish something before it expires?



National Standards

National Standards in Financial Literacy from the Council for Economic Education

2. Buying Goods and Services

People cannot buy or make all the goods and services they want; as a result, people choose to buy some goods and services and not buy others. People can improve their economic well-being by making informed spending decisions, which entails collecting information, planning, and budgeting.

- 2.BM.4.2 People make choices about what goods and services they buy because they can't have everything they want. This requires individuals to prioritize their wants.
- 2.BM.4.3 People spend a portion of their income on goods and services in order to increase their personal satisfaction or happiness.
- 2.BM.4.4 Whenever people buy something, they incur an opportunity cost. Opportunity cost is the value of the next best alternative that is given up when a person makes a choice.
- 2.BM.4.5 Informed decision making requires comparing the costs and benefits of spending alternatives. Costs are things that a decision maker gives up; benefits are things that a decision maker gains.
- 2.BM.4.6 People's spending choices are influenced by prices as well as many other factors, including advertising, the spending choices of others, and peer pressure.
- 2.BM.4.7 Planning for spending can help people make informed choices. A budget is a plan for spending, saving, and managing income.

Common Core English Language Arts

Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

- L.4.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- L.4.5.B Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.
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C3 Framework for Social Studies

Dimension 2, Economic Decision Making

- D2.Eco.1.3-5. Compare the benefits and costs of individual choices.
- D2.Eco.2.3-5. Identify positive and negative incentives that influence the decisions people make.



Please Little Spender, Think

Lyrics

I can't wait for the concert! I'm going to celebrate by going shopping!
Pepper, don't go crazy at the store!
You need enough money to buy your concert ticket, remember?
Sorry, Prudence, gotta go! See you tonight! Buy one get one free, limited time only. Let's go shopping!

This is my time, this is buy time.
Hear that till it's going bing, bing, bing
All the things love, my heart sings love,
I feel this store has been made just for me, me, me!
It's made for your money. You watched the TV, it promised freebies.
It's 50% so I can buy twice as much. It's cool to buy stuff but have you thought enough?
Wasting time talking when there's money to spend.
There's money to spend!

You're a shopaholic, you need everything now, you rack up quite a bill.
You're a shopaholic, you spare no time to think. Love the excitement and the thrill.

The savings have gone. Look and you will see,
All the things you're buying, they are not free!
Please little spender, think!

You choose quantity over quality, lots of bags, so many swing tags
It's not a race girl, there's no first place girl!
Every step I take, I see something that's me. That's totally me!
I'm at the till now, was like really how?
You're about to spend loads of money, everything you have.
My purse is empty, now how can that be?
You didn't weigh it up and now there's no cash left. Oh, there's no cash left?

Consider all your options now, be smart before you start.
Consider all your options now before filling up your cart.
The savings have gone. Look and you will see
All the things you're buying, they are not free!
Please little spender, think!

Spending's got the better of me, but I'm not going to let it.
Please little spender, think!
Thinking more is my goal!

Consider all your options now, be smart before you start
Don't want your savings to go, a-ah! On just one shopping spree, no way!
You'll be better off financially, on that we can agree.
Please little spender, think!



Trip to the Store

Directions: Imagine your teacher is taking your entire class to the store. You will each receive \$10 to use as you wish. How will you use it? How much of the ten dollars do you expect to have when you get back?

1. How would you use the money? Why? Draw a picture or write 1–2 sentences.

2. Of the \$10, how much do you think you would still have when you return back to school? Circle the amount below.

\$0 \$1 \$2 \$3 \$4 \$5 \$6 \$7 \$8 \$9 \$10

Penny Pincher Sign

PENNY PINCHER



Money Burns a Hole in Your Pocket Sign

**MONEY
BURNS
A HOLE
IN YOUR
POCKET**



Please Little Spender, Think Situation #1 Buy One, Get One

Situation: A person goes to the store and sees a big sign announcing a sale. If you buy one, you will get one free.

Directions:

1. In your groups, discuss the questions below. Be sure to let each group member contribute to the conversation.
 - Have you ever seen a sale like this where you can get something for free if you buy one at full price? If so, what was on sale?
 - How do “Buy One, Get One” or BOGO sales make shoppers feel?
 - What should a person think about before buying something that is on a “Buy One, Get One” sale?
2. Choose one of the methods below to share this situation with your classmates and what you think people should think about when it happens.
 - **Poster:** Create a poster with a brief saying or slogan showing something people should think about when they see a sale sign. Be prepared to share the poster with the class and explain why you think it will be effective in making people think before they spend.
 - **Commercial:** Develop a short commercial that helps shoppers think about the ads they see for sales on shows or online. Be prepared to act out the commercial for your classmates and explain why you think it will be effective in making people think before they spend. Consider who it is good for, the customer or the business? Why?
 - **Text Messages:** Write a text message conversation between two friends who are discussing whether or not to buy something just because it is on sale. Make sure one friend encourages the other to think before he or she buys the item. Be prepared to read the messages aloud to the class and explain why the friend giving advice was or was not successful.
 - **Skit:** Prepare a short skit in which one group member pretends to be a child who wants to buy something because it is on sale. Another group member should play the role of a parent who encourages the child to think before spending his or her hard-earned money. Make sure you show whether the child purchased the item in the end or not. Be prepared to act out the skit and explain why you chose the ending you selected.



Please Little Spender, Think Situation #2 Need it? Want it?

Situation: A friend says that he needs the newest pair of headphones that just came out. They are the best ever and will be better than the ones he already owns. You ask if he really “needs” them.

Directions:

1. In your groups, discuss the questions below. Be sure to let each group member contribute to the conversation.
 - What advice would you give your friend in this situation? Why?
 - Have you ever thought you needed something when you really just wanted it? Did you buy it anyway? Why?
2. Choose one of the methods below to share this situation with your classmates and what you think people should think about when it happens.
 - **Poster:** Create a poster with a brief saying or slogan showing something people should think about when they think they need something. Be prepared to share the poster with the class and explain why you think it will be effective in making people think before they spend. Consider who it is good for, the customer or the business? Why?
 - **Commercial:** Develop a short commercial that helps shoppers think about whether something is a want or a need. Be prepared to act out the commercial for your classmates and explain why you think it will be effective in making people think before they spend. Consider who it is good for, the customer or the business? Why?
 - **Text Messages:** Write a text message conversation between two friends who are discussing whether or not to buy something the one says he or she “needs.” Make sure one friend encourages the other to think before he or she buys the item. Be prepared to read the messages aloud to the class and explain why the friend giving advice was or was not successful.
 - **Skit:** Prepare a short skit in which one group member pretends to be a child who wants to buy something because he or she “needs” it. Another group member should play the role of a parent who encourages the child to think before spending his or her hard-earned money. Make sure you show whether the child purchased the item in the end or not. Be prepared to act out the skit and explain why you chose the ending you selected.



Please Little Spender, Think Situation #3 My Time, Buy Time

Situation: A friend wants to go shopping because he or she is bored. It is a favorite pastime that usually ends up in the friend spending money on things that are unnecessary.

Directions:

1. In your groups, discuss the questions below. Be sure to let each group member contribute to the conversation.
 - Do you like to go shopping?
 - Have you ever gone shopping or asked to be taken shopping because you were bored?
 - What advice would you give to a friend in this situation? Why?
 - Have you ever missed out on something because you spent all your money?
2. Choose one of the methods below to share this situation with your classmates and what you think people should think about when it happens.
 - **Poster:** Create a poster with a brief saying or slogan showing something people should think about when they want to go shopping because they are bored. Be prepared to share the poster with the class and explain why you think it will be effective in making people think before they spend. Consider who it is good for, the customer or the business? Why?
 - **Commercial:** Develop a short commercial that helps people decide if shopping is a good use of time when they are bored. Be prepared to act out the commercial for your classmates and explain why you think it will be effective in making people think before they spend. Consider who it is good for: the customer or the business? Why?
 - **Text Messages:** Write a text message conversation between two teenage friends who are discussing whether or not to go shopping because they have nothing else to do. Make sure one friend encourages the other to think before he or she goes shopping. Be prepared to read the messages aloud to the class and explain why the friend giving advice was or was not successful.
 - **Skit:** Prepare a short skit in which one group member pretends to be a child who wants to go shopping because he or she is bored. Another group member should play the role of a parent who encourages the child to think before spending his or her hard-earned money. Make sure you show whether the child is allowed to go shopping. Be prepared to act out the skit and explain why you chose the ending you selected.



Please Little Spender, Think Situation #4 Quantity Over Quality

Situation: Whenever a friend gets more money, it is spent on more and more stuff. He or she says that more is always better.

Directions:

1. In your groups, discuss the questions below. Be sure to let each group member contribute to the conversation.
 - What is something kids might buy in large quantities or buy multiple times?
 - In the video, Pepper chooses “quantity over quality” at the flower shop (1:22). What do you think they mean by quantity over quality?
 - What advice would you give to a friend who buys things that are lower quality instead of saving up for one that is better quality? Why?
2. Choose one of the methods below to share this situation with your classmates and what you think people should think about when it happens.
 - **Poster:** Create a poster with a brief saying or slogan showing something people should think about when they want to buy more and more of an item. Be prepared to share the poster with the class and explain why you think it will be effective in making people think before they spend. Consider who it is good for, the customer or the business? Why?
 - **Commercial:** Develop a short commercial that helps people decide if they should buy more inexpensive items or one nicer and more expensive item. Be prepared to act out the commercial for your classmates and explain why you think it will be effective in making people think before they spend. Consider who it is good for, the customer or the business? Why?
 - **Text Messages:** Write a text message conversation between two friends who are discussing whether or not to buy three cheap items (such as t-shirts) or one nice one. Make sure one friend encourages the other to think about the options. Be prepared to read the messages aloud to the class and explain why the friend giving advice was or was not successful.
 - **Skit:** Prepare a short skit in which one group member pretends to be a child who wants to buy multiples of a less expensive item. Another group member should play the role of a parent who encourages the child to get one nicer item that will last longer. Make sure you show the child's choice in the end. Be prepared to act out the skit and explain why you chose the ending you selected.