



## The Four Money Bears by Mac Gardner

This book introduces the basic concepts and decisions of budgeting. This exercise provides the opportunity to:

1. Teach how planning helps people make short-, mid-, and long-term money choices;
2. Introduce spending, saving, investing, and sharing as ways to use money; and
3. Explore how saving today impacts current spending decisions to achieve future goals.

**Time Limit:** 40 minutes

### Supplies Needed:

- *The Four Money Bears* by Mac Gardner
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Worksheet copies for all students



## How Does Budgeting Help us Reach Short- and Long-Term Goals?

**(1) (5 minutes)** Before starting the lesson, make four categories on the white board labeled “Spending,” “Saving,” “Investing,” and “Sharing.” Have you ever thought about where money comes from? Most adults make money by working at a job -- they earn an income. Income is money people earn for work. If you had money, what would you do with it? **Allow for discussion and write down student answers, placing them under the associated heading on the white board.**

**(2) (10 minutes)** Reference the student-generated whiteboard lists and highlight examples of spending, saving, investing, or sharing. Some of you said you’d spend your money. Others said you’d save or share it. Your money goals might change depending on how much income you have. Today I’m going to read you a story about the different things we can do with our money.

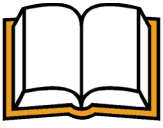
**Read the story.**

**(3) Go to page 2.** When we visit the store to shop, we have to make decisions about how we spend money. One way to make decisions is to think about our money goals. A goal is something somebody wants to achieve. In the story, Papa Bear sensed that Mimi and JJ didn’t understand how to set money goals. What does it mean to set a goal? **Take answers.**

Answer: Goal setting is the process of identifying something that someone wants to achieve and creating a plan for how the goal will be achieved. **Hold up a pencil.** For example, our goal might be to buy a pencil.

**(4) Go to page 3.** What are the four things we can do with money?

Answer: 1) Spend money for a good or a service. 2) Save money by limiting our spending today so we can buy something in the future. 3) Invest money today in a bank or business so we can make it grow for years to come. 4) Share money to help those in need.



**(5) Go to pages 6 and 7.** In order to spend, save, invest, and share, you have to set goals. If Spender Bear set a goal for something he wanted to achieve with his money, do you think he'd have more money left over than just spending it all? **Take answers.** Without clear goals, Spender Bear would spend all of his money and have nothing left over.

**(6) Go to pages 8 and 9.** Saving is a great goal because you can save for next week, next month, or even next year! Why do you think Saver Bear didn't have any money left over to spend? **Take answers.** It's hard to spend or share if all your money goes into savings.

**(7) Go to pages 10 and 11.** Investing is using money with the goal of growing it to make a profit. Investing is often a long-term goal. What happened when Investor Bear invested all of his money? **Take answers.** If you invest all your money for a long-term goal, you don't have any for your shorter-term goals.

**(8) Go to pages 12 and 13.** Giving and sharing money is also very important. You can give money to a charity, an organization that shares resources with a person, or group of people, in need. What happened when Giver Bear gave away all of her money? **Take answers.** Giver Bear's goal of sharing seemed to get in the way of other money goals, such as spending and saving.

**(9) Go to pages 14 and 15.** The Four Money Bears realize that if they work together they can balance their money goals for now and for the future. What do they create to achieve a balanced money plan? **Take answers.**

Answer: A budget is a spending plan for managing money during a specific period of time. Their budget is built to ensure they 1) spend cautiously, 2) save diligently, 3) invest wisely, and 4) give generously.

**(9) Go to pages 20 and 21.** By building a budget to manage their money, the bear family can achieve their goals. **Review the ways they spend, save, invest, and share on page 21. Use this as a segue to the budget worksheet on page 22 of the book, or handout the worksheets contained on pages 15, 16, and 17 of this curriculum guide.**

**For Younger Students** Show Discovery Education's Cha-Ching video segment "Earn, Save, Spend and Donate" prior to taking up the worksheets. Visit <https://vimeo.com/210257887>. This 3:00 long video will reinforce the themes in the Four Money Bears. Once complete, distribute one of the activity worksheets on the following pages of this curriculum guide.

**For Older Students** Scholastic offers a great worksheet to help students understand spending and saving decisions. Visit [http://www.scholastic.com/regions/pdf/RegionsYR2-StudentWorksheet4\\_3-5.pdf](http://www.scholastic.com/regions/pdf/RegionsYR2-StudentWorksheet4_3-5.pdf) to access the worksheet. This piece is a good supplement to the Make a Monthly Budget worksheet in this curriculum guide.