PENNY HOLLOW / NEXTGEN

AGES 11-13 | FINANCIAL LITERACY WORKBOOK

Budget Boss: 30-Day Money Challenge

Thirty practical missions to plan, save, shop thoughtfully, and protect your money.

LEARN / PRACTICE / INVESTIGATE / GROW



Penny | Sammy | Benny | Ernie | Izzy | Cleo

Where Little Money Habits Grow Into Big Futures.

Family & classroom edition | Educational examples | 2026

Printable activities, worked examples, reflections, and answer keys

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EIGHT FOUNDATIONS

Foundation 2: Give every dollar a job

A balanced budget assigns no more money than you have. Planned uses can include spending, saving, giving, and a small unassigned buffer. Savings is money reserved for later; it is not a purchase from a store. In a planning table it still needs a job, so that you do not accidentally spend it twice. No single percentage rule fits every person or every month.

1. Choose a time period and list available money once.
2. List necessary costs first, then savings goals, flexible spending, and a buffer.
3. Add all planned uses. If they exceed available money, revise before buying.
4. Track what actually happens and update the plan when circumstances change.

Fictional $50 plan	Amount
School supplies	$8
Transport	$10
Savings	$15
Flexible spending	$12
Buffer	$5
Total planned uses	$50

This plan balances because $8 + $10 + $15 + $12 + $5 = $50. The buffer is not a reason to ignore small purchases; it is a planned cushion. If transport becomes $13, moving $3 from flexible spending leaves savings and the buffer intact. A useful budget changes with new facts.

Quick check

1. If flexible spending rises to $18 without another change, how far over the original plan are you?

Check: the extra $6 makes planned uses $56, so the plan is $6 over. Reduce a use, increase legitimate available money, or change the timing.

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WEEK 1: MAKE A PLAN

Day 3: Build the exact $50 budget

This is your first full budget. You have exactly $50 for the fictional week. Every dollar can have a purpose, but the purposes must not add up to more than $50. Treat the savings amount as reserved money that cannot also buy a snack. Explain a trade-off rather than merely making a total look neat.

Planned use	Amount
Bus travel	$8
Lunch purchases	$10
Friend's gift	$6
School supplies	$4
Savings goal	$15
Fun spending	You decide

The first five uses total $43. The final row must fit the money left. You are allowed to choose a less expensive gift or bring lunch, but the first version should use the listed amounts exactly so that everyone can check the same calculation. Your second version can show your priorities.

Your money mission

1. Calculate the maximum fun-spending amount. Prove the plan totals $50.

2. Make a second balanced plan with savings of $18. Identify exactly where the extra $3 comes from.

Balanced means supported by available money, not equal spending in every category. A model plan is provided, but another clearly explained balanced revision can also be sound.

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WEEK 2: KEEP TRACK AND COMPARE

Day 14: Work a discount and tax in order

A discount and a sales tax are different steps. In this fictional exercise, tax is 8% of the price after a discount. Real rates, taxable items, and calculation rules vary. Use the stated assumptions rather than treating this as an actual store's checkout rule.

Fictional item	Price rule
Shirt A	$24 marked price; 25% off
Shirt B	$20; no discount
Tax for both	8% of selling price
Available flexible money	$25

For Shirt A, first multiply $24 by 0.25 to find the discount. Subtract that amount, then multiply the reduced price by 0.08 to find tax. Keep cents in your working. For Shirt B, apply the same tax rate to $20. Both shirts are equally suitable and equally durable in this scenario.

Your money mission

1. Calculate the final price of each shirt and the difference between them.

2. If the learner chooses Shirt A, how much of the $25 remains? Explain why buying neither can still be reasonable.

A discounted item is only a useful purchase when it serves a purpose and fits the full budget. Correct arithmetic supports the decision; it does not make the decision for you.

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WEEK 3: EARN AND GROW

Day 18: Price above the true cost

The contribution per item is its selling price minus the variable cost per item. That amount helps cover fixed costs before a profit remains. Break-even is the point where revenue covers total costs. This fictional project has no taxes, refunds, or additional costs; real businesses must investigate those too.

Pricing facts	Amount
Price per bracelet	$3.00
Material cost per bracelet sold	$1.20
Fixed project cost	$18.00
Expected bracelets sold	12

At $3, each sale contributes $1.80 toward the $18 fixed cost. Dividing $18 by $1.80 gives the quantity needed to break even. An expected quantity is a forecast, not guaranteed demand. A lower price may attract interest but can require more sales just to cover the same fixed cost.

Your money mission

1. Find the break-even quantity and profit if 12 sell.

2. If price falls to $2 with all costs unchanged, how many whole sales are required to cover fixed costs? Explain why a lower price is not automatically safer.

When a break-even calculation gives part of an item, round the sales quantity up. You cannot cover the gap by selling a fraction that your product does not offer.

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TEMPLATES AND FINAL ASSESSMENT

Reusable budget and savings dashboard

Copy this page under the included license when you want to repeat the challenge. Use a fictional situation or a private family-approved goal. Do not put account numbers, passwords, or identifying financial details on it. Choose one period and do not mix weekly money with monthly costs without explaining the conversion.

Budget period: _____	Planned	Actual	Reason for difference
Money available / received	_____	_____	_____
Necessary spending	_____	_____	_____
Optional spending	_____	_____	_____
Giving, if chosen	_____	_____	_____
Goal savings reserved	_____	_____	_____
Buffer / other reserve	_____	_____	_____
Uses total	_____	_____	_____

Savings goal	Starting amount	Target cost	Contribution / period	Estimated periods
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Check the budget by comparing available money with all planned uses. Check the savings schedule using (target cost - starting amount) / regular contribution, rounded up to whole periods. If income varies, list contributions individually instead. At review time, write a reason for a difference and choose one adjustment; do not silently replace the original plan.

One next action

1. What will you check, when will you check it, and which trusted adult can help if the plan no longer fits?

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