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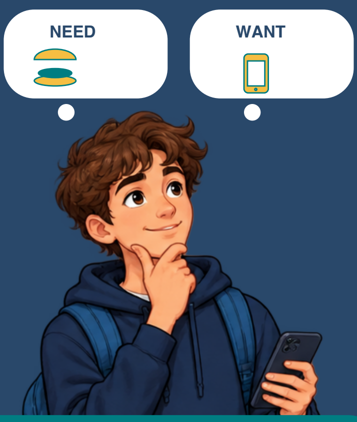
ACHIEVE TRANSFORMATION

Financial Literacy Lesson
Needs vs Wants

Grades 9-12 I 55 minutes



Lesson Purpose

Help students distinguish essential expenses from optional purchases, explain how circumstances affect choices, and prioritize spending within a limit.

Learning Objectives

Students will classify purchases with a reason, compare need and want spending, and revise a shopping plan to fit a budget.

Teacher Lesson Outline

0-6 I 6 min	Need, Want, or Depends?
6-12 I 6 min	Video (3:31) + definitions
12-17 I 5 min	Debrief + essential questions
17-32 I 15 min	Receipt detectives in groups
32-42 I 10 min	Budget remix + share
42-51 I 9 min	Spending map + partner reflection
51-55 I 4 min	Individual exit ticket

PRACTICE SHOPPING

Lunch	$6.00
Cable	$8.00
Toy	$10.00

SAME MONEY.
DIFFERENT
CHOICES!

Queue the existing Needs vs Wants video. Give each student page 4; give each group one receipt (pages 6-10). Worksheets: pages 11-13. Teacher guides: pages 5 and 14. Prices are fictional; no tax.

Exit Ticket

Students independently explain needs vs wants, prioritize two essential purchases, and describe how context changes a choice.

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START: Essential Questions

Q **What are some basic needs?**
Food, water, shelter and suitable clothing. Health, hygiene, transport and school access may also be essential.

Q **When do you ask, "Do I need this?"**
What is the purpose? Is there a usable alternative? What happens if the purchase is delayed?

Q **Can the same item be a need or a want?**
Compare required headphones for school with a premium upgrade when a working pair is available.

Q **How does a budget guide a choice?**
Cover essential needs first; optional purchases must fit the money available.

Education Standards

SSEPF2: Analyze income as a scarce resource that can be allocated effectively through budgeting.

Georgia ' s Personal Financial Literacy SSPFL2b: Differentiate between needs and wants.

Lesson Materials

Existing Needs vs Wants video (3:31)
One receipt per group
Worksheets + exit ticket
Pencils, calculators, timer

QUICK CHECK: What is a budget?

A plan for how available money will be used, including spending and saving.

Discuss choices. Explain the situation. Respect different resources.

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MY MONEY GROWS / LESSON 2

Run the activities

Teacher facilitation I Minutes 0-55

OPENING FACILITATION I Minutes 0-17

0-6: Use student page 4. Allow 2 minutes for initial choices, 2 minutes to hear the teacher-only details on page 5 and record final choices, and 2 minutes for partner discussion.
6-12: Play the 3:31 video; use the remaining 2:29 for definitions. Without video, explain and give examples for six minutes.
12-17: Spend 2 minutes reviewing one changed choice, 2 minutes on page 2 questions and 1 minute connecting choices to a budget.

17-32 I Receipt detectives (15 min)

2 min: Form groups of 3-4; assign reader, recorder, calculator and reporter (combine roles if needed). Give each group one receipt, pages 6-10.
6 min: Read the shopper scenario; mark every item N (need) or W (want). Explain uncertain choices using the scenario.
4 min: Calculate need and want subtotals; check that they add to the receipt total.
3 min: Share one choice and its evidence.

32-42 I Budget remix (10 min)

1 min: Reveal the spending limit on the receipt. 5 min: Keep essential purchases first; select optional purchases only if money remains. List what to keep, what to remove and the revised total. 4 min: Groups report the plan, money left and one tradeoff. Choosing to save leftover money is allowed.

42-51 I My spending map (9 min)

1 min: Explain page 11. 4 min: Students list six actual or fictional monthly purchases, estimates and classifications. 3 min: Use page 12 to compare one choice with a partner and revise it if warranted. 1 min: Write a personal decision rule. Students need not disclose household finances.

51-55 I Exit ticket (4 min)

3 min: Students independently complete page 13. 1 min: Collect and close: identify the purpose, check alternatives, cover essential needs and stay within the budget. Review with the criteria on page 14.

TEACHER NOTES / ADAPTATIONS (editable)

Add accommodations, local examples or implementation notes.

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Student Opening Activity

Need, Want, or Depends? I Before the video I Minutes 0-6

Name: ________________________ Date: _____________

1. CHOOSE (2 min): Read each situation. Circle Need, Want, or Depends.
2. LISTEN + DECIDE (2 min): Your teacher reads a new detail for each situation. Circle your final choice: Need or Want. Write a few words explaining why.
3. DISCUSS (2 min): Tell a partner: Did your choice change? Which detail helped you decide?

Depends means you need more information about the shopper situation. Keep the final-choice spaces blank until your teacher reads the added details.

1. A student buys headphones.

First choice: Need / Want / Depends

After the new detail - final choice: Need / Want

Why? ____

2. A student buys new sneakers.

First choice: Need / Want / Depends

After the new detail - final choice: Need / Want

Why? ____

3. A student buys lunch.

First choice: Need / Want / Depends

After the new detail - final choice: Need / Want

Why? ____

Partner discussion: Explain one choice that changed or stayed the same.

Which detail helped you decide? ______________________________

Opening: teacher reveal

Teacher-only guide I Read aloud after initial choices

Keep this teacher page hidden. Give students the Student Opening Activity page.
First 2 minutes: Read only each initial sentence. Pause for Need, Want, or Depends.
Next 2 minutes: Read each new detail. Pause for a final Need or Want choice and a short reason. Do not read the teacher answers aloud before students decide.

1. Headphones

FIRST - say: "A student buys headphones."
Pause: Students circle Need, Want, or Depends.

NEXT - read the new detail: The school requires headphones for assigned audio activities. The student does not have a working pair, and none are available to borrow.

Pause: Students make a final Need or Want choice and write a brief reason.

Teacher answer: NEED: required for schoolwork, with no usable alternative.

2. New sneakers

FIRST - say: "A student buys new sneakers."
Pause: Students circle Need, Want, or Depends.

NEXT - read the new detail: The student already has comfortable, safe shoes that fit. The new pair is a purchase to get the latest style.

Pause: Students make a final Need or Want choice and write a brief reason.

Teacher answer: WANT: an optional style upgrade; suitable shoes are available.

3. Lunch

FIRST - say: "A student buys lunch."
Pause: Students circle Need, Want, or Depends.

NEXT - read the new detail: The student has no packed lunch, no meal available at home to bring, and no free school meal available today.

Pause: Students make a final Need or Want choice and write a brief reason.

Teacher answer: NEED: food is essential, and no available meal meets this need.

Last 2 minutes I Discuss: Partners explain whether their choices changed and which details mattered. Initial answers may vary based on assumptions.
Then: Watch the video; debrief and connect choices to a budget at minutes 12-17.

Receipt detectives A

School-day essentials I Group activity I Use during minutes 17-42

Shopper scenario: Jordan has no usable backpack or headphones. School supplies are required; headphones are needed for assigned audio work. Lunch is not provided today.

Directions:

Mark each receipt item N (need) or W (want). Explain your choices using the shopper scenario.

Add each category. Check that your subtotals equal the receipt total.

PRACTICE RECEIPT A

Fictional prices I No tax

ITEM	PRICE
Notebook	$3.00
Pencils (pack)	$2.00
Lunch sandwich	$6.00
Water bottle	$4.00
Basic headphones	$12.00
Backpack	$18.00
Wireless earbuds upgrade	$40.00
Gummy candy	$3.00
Toy race car	$5.00
Sticker pack	$2.00
TOTAL	**$95.00**

Needs: $________ Wants: $________
Combined: $________

BUDGET REMIX I Limit: $48

On the back, list items to keep and remove. Show your revised total and money left. Explain one tradeoff and one classification your group debated. Stay at or below the limit.

Receipt detectives B

Game night choices | Group activity | Use during minutes 17-42

Shopper scenario: Sam already has food, drinking water, school supplies and a working controller at home. Sam is shopping for a game night with friends.

Directions:

Mark each receipt item N (need) or W (want). Explain your choices using the shopper scenario.

Add each category. Check that your subtotals equal the receipt total.

PRACTICE RECEIPT B

Fictional prices | No tax

ITEM	PRICE
Frozen pizza	$8.00
Apples (bag)	$4.00
Bottled water (pack)	$5.00
Chips	$4.00
Cookies	$3.00
New game controller	$30.00
Video game	$25.00
Building-block toy kit	$12.00
Card game	$7.00
Phone charm	$2.00
TOTAL	**$100.00**

Needs: $________ Wants: $________

Combined: $________

BUDGET REMIX | Limit: $35

On the back, list items to keep and remove. Show your revised total and money left. Explain one tradeoff and one classification your group debated. Stay at or below the limit.

Receipt detectives C

Getting ready for the week | Group activity | Use during minutes 17-42

Shopper scenario: Riley needs soap, toothpaste, socks and a charging cable to replace unusable items. Riley has safe drinking water and meals at home. The phone is needed to contact a caregiver after school.

Directions:

Mark each receipt item N (need) or W (want). Explain your choices using the shopper scenario.

Add each category. Check that your subtotals equal the receipt total.

PRACTICE RECEIPT C

Fictional prices | No tax

ITEM	PRICE
Body soap	$4.00
Toothpaste	$3.00
Socks (pack)	$6.00
Phone charging cable	$8.00
Phone case upgrade	$15.00
Plush animal toy	$10.00
Puzzle	$7.00
Fruit snack bars	$5.00
Ice cream	$4.00
Portable speaker	$24.00
TOTAL	**$86.00**

Needs: $________ Wants: $________

Combined: $________

BUDGET REMIX | Limit: $36

On the back, list items to keep and remove. Show your revised total and money left. Explain one tradeoff and one classification your group debated. Stay at or below the limit.

Receipt detectives D

First weekend job | Group activity | Use during minutes 17-42

Shopper scenario: Taylor starts a weekend job requiring a plain shirt. Taylor has no suitable shirt, needs a bus fare and lunch, and has no reusable bottle for drinking water. Other clothing and headphones already work.

Directions:

Mark each receipt item N (need) or W (want). Explain your choices using the shopper scenario.

Add each category. Check that your subtotals equal the receipt total.

PRACTICE RECEIPT D

Fictional prices | No tax

ITEM	PRICE
Plain work shirt	$12.00
Bus fare	$6.00
Packed lunch	$5.00
Reusable water bottle	$4.00
Wireless earbuds	$20.00
Fashion cap	$8.00
Comic book	$6.00
Toy robot	$7.00
Candy	$3.00
Bag charm	$2.00
TOTAL	**$73.00**

Needs: $________ Wants: $________

Combined: $________

BUDGET REMIX | Limit: $35

On the back, list items to keep and remove. Show your revised total and money left. Explain one tradeoff and one classification your group debated. Stay at or below the limit.

Receipt detectives E

School project day I Group activity I Use during minutes 17-42

Shopper scenario: Morgan needs poster board, markers and glue for an assigned school project. Morgan needs bus fare to school and lunch; no free meal or usable project supplies are available. Headphones already work.

Directions:

Mark each receipt item N (need) or W (want). Explain your choices using the shopper scenario.

Add each category. Check that your subtotals equal the receipt total.

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PRACTICE RECEIPT E

Fictional prices I No tax

ITEM	PRICE
Poster board	$4.00
Markers	$6.00
Glue stick	$3.00
Bus fare	$4.00
Lunch sandwich	$6.00
Tablet stand	$12.00
New headphones	$18.00
Plush animal toy	$9.00
Puzzle	$7.00
Chocolate bar	$3.00
Decorative stickers	$2.00
TOTAL	**$74.00**

Needs: $________ Wants: $________

Combined: $________

BUDGET REMIX I Limit: $32

On the back, list items to keep and remove. Show your revised total and money left. Explain one tradeoff and one classification your group debated. Stay at or below the limit.

My spending map

Student activity 1 I Use during minutes 42-51

Name: ________________________ Date: _____________

List six actual or fictional purchases for a month. Estimate each cost. Mark N (need) or W (want) and explain the purpose or circumstance. You may use a made-up shopper.

#	Purchase	Cost	N / W	Reason / situation
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

Estimated needs total: $________ Wants total: $________

Which purchase would you make first, and why?

Your needs, your situation

Student activity 2 I Partner reflection

Choose one purchase from your spending map. Discuss prompts 1-3 with a partner, then write a short decision rule for prompt 4. Brief notes are optional. You may use a fictional example.

1. My purchase and classification:

What makes it a need or a want in this situation?

2. A different situation:

When could the same item fit the other category?

3. A tradeoff:

If money were limited, what would you delay or replace?

4. My decision rule:

Before I buy something, I will...

Exit ticket

Individual check I Minutes 51-55

Name: ______________________________ Date: ________________

1. In your own words, what is the difference between a need and a want?

2. Casey has $20. Casey needs a $6 lunch and an $8 charging cable for a required school device. Casey also wants a $10 toy. There are no usable alternatives.
What should Casey buy first? Show the total and the money left.

3. How could a change in circumstances change whether headphones are a need or a want? Give one example.

Optional take-home extension: List five possible purchases before your next shopping trip. Classify each, estimate the cost and choose what fits your budget. This extension is outside the 55-minute lesson.

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Teacher answer guide

Suggested reasoning I Accept supported alternatives

Receipt A I Total $95

Needs: notebook $3, pencils $2, sandwich $6, water bottle $4, basic headphones $12, backpack $18 = **$45**. Wants = **$50**. Example $48 plan: all needs plus gummy candy $3; $0 left. A reusable bottle supports access to water during the school day; discuss free alternatives if available.

Receipt B I Total $100

Under the stated scenario, all purchases are optional additions for game night: needs **$0**, wants **$100**. Food is a basic need, but extra food when meals are already available can be optional. Example $35 plan: pizza $8 + apples $4 + building-block kit $12 + card game $7 + cookies $3 = **$34**; $1 left.

Receipt C I Total $86

Needs: soap $4 + toothpaste $3 + socks $6 + charging cable $8 = **$21**. Wants = **$65**. Example $36 plan: all needs plus phone case upgrade $15 = **$36**; $0 left. Saving some or all of the remaining $15 is also a valid choice.

Receipt D I Total $73

Needs: shirt $12 + bus fare $6 + lunch $5 + bottle $4 = **$27**. Wants = **$46**. Example $35 plan: all needs plus cap $8 = **$35**; $0 left.

Receipt E I Total $74

Needs: poster $4 + markers $6 + glue $3 + bus fare $4 + lunch $6 = **$23**. Wants = **$51**. Example $32 plan: all needs plus puzzle $7 + stickers $2 = **$32**; $0 left.

Exit ticket I Look for three skills

1. Distinguishes essential purposes from optional enjoyment or upgrades.
2. Prioritizes lunch and cable: $6 + $8 = **$14**; $20 - $14 = **$6 left**. The $10 toy does not fit.
3. Explains context: basic headphones may be needed for assigned audio work; another pair may be a want when a working pair is already available.

Assessment: If a student sorts by item alone, ask about purpose and alternatives. If a student exceeds the limit, have them subtract essential spending first. Accept different classifications when they include a reasonable assumption and an accurate calculation.

Language reminder: A want is not a bad purchase. The goal is to make a reasoned choice within available resources. Never require students to defend a family expense in public.

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