# FINANCIAL LITERACY AND WEALTH MINDSET

## Activity Pack -- FREE Resource

Ages 7-11 | No Prior Reading Required

Classroom, Library and Home Use

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# The Three Rivers Detective

Money experts often describe three different ideas that get mixed up: income (money you earn), wealth (money you keep and grow), and freedom (having the time and choices you want). A person can earn a lot of income and still have little wealth if none of it is kept or grown. Practise telling the three ideas apart below.

## Activity 1: River Sorter

Sort each example into the river it belongs to (Income, Wealth or Freedom), then explain your thinking.

| Example | Which River? | Why? |
|---|---|---|
| Pocket money from chores | _____ | _____ |
| Coins saved in a piggy bank | _____ | _____ |
| A weekend with nothing you must do | _____ | _____ |
| Wages from a part-time job | _____ | _____ |
| Money invested and growing | _____ | _____ |
| Choosing how you spend your afternoon | _____ | _____ |

## Activity 2: The Smart Money Path

For each situation below, write what a smart money detective should do:

**1. You earn $10 for helping a neighbour. What could you do with it to grow your wealth, not just your income?**

**2. A friend spends all their pocket money the day they get it. What might happen to their wealth over time?**

**3. You want more freedom (time for the things you love). How could saving money help with that one day?**

## Think About It

* Income can flow in fast like a river, but it can dry up just as quickly. Why might money that is only earned, never kept, disappear just as fast as it arrives?

* Why might someone who works very hard still end up with very little wealth?

# The Money Tree Growth Chart

Money that is saved and left alone can grow, a little like a tree grows from a seed. This is called compound growth: the longer money is saved, and the more that is added to it, the bigger it becomes -- and the growth itself starts adding more growth. This worksheet helps you track saving and see the compound effect in action.

## Activity 1: My Savings Tracker

Colour a coin each week you complete each saving habit.

| Savings Habit | Wk1 | Wk2 | Wk3 | Wk4 | Wk5 | Wk6 | Wk7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Add coins to my savings jar | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Skip one unplanned treat | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Do a chore for pocket money | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Check how much I have saved | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Set aside money before spending | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Talk with an adult about saving | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |

## Activity 2: Watch the Money Tree Grow

What happens if you save $5 every month and never take any out? See how it stacks up.

| Month | Saved This Month | Total Saved | What's Happening |
|---|---|---|---|
| Month 1 | $5 | $5 | The first seed coin is planted |
| Month 2 | $5 | $10 | Small roots are growing |
| Month 3 | $5 | $15 | The tree is taking shape |
| Month 6 | $5 | $30 | Branches are spreading |
| Month 12 | $5 | $60 | A whole year of growth |

**Choose ONE saving habit you will start this week:**

## Think About It

* If you save $5 every month for a year, how much would you have? What would happen if you spent $5 back out some months instead?

* Why do small amounts saved regularly often matter more than one big amount saved once?

# Build Your Own Balance Shield

Many money experts recommend splitting money into different jobs instead of spending it all the same way. One simple plan splits every dollar into four jobs: protecting (saving for emergencies), growing (saving or investing for the future), building opportunities (spending on things that create more value), and giving or having fun. Analyse this plan, then build your own version.

## Activity 1: Analyse the Balance Shield

The Balance Shield has 4 parts for smart money decisions. Fill in the 'Why It Matters' column.

| Shield Part | What It Means | Why It Matters |
|---|---|---|
| Protect (30%) | Save for emergencies | _____ |
| Grow (30%) | Save or invest for the future | _____ |
| Opportunity (30%) | Build things that create value | _____ |
| Give and Fun (10%) | Share with others, enjoy life | _____ |

## Activity 2: Design Your Own Balance Shield

Imagine you earn $20. Split it across the four parts and draw your shield.

**My split of $20:**

Protect: $_____ Grow: $_____ Opportunity: $_____ Give/Fun: $_____

**My shield is called:** _____

The part I am most proud of is: _____

**DRAW YOUR SHIELD HERE:**

**Label your 4 parts:**

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

## Think About It

* What makes the Balance Shield a good design? Is it easy to remember? Does it work for people who earn very different amounts?

* If you could add a fifth part to the Balance Shield, what would it be for? Why?

# My Money Beliefs Mirror

**Note to students and adults:**
This worksheet explores feelings and beliefs about money. Every family's money situation is different, and no question asks for family financial details. All feelings are valid -- there are no wrong answers. If a question brings up big feelings, talk with a trusted adult. You may skip any question.

The beliefs people carry about money often shape the choices they make with it. Someone who believes 'money is hard' may avoid thinking about it, while someone who believes 'money can help me and others' is more likely to plan and grow it. Beliefs are not facts -- they can be noticed and changed.

## Activity 1: Feeling Check-In

Circle or underline words that describe how you feel about each situation:

**Saving money instead of spending it now:**
Easy Fine Hard Nervous Proud Curious Other: _____

**Talking about money with an adult:**
Okay Worried Awkward Brave Interested Other: _____

**Not being able to buy something I want:**
Calm Fine Frustrated Curious Okay Other: _____

**Giving some of my money to help someone:**
Easy Hard Generous Proud Unsure Other: _____

## Activity 2: Reframe the Belief

A mirror can show us a new way of seeing ourselves. Choose ONE money thought and practise reframing it into a helpful one.

**A money thought I sometimes have:** _____

Is this thought always true? (ask an adult if unsure):

One thing that would help me feel calmer about money:

A trusted person I could talk to about money: _____

My reframed thought (change 'Money is hard' to 'Money can help me because...'):

## Think About It

* Why might two people have very different beliefs about money, even in similar situations?

* If a friend felt worried about money, what would you say to help them?

# Gratitude and the Ripple of Giving

Money is not only for spending on ourselves. Communities where people share knowledge, help, and resources often become stronger and more prosperous for everyone in them. Gratitude means noticing the people and support around us -- and giving back means sharing what we have, even in small ways, to help others too.

### Activity 1: My Money Gratitude Inventory

Write one thing each person or place does that helps your family with money, and how it makes you feel.

| Person or Place Who Helps | What They Do | How It Makes Me Feel |
|---|---|---|
| A parent or carer | | |
| A teacher | | |
| A local shop or market | | |
| A friend | | |
| Someone else: _____ | | |

### Activity 2: The Ripple Effect -- Plan a Gift

When many people each give a little, together they can rebuild something big, like a bridge. Small gifts can create a ripple of good for others. Plan a way you could give from your 'Give and Fun' savings.

**I want to give or share:**

Who or what it would help: _____

**How I will give it (tick one):**

[] Give money [] Give my time [] Give something I made [] Give something I own [] Other: _____

**One reason giving might make a community stronger, not just the receiver:**

## Think About It

* Can you think of a time when helping someone else ended up helping you or your community too?

* What is one money value (like saving, sharing, or planning) you would most like to teach someone younger than you?

# My Money Goals

Setting goals is how we turn knowledge into action. Money goals help us make smart choices a regular part of everyday life. The best goals are specific, realistic, and have a clear start date. Like a savings tree, small money goals achieved consistently lead to big long-term results.

## Activity 1: My Money Goal Tiers

Set money goals at three levels.

| Goal Tier | My Goal | How I Will Do It | When I Will Start |
|---|---|---|---|
| **SHORT-TERM (this week)** | | | |
| **MID-TERM (this month)** | | | |
| **LONG-TERM (this year)** | | | |

## Activity 2: Money Mindset Self-Rating

Rate yourself 1-5 on each money habit.

**Rate 1-5: 1 = still working on it, 5 = I've got this!**

| Money Habit | My Rating (1-5) | My Target |
|---|---|---|
| I save some money before I spend any | /5 | |
| I think before I buy something I want | /5 | |
| I know the difference between income and wealth | /5 | |
| I ask questions when I do not understand money | /5 | |
| I share or give some of what I have | /5 | |
| I stay patient instead of wanting money fast | /5 | |

## Think About It

* Write your own personal money motto in 10 words or fewer.

* If you started a money club with a friend, what would its two rules be?

# Teacher's Companion

**No Prior Reading Required**
This pack is fully standalone. No book or characters are referenced. Any student can complete these worksheets without prior reading. Suitable for classroom, library, and home learning programmes. This pack is an excerpt of a full book-specific learning pack available with purchase at **learningsmart.au**

## Australian Curriculum Alignment

| Learning Area | Strand | Year Level | Content Description (summary) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mathematics | Money and Financial Mathematics | Yr 2-5 | Solve problems involving money; represent money values in different ways |
| Economics and Business | Consumer and Financial Literacy | Yr 3-6 | Understand income, saving, spending and giving; explain why people save |
| HASS / Economics | Resource Allocation and Making Choices | Yr 3-6 | Investigate the concept of scarcity; identify factors in decision making |
| Gen. Capabilities | Personal and Social Capability | Yr 2-6 | Recognise emotions and beliefs; understand personal strengths |
| English | Language -- Expressing Ideas | Yr 2-6 | Vocabulary for reasoning, persuading, and explaining choices (WS1, WS4) |
| Gen. Capabilities | Ethical Understanding | Yr 3-6 | Consider fairness, generosity, and consequences of financial choices |
| Gen. Capabilities | Critical and Creative Thinking | Yr 3-6 | Evaluate ideas and pose questions; design and justify solutions (WS3) |

## 16 Key Financial Literacy Lessons

| # | Lesson |
|---|---|
| 1 | Income is money you earn; wealth is money you keep and grow -- they are not the same thing. |
| 2 | Freedom is time you control, and it can be supported by how wealth is managed. |
| 3 | Working harder alone does not always create wealth if nothing is saved or kept. |
| 4 | Money grows when it is protected and given time, like a seed becoming a tree. |
| 5 | If every coin is spent, none is left behind to grow. |
| 6 | A simple plan (like the Balance Shield) can split money into protecting, growing, opportunity, and giving. |
| 7 | Savings help people stay calm instead of scared during unexpected 'storms' in life. |
| 8 | Money should build things that help people, not just sit idle. |
| 9 | Leverage means using tools, systems, and people wisely to achieve more together. |
| 10 | Smart people understand risk instead of ignoring it or running from it. |
| 11 | Opportunities are everywhere, but most people miss them because they are distracted. |
| 12 | Generosity can create stronger communities and stronger opportunities for everyone. |
| 13 | Beliefs about money shape the actions people take with it. |
| 14 | Patience and steady growth usually build more lasting wealth than chasing quick riches. |
| 15 | Borrowing carelessly can create heavy 'chains' of debt -- borrow wisely. |
| 16 | Money is a tool, not the final goal -- real wealth means balance across protecting, growing, giving, and freedom. |

## Answer Keys and Discussion Guidance

**WS1 -- River Sorter (Sample Responses)**
Pocket money from chores: Income River. Coins saved in a piggy bank: Wealth River. A weekend with nothing you must do: Freedom River. Wages from a part-time job: Income River. Money invested and growing: Wealth River. Choosing how you spend your afternoon: Freedom River.

**WS1 -- Smart Money Path (Model Answers)**
1. Save or invest some of it instead of spending all of it, so it can grow into wealth. 2. It may run out quickly and leave nothing saved for the future. 3. Saving money now can buy back time and choices later in life.

**WS2 -- The Money Tree (Key Insight)**
Saving $5 a month for 12 months totals $60 if nothing is withdrawn. Accept all reasonable extensions discussing interest or investment growth on top of the saved amount. Key insight: consistency over time produces results impossible to achieve in a single effort.

**WS3 -- Balance Shield Analysis (Sample 'Why It Matters')**
Protect: unexpected costs happen and savings prevent panic. Grow: money left to grow compounds into more over time. Opportunity: some spending creates future value rather than using it up. Give and Fun: enjoying money and sharing it builds wellbeing and community.

**WS4 -- Sensitivity Note for Educators**
Family financial circumstances vary widely and can be a sensitive topic for some students. Do NOT require students to share responses aloud or disclose family financial details. Offer private written submission or drawing as an alternative. If a student discloses a concern, follow your school's wellbeing and child safety protocol.

**WS6 -- Money Mindset Rating**
There are no correct scores. Any rating below 3 is an opportunity for a supportive conversation about habits, not correction.

**Upsell Note for Educators**
This generic pack is based on the Learning Smart book series. The full book-specific learning pack -- which references the characters, story moments, and adventure narrative -- is available with book purchase or subscription at **learningsmart.au**. Book-specific packs significantly increase student engagement and reading motivation.

## Differentiation Strategies

| Level | Strategy | Example Application |
|---|---|---|
| Below Level (support) | Reduce written output; use sentence starters; allow verbal responses; pair with peer. | WS1: provide pre-filled river examples. WS4: use feeling cards instead of open writing. |
| On Level (standard) | Complete all activities as written. Use discussion partner for Think About It sections. | Standard completion with class debrief of Think About It questions. |
| Extension (enrichment) | Research simple interest and compound growth; compare saving and investing; present to a younger class. | WS3: design a five-part Balance Shield. WS2: model savings growth with interest added. |

## 7 Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between income, wealth, and freedom? How can we help students separate 'earning money' from 'keeping and growing money'?

2. How many students can already name something they are saving toward? Why is it useful for children to have a savings goal, however small?

3. Some children believe 'money is hard' or 'we can't afford things' without understanding the full picture. How can educators discuss money mindsets sensitively, without prying into family finances?

4. Why might the same amount of pocket money lead to very different outcomes for two children? Introduce saving, spending, and giving choices at a developmentally appropriate level.

5. When children teach money habits to younger students, they understand it more deeply themselves. How might you use peer teaching for financial literacy topics?

6. The Money Tree activity (WS2) is based on compound growth. Can students think of other examples where small, consistent actions produce big results over time?

7. What is the difference between a 'quick riches' mindset and a 'steady growth' mindset? How can we help students value patience without discouraging ambition?

## Classroom Display Ideas

**Balance Shield Wall:** Large class shield with one message per part -- students vote on examples to add to each quarter.

**Money Tree Growth Wall:** A paper tree that grows a leaf each week the class saving goal is met.

**Three Rivers Chart:** Class poster mapping examples into Income, Wealth, and Freedom rivers -- laminate as a year-round reference.

**Class Savings Jar:** A shared visual tracker (counters or stickers) building toward a class goal, reinforcing patience and delayed gratification.

**Generosity Bunting:** Students complete 'I could help by...' -- display as classroom bunting.

**Money Mindset Pledge:** Class creates and signs a shared two-rule money mindset pledge.

## Want the Full Adventure?

This free activity pack is inspired by the **Learning Smart book series** -- educational adventures featuring Belinda, James, and their guide Professor Bee.

**The Full Book-Specific Learning Pack Includes:**

* Worksheets tied directly to the book's characters and story moments
* Story-based Think About It questions that deepen reading comprehension
* A Teacher's Companion with book-specific discussion questions
* Access to the full Learning Smart resource library

**Available with book purchase or subscription at:**

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### Books in the Learning Smart Series

| Title | Topic |
|---|---|
| The Treasure Map of Money Mountain | Financial Literacy |
| Professor Bee's Body Expedition | Human Body and Science |
| Belinda and James: Beach Smart | Sun and Water Safety |
| Guardians of the Web | Internet Safety |
| The Magical ABC Adventures: Letters A-F | Early Literacy and Phonics |

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