What Is Money

Money Foundations: Module 1

AGE RANGE	7–12	DURATION	35 min

CORE LEARNING OUTCOME

Understand what money is and its common forms, that money represents value, and that value is created when people use their time and skills to make things others find useful or enjoyable.

Learning Objectives

TYPE	OBJECTIVE
Knowledge	Children can identify common forms of money (cash, coins, cards, digital payments) and explain that money represents value created by people's time and skills.
Skills	Children can identify examples of people creating value through skills or work (e.g. coders, musicians) and connect a purchase to the effort behind it.
Attitudes	Children begin to think about the effort and value behind a purchase before buying, rather than assuming money is limitless.

Materials Needed

- Module 1 video, “What Is Money” (cued up, device tested with sound)
- Printed “What Is Money” activity sheet — one per child
- Pencils
- Whiteboard or screen to display the Activity 2 word bank
- Optional, if running the offline challenge in class: a few small classroom objects to substitute for household items (see Homework / Offline Challenge below)

Lesson Flow

STEP	TIME	WHAT HAPPENS
1. Warm-Up	5 min	Hold up or describe examples of a coin, a note, a bank card, and a phone with a payment app. Ask: “Which of these count as money?” (All of them!) Take a few quick answers, making sure children can name each form. This is presumed knowledge — the video doesn't cover it — so keep it brief before moving to the video's real focus: what money represents.
2. Watch the Video	2 min	Play the Module 1 animation, “What Is Money.” Prompt before playing: “As you watch, think about what Sam's dad means when he says money doesn't just appear out of nowhere — where do you think it actually comes from?” After the video, take 1–2 quick answers before moving on — this is a temperature check, not a discussion yet.

3. Direct Instruction & Discussion	8–10 min	Children can already identify money from the warm-up. Now walk through the two key concepts in the Content Knowledge table below — both come directly from the video: money represents value, and value is created by using time and skills
4. Guided Activity	15–20 min	Hand out the “What Is Money” activity sheet. Complete Activities 1–3 in class (see Activity Breakdown table below). Circulate while children work, especially during Activity 2.
5. Closure & Recap	5 min	Bring the group back together and pose one or both discussion prompts (see below). Check for understanding: ask a child to name a form of money and explain, in their own words, what money represents and where its value comes from.

Content Knowledge — Used in Step 3

Each concept below has a plain-language explanation and a suggested script.

CONCEPT	EXPLAIN IT LIKE THIS	SUGGESTED SCRIPT
Money represents value	Money itself — paper, metal, or numbers on a screen — isn't valuable on its own. It's a stand-in for something real: the time, skill, and effort someone put into making or doing something. Money doesn't just appear out of nowhere, because value doesn't just appear out of nowhere — someone has to create it first. The video closes on a brief note that different forms of money (cash, card, coin, digital) are all just ways everyone agrees to represent that value; that's a light touch here, not a deep dive — children already covered identifying these forms in the warm-up.	*“In the video, Sam wanted an expensive video game, and his dad said money doesn't just appear out of nowhere. What do you think he meant by that? What do you think that money actually represents?”*
Value is created by making things people find useful or enjoyable	People create value by spending their time and using a skill to make or do something that other people find useful, helpful, or enjoyable. A coder spends months writing a video game. A musician spends time creating music. That's why they get paid — and it's also why, when you buy something, your money doesn't just disappear: it pays the people whose time and skill created that value in the first place. Understanding this helps children spend more thoughtfully, since every purchase represents someone else's work.	*“Think about the video game Sam wanted. Who do you think helped make it? Coders spent months writing the game, and musicians created the music. When you buy that game, your money helps pay all the people who spent their time creating it — that's what it means to spend money wisely.”*

Activity Breakdown — Used in Step 4

ACTIVITY	FORMAT	TIME
Activity 1: What Is Money?	Open response, individual	~5 min
Activity 2: Complete the Sentence	Fill-in-the-blank, individual or pairs	~5 min
Activity 3: Think About It!	Reflection + mood check-in, individual	~5–7 min

Discussion Prompts — Used in Step 5

- *“Why do you think Sam's dad reacted the way he did when he saw the price of the video game?”*
- *“Can you think of a job where someone uses a skill to make something you'd want to buy?”*

Homework / Offline Challenge — Activity 4: In Real Life

OPTION	WHAT IT INVOLVES	BEST FOR
Default: send home as homework	Children pick 3 items from home, draw them, guess the value of each, then check with a grown-up.	Most classes — the value-guessing works best against real household items a parent can confirm, and it's designed as a family activity.
Alternative: run as a class activity	Substitute 3 classroom or school-bag items (pencil case, water bottle, book). Children guess the value, then the teacher reveals an approximate real price as the “grown-up check.”	Classes where take-home worksheets are impractical. Note this loses the family-conversation element the activity was designed around.

Differentiation Notes

LEARNER	STRATEGY
Extension	For children who finish early, ask: what skill would you like to use someday to earn money?
Support	For Activity 2, pre-highlight which blank each word bank term fits, or pair with a stronger reader.
Shy / non-verbal learners	Allow drawing an answer to the Activity 3 reflection questions instead of writing.

Common Misconceptions to Watch For

MISCONCEPTION	TEACHING TIP
Children may think money simply comes from parents, ATMs, or banks, without connecting it to the value someone created somewhere in the chain.	Trace it back one step further: where did the parent's or the bank's money come from? Someone creating value through their time and skill, eventually.
Children may not realize that digital or “free-feeling” purchases (apps, downloads) still represent real value that real people were paid for.	Use the video game example — coders and musicians still created real value and got paid, even though the game feels like it just exists on the screen.