

Starting small and saving up

Students read a story about characters who save for something special and then create their own savings goal.

Learning goals

Big idea

Saving a little bit of money over a long time will add up and help us reach our goals.

Essential questions

- How does saving a small amount of money add up over time?
- How does saving money help me reach my goals?

Objectives

- Understand the importance of saving money over time
- Create a savings goal

What students will do



- Read a story about characters who save small amounts of money to reach their goal.
- Answer questions about the story.
- Write their own savings goal.

NOTE

Please remember to consider your students' accommodations and special needs to ensure that all students are able to participate in a meaningful way.

KEY INFORMATION

Building block:

-  Executive function
-  Financial habits and norms

Grade level: Elementary school (2-3, 4-5)

Age range: 7-9, 9-11

Topic: Save and invest (Saving for long-term goals, Saving for short-term goals)

School subject: English or language arts, Social studies or history

Teaching strategy: Direct instruction, Personalized instruction

Bloom's Taxonomy level: Understand, Analyze

Activity duration: 45-60 minutes

National Standards for Personal Financial Education, 2021

Spending: 4-1, 4-3, 8-1

Saving: 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 8-2

These standards are cumulative, and topics are not repeated in each grade level. This activity may include information students need to understand before exploring this topic in more detail.

Preparing for this activity

- While it's not necessary, completing the "[Flying into spending and saving](#)" activity first may make this one more meaningful.
- Print copies of all student materials for each student, or prepare for students to access them electronically.
 - You can download the "Money Monsters Learn to Save" story as a PDF or an animated ePub.
 - To view the ePub file, you'll need a book reader app. Then you can enlarge some of the pictures in the ePub.
 - You also can order free copies of this story or the entire Money Monster storybook series from <https://go.usa.gov/xAfnS>. Shipping takes three to four weeks.

What you'll need

THIS TEACHER GUIDE

- [Starting small and saving up \(guide\)](#)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_starting-small-saving-up_guide.pdf](#)

STUDENT MATERIALS

- [Starting small and saving up \(worksheet\)](#)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_starting-small-saving-up_worksheet.pdf](#)
- [Money Monsters Learn to Save \(story\)](#)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_money-monsters-learn-save_story.pdf](#)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_money-monsters-learn-save_story.epub](#)

Exploring key financial concepts

Saving money doesn't have to be overwhelming or difficult. In fact, there are lots of easy things people can do to build their savings, even if it's only a little at a time. One thing that can be helpful is to know exactly what you're saving for. This is called your savings goal. It can also be helpful to have a plan for how much money you're going to save each month. Having a plan can make it easier to reach your savings goal.

TIP

Because savings products, terms, and laws change, students should be encouraged to always look for the most up-to-date information.

Every person or family has a different idea of things they want in life. What do you want for yourself in the next few years? What do you want 10 years from now? Often, we need to save money to make our hopes, wants, and dreams for our futures come to life. Sometimes people feel like they don't have enough money to save. But not planning for or saving for these things may mean that they don't happen.

Teaching this activity

Whole-class introduction

- Ask students if they or the adults in their lives have ever saved money for something special.
 - Share examples such as saving to buy a new pair of shoes, pay for music lessons, or take a trip to an amusement park.
 - Ask for volunteers to share their examples.
- Tell students that they'll read a story about Money Monster characters who are learning about how to save money.
 - Tell them that after they read the story, they'll answer questions about it on a worksheet.
- Be sure students understand key vocabulary:
 - **Earn:** To receive money in exchange for goods or services.
 - **Goal:** Something, such as an outcome, you wish to achieve or accomplish in a specific amount of time.
 - **Money:** You can use money to buy goods and services. Money looks different in different places around the world.
 - **Save:** Setting something, like money, aside to use in the future.
 - **Savings goal:** The amount of money you plan to put aside for a specific purpose.
 - **Spend:** The act of using money to buy goods or services.

TIP

Visit CFPB's financial education glossary at consumerfinance.gov/financial-education-glossary/.

A tip for differentiating instruction

The reading level for "Money Monsters Learn to Save" is third grade. If your students are emerging readers, you may consider reading the story to them instead of having them read it.

Individual work

- Distribute the “Money Monsters Learn to Save” story and the “Starting small and saving up” worksheet.
- Students will read the story and fill out the worksheet independently.

NOTE

Reading from the ePub? You can enlarge the pictures by clicking the plus sign icon next to an illustration. The larger image will open in a new browser window.

Wrap-up

- Ask for volunteers to share their answers to the reflection questions.
 - Be sure to tell students that it was okay for Gibbins to choose to spend some of his money.
 - The important thing to remember is to have a balance between spending and saving so that you can enjoy life and meet your goals.

Suggested next steps

Consider searching for other [CFPB activities](#) that address the topic of saving and investing, including saving for long-term goals or short-term goals. Suggested activities include [“Picturing what you’re saving for”](#) and [“Saving for now and later”](#).

Find other Money Monster stories for grades K-7 on the [Money Monster story page](#).

Measuring student learning

Students’ answers on their worksheets and during discussion can give you a sense of their understanding.

The answer guide on the next page provides possible answers for the “Starting small and saving up” worksheet. **Keep in mind that students’ answers to the reflection questions may vary, as there may not be only one right answer.** The important thing is for students to have reasonable justification for their answers.

Answer guide

Money Monsters choose a savings goal

1. Foozil and Gibbins saw a new bike in a store window. Why did they want to buy new bikes?
They wanted to ride them to school, the park, and the pool.
2. A savings goal is an amount of money you want to save for something you want to buy. What savings goal did Foozil and Gibbins set for themselves? **\$100**

Money Monsters remember to save

3. Foozil drew a thermometer to help her keep track of how much money she was saving. How did keeping track of her money help her reach her goal?
It showed her how each little bit of money she saved added up to her goal amount.
4. What did Gibbins do to remind himself of what he was saving money for?
He drew a picture of the bike.
5. What did Foozil and Gibbins do to earn money?
They walked neighborhood dogs, did odd jobs for the neighbors, sold some of their toys and books, fed a friend's cat, and saved birthday money.

Money Monsters meet their goal

6. Foozil saved enough money to get a new Whizbang bike. Gibbins saved money, but not enough to buy a new bike. What solution did the two Money Monsters find so that they could each have what they wanted?
They looked for a used bike by searching on the Internet, visiting the library, and talking to friends.