



## A Bike Like Sergio's by Maribeth Boelts

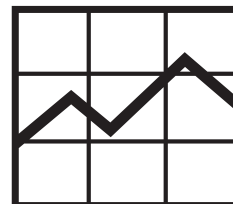
This story provides students with an opportunity to consider how peoples' wants and needs can change or be adjusted depending on circumstances. This lesson will help students:

1. Develop an understanding that money can only be spent once;
2. Remind readers of the importance of making thoughtful financial decisions;
3. Introduce the concept that wants and needs can be reviewed in rank order.

**Time Limit:** 40 minutes

### Supplies Needed:

- *A Bike Like Sergio's* by Maribeth Boelts
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Worksheet copies for all students



## Individual Circumstances Impact Wants and Needs

**(1) (5 minutes)** A want is a thing you enjoy but could live without. A need is something you must have to survive. Have you ever considered that a person's decisions about what they want, or what they need, are impacted by how much money they have? For example, say that you have very little money after you pay for all the "needs" in your life -- this would make it more challenging to buy extra things than for a person who has a lot of money. How would the amount of money a person has impact their spending decisions? (*Discuss*)

**(2) (10 minutes)** We're going to read a story about Ruben, a young person who comes from a family that doesn't have as much money as some of his friends' families. As we read along, keep track of the way Ruben's money decisions are guided by his family's finances. *Read the story.*

**(3) Go to page 3 of the book.** Ruben's friend Sergio has a new bike. Ruben's family doesn't have the money to buy him a bike as a birthday gift. Do you think Ruben wants a new bike?

Answer: Yes. Ruben wants a bike, but recognizes his family doesn't have extra money for a bike after they pay for needed living expenses. *Remind students that a person's wants or needs can change based on factors that they may or may not control.*

**(4) Go to page 5 of the book.** Sergio is able to buy baseball cards with family money, while Ruben has to use his family's money to buy bread. Is bread (food) a want or a need?

Answer: Food is a need. The baseball cards Sergio buys are wants, and he is able to buy them because his family has extra money.

**(5) Go to page 6 of the book.** Ruben finds a dollar bill on the floor and keeps it to himself. Why?



Answer: Ruben had just watched Sergio buy baseball cards, which are a want. Ruben was probably thinking about how finding a dollar could help him buy cards of his own. Ruben didn't think to question whether the woman who lost the money had needs that were more important than his want.

**(5) Go to page 9 of the book.** Ruben found the dollar bill assuming it was \$1.00, not \$100.00. What did Ruben think of when he discovered the true value of the bill -- wants or needs?

Answer: Ruben thought of his want to buy a bike like Sergio's. Not a need.

**(6) Go to page 15 of the book.** Ruben plans to tell his mom that he found \$100.00 and would like to spend it on a new bike. Why do you think he stops short of telling her about it while she makes a grocery list?

Answer: Ruben sees that his mom does not have enough money to buy all the groceries on her shopping list. He knows that money is limited and can only be used once. Spending \$100.00 on a bike when his family has many needs, like food, may not be the most responsible use.

**(7) Go to page 25 of the book.** When Ruben comes face to face with the woman who dropped the \$100.00, he decides he will return her money. ***Make the assumption that the woman, as an adult, probably has more pressing needs for the \$100.00 than Ruben does as a child who wants to buy a bike. Discuss with students why Ruben returned the money.***

**(8) Go to page 29 of the book.** The woman is thrilled when Ruben returns her lost money. Based on her reaction, do you think she was going to use the money for wants or for needs?

Answer: It seems like the woman had real needs for the money, like food.

**(9) Go to page 31 of the book.** Ruben returns home and tells his parents about the \$100.00. What do you think he means when he says "with my family all around and my birthday almost here ... I am proud, too"? ***Allow students to discuss before moving on to activities.***

**For Younger Students** *distribute the coloring worksheet and encourage students to discuss how Ruben and the woman's wants differed due to their individual needs. Again, consider discussing how an adult's needs could differ from a child's. You can discuss financial decision making and the benefits and costs of different choices.*

**For Older Students** *have a discussion about how limited financial resources impact the choices individuals make. Point out that an individual who has less financial means has to be more discerning as they prioritize wants.*