

The Pickle Patch Bathtub

By Frances Kennedy / ISBN: 1-58246-112-0

Lesson Authors

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Standards and Benchmarks (see page 10)

Lesson Description

In this lesson, students learn about opportunity cost, saving, savings goals, and a savings plan by reading *The Pickle Patch Bathtub* by Frances Kennedy. Students will develop savings plans that lead to their own savings goals.

Grade Level

3-5

Concepts

Opportunity cost
Saving
Savings goal
Savings plan

Objectives

- Students will be able to
- define and identify opportunity cost,
 - explain what is meant by saving,
 - explain and give an example of a savings goal, and
 - explain and give an example of a savings plan.

Time Required

60-90 minutes

Materials

- *The Pickle Patch Bathtub* by Frances Kennedy (ISBN: 1-58246-112-0)
 - Handouts 1 and 2, one copy of each for each student and one copy of each for the teacher to use as visuals
 - Crayons or markers
 - Scissors, one pair per student
 - String or yarn, one 36-inch piece per student
 - Stapler
 - 12 sheets of construction paper—one for each month of the year plus extra for additional pictures
 - ¼ sheet of white paper, one per student
 - Several sheets of green construction paper, cut into strips and taped together to form a timeline
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Procedure

1. Ask students if they would be excited about getting a dime for Christmas or as a birthday gift. (*Most will not.*) Why not? (*A dime can't buy very much.*)
2. Tell students that at one time a dime could buy much more than it can today. Tell students you are going to read a story called *The Pickle Patch Bathtub* by Frances Kennedy. Show students the cover of the book. Point out that the story takes place in 1925 and is based on a true story about a girl named Donna and her three sisters and brother.
3. Ask students to listen for the important role a dime plays in the story.
4. Read the book.
5. Discuss the following:
 - What was Donna's problem? (*The washtub Donna took a bath in was too small for her long legs.*)
 - How did Donna propose solving the problem? (*Donna wanted her parents to buy a new bathtub.*)

- Why were Donna's parents unwilling to buy a new tub? (*Donna's mother said the family had more important things to spend their money on and that Donna's father was saving for a tractor.*)
6. Explain that the family had to make choices about how to use their money. If they bought the bathtub, they wouldn't be able to buy something else. Ask students what might be some important things Donna's mother thought the family should buy. (*Answers will vary but may include food, clothes, or other items for the farm and the family.*)
 7. Ask students how much the bathtub cost. (*\$9.25 plus \$1.50 shipping = \$10.75*) Point out that because the family spent money on food, clothes, and other things, they couldn't also buy the bathtub.
 8. Tell students that **opportunity cost** is what is given up when a choice is made; it is your second choice.
 9. Give the students the following situation: Your class has enough money to take only one trip this year. You can go to an amusement park or to a water park.
 10. Discuss the following:
 - What must the class do? (*The class must make a choice.*)
 - Why can't the class go to the water park and the amusement park? (*There is not enough money to do both.*)
 - If you go to the amusement park, what do you have to give up? (*Going to the water park*)
 - If you go to the amusement park, what is your opportunity cost? (*Going to the water park*)
 - Explain that by choosing the amusement park, the class loses the opportunity to go to the water park.
 - If you go to the water park, what do you have to give up? (*Going to the amusement park*)
 - What is the opportunity cost of going to the water park? (*Going to the amusement park*)
 - Explain that by choosing the water park, the class loses the opportunity to go to the amusement park.
 11. Refer back to the story and discuss the following:
 - Why couldn't the family have the bathtub and food and clothing? (*The family did not have enough money to buy all of those things.*)

- What was the opportunity cost of spending the money on food and clothing? (*The bathtub*)
 - What was Donna going to have to do to get the bathtub? (*Save money*)
12. Ask students what **saving** means. (*Saving is when you keep money to spend in the future.*) Ask students for examples of things for which they have saved. (*Answers will vary.*)
13. Point out that Donna had a **savings goal**, a new bathtub. A savings goal is a good or service you want to buy in the future. To achieve her goal, Donna put together a **savings plan**. A savings plan is a schedule listing tasks that, when completed, will allow you to reach a savings goal.
14. Ask students what Donna's first savings plan was. (*Donna's first savings plan was to work with her three sisters and brother to do the following to save enough for a bathtub:*
- *save five Christmas dimes;*
 - *save five dimes received for their birthdays;*
 - *weed the pasture;*
 - *pick cherries, strawberries, and blackberries; and*
 - *win the poetry contest.*)
15. Ask why Carlyle didn't want to contribute his Christmas dime. (*Carlyle had his own savings goal. He fit just fine in the washtub, and he was saving for a banana in hopes that a tarantula would crawl out of the banana bunch.*)
16. Discuss the following:
- Why did Donna's first savings plan fail? (*Donna's first plan fell because no one wrote a poem and she was the only one who put her Christmas dime in the jelly jar.*)
 - What was Donna's next plan for reaching her goal? (*Donna wanted to grow cucumbers to sell to the Keokuk Cannery to make into pickles.*)
 - How much money did Donna and her siblings save by October? (*\$10.65*)
 - How much money did they need? (*\$10.75*)
 - How did Carlyle help his sisters reach their goal? (*Carlyle contributed his Christmas dime.*)
17. Remind students that before reading the story, they didn't think a dime was very valuable, and they wouldn't have been happy receiving one for Christmas or their birthdays.

18. Point out to students that in 1925 a dime was able to purchase more than it does today. Ask students how much they think something that cost a dime in 1925 would cost today. (*\$1.12*) How much would a bathtub that cost \$9.25 in 1925 cost today? (*\$103.23*)
19. Display *Handout 1: My Savings Goal* on which you have drawn a savings goal in the bathtub. Tell students that this is something for which you want to save.
20. Distribute a copy of Handout 1 to each student. Instruct the students to draw in the bathtub a picture of something for which they want to save. Tell students this is their savings goal.
21. Display *Handout 2: Steps for My Savings Plan* on which you have written ideas for how you intend to save for your goal. Read each idea to the students. Tell students these are things you plan to do to save enough money to reach your goal.
22. Ask students for some ideas on how they could earn money to save toward their goal. (*Answers will vary.*)
23. Distribute a copy of Handout 2 to each student. Instruct them to write one savings idea on each cucumber. Each of these ideas will help them earn and save money toward reaching their goal.
24. Have the students cut out the bathtub and the cucumbers. Give each student a quarter sheet of paper. Ask them to draw seven cucumber seeds. Ask students why in the story the children planted seven seeds in each hole they dug. (*The children planted seven seeds to make sure enough survived to grow into cucumbers.*) Point out that Donna said, "It's one for the cutworm, one for the crow, one for the beetle, and four to grow."
25. Give each student a piece of string or yarn, which will represent a cucumber vine. Have students staple the seeds at one end of the string and the bathtub at the other end, then staple their cucumbers along the cucumber vine.
26. Remind the students that the bathtub has a picture of their savings goal and the cucumbers on the vine list ways to save for that goal.
27. Display the students' vines on a bulletin board titled "Seeds of Saving." Ask students why the bulletin board has this title. (*In the book, Donna and her siblings planted seeds to grow cucumbers to sell to earn enough money to buy the bathtub. On the bulletin-board vines, the students are planting seeds—ways they can achieve their savings goal.*)

28. Point out that when Papa took Donna to the post office, she counted out her “pickle patch” money to get a money order. Explain the following:
- A money order is a form of payment that can be used to pay bills or to purchase goods or services.
 - Money orders can be bought at a number of places, including post offices, supermarkets, check-cashers, and banks.
 - Each money order has a number printed in several locations, including the stub that the purchaser keeps as a receipt. This number is required for tracking purposes, and purchasers should retain it for their records.
 - Purchasers must pay a fee for a money order.
29. Discuss the following:
- Why did Donna use a money order rather than send cash? (*A money order was safer to send than cash.*) Note that the book doesn't say who paid for the money order.
 - What might Donna use today instead of a money order? (*Today, Donna might use a check, credit card, or debit card.*)
 - What is a benefit of using a check instead of cash or a money order? (*Checks are a service offered by banks. When people have money in a checking account they can write checks on that money. When you keep your money in a checking account at a bank, it is more secure than keeping money at home in the form of cash. Money orders are safer than cash, but you must pay a fee for money orders. Writing a check from your checking account is usually free of charge.*)
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Closure

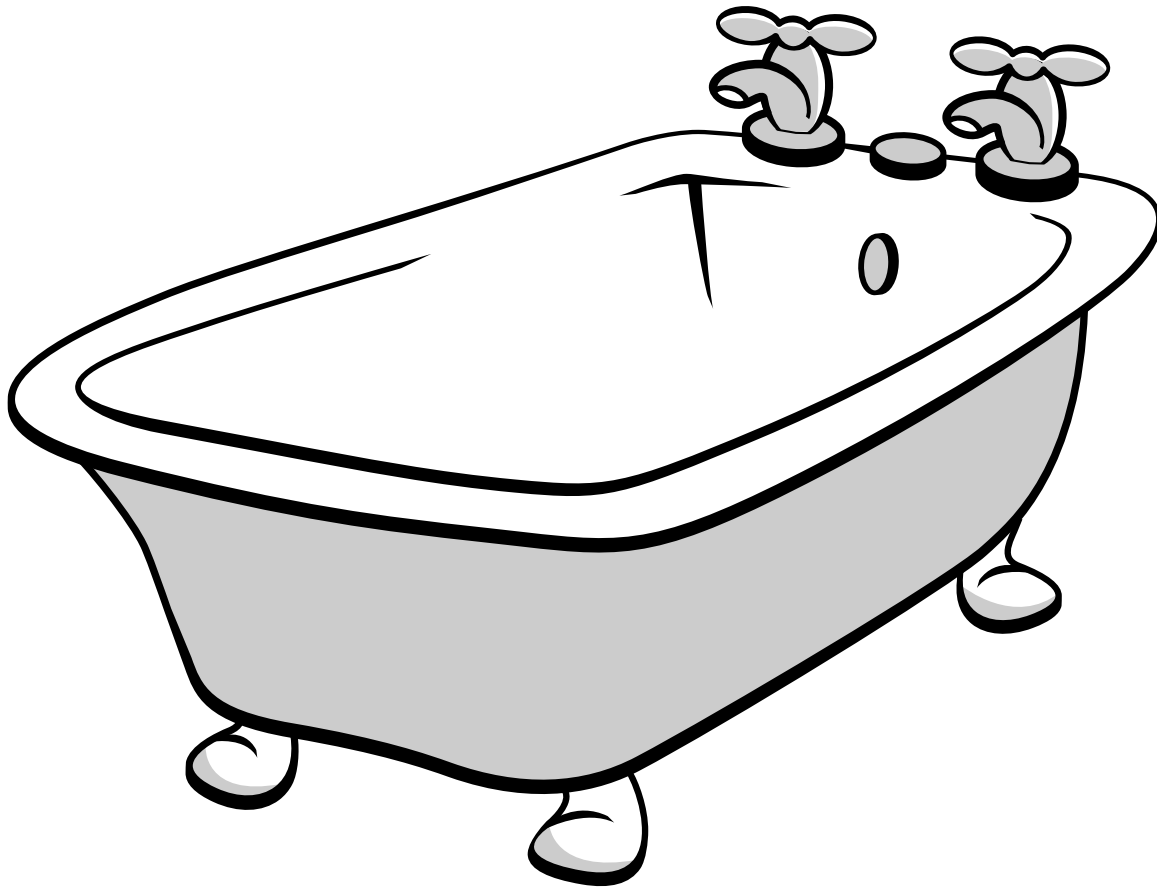
- What is opportunity cost? (*Opportunity cost is what is given up when a choice is made; it is your second choice.*)
- What is saving? (*Saving is when you keep money to spend in the future.*)
- What is a savings goal? (*A savings goal is a good or service that you want to buy in the future.*) Give an example of a savings goal. (*Answers will vary.*)
- What is a savings plan? (*A savings plan is a schedule listing tasks that, when completed, will allow you to reach a savings goal.*)

Assessment

1. Use the book to review the story by making a timeline. The story begins in January, when Donna decides she needs a bathtub, and ends in December, when she actually gets to take a bath in the new tub. Have students draw pictures on pickles representing the various activities that occurred each month throughout the year. Attach their pictures to a long strip of paper assembled from several sheets of green construction paper. Review the steps the family went through to achieve their goal and how long it took.
2. Have the students write a short essay describing a different savings goal than they used in the bathtub/pickles activity you posted on the bulletin board. Tell the students to be sure to fully describe their savings goal and their savings plan. Ask the students to identify what they will have to give up (the opportunity cost) to achieve their savings goal.

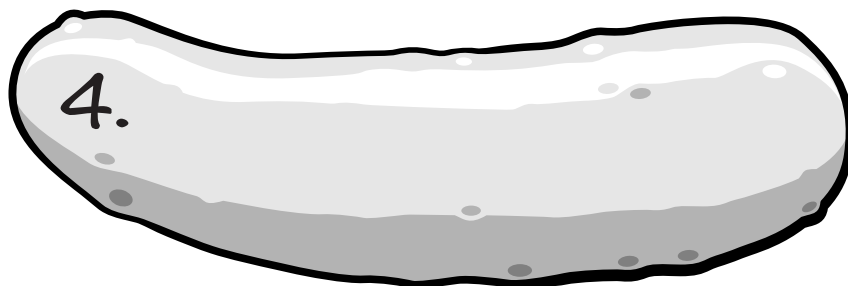
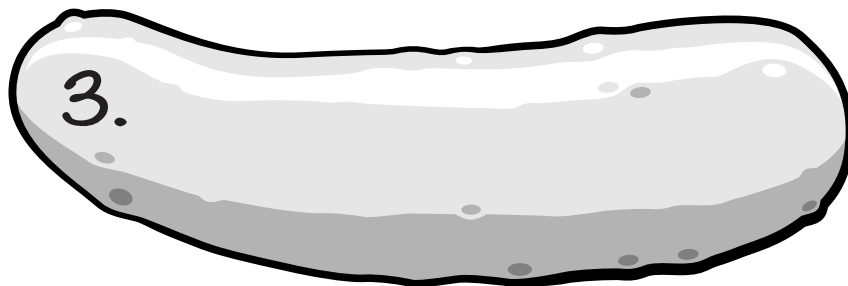
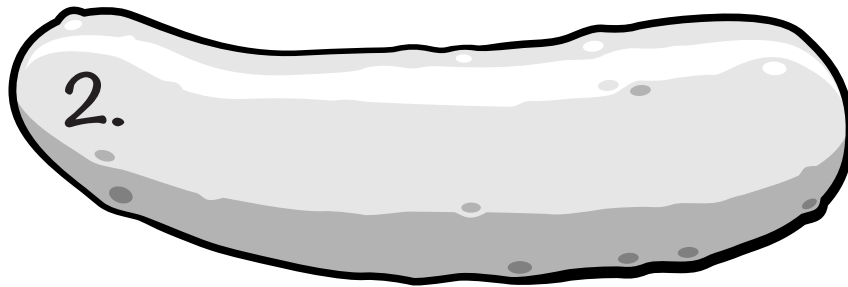
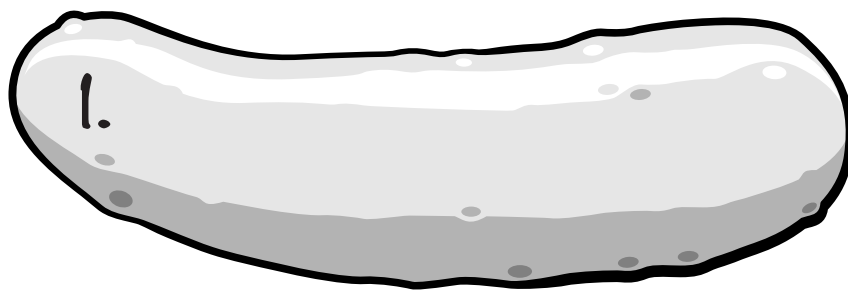
Handout 1: My Savings Goal

My Savings Goal



Handout 2: Steps for My Savings Plan

Steps for My Savings Plan



Standards and Benchmarks

National Standards in Economics

Standard 1: Productive resources are limited. Therefore, people cannot have all the goods and services they want; as a result, they must choose some things and give up others.

- **Benchmark 4, Grade 4:** Whenever a choice is made, something is given up because resources are limited.
- **Benchmark 5, Grade 4:** The opportunity cost of an activity is the value of the best alternative that would have been chosen instead. It includes what would have been done with the money spent and the time and other resources used in undertaking the activity.

Standard 10: Institutions evolve and are created to help individuals and groups accomplish their goals. Banks, labor unions, markets, corporations, legal systems, and not-for-profit organizations are examples of important institutions. A different kind of institution, clearly defined and enforced property rights, is essential to a market economy.

- **Benchmark 2 for Grade 4:** Saving is the part of income not spent on taxes or consumption.

National Standards in Personal Finance

Saving and Investing Overall Competency: Implement a diversified investment strategy that is compatible with personal goals.

- **Benchmark 1, Grade 4:** People save for future financial goals.
- **Benchmark 2, Grade 4:** Every saving decision has an opportunity cost.

Common Core State Standards, English Language Arts Standards, Grades 3-5

Reading: Literature

- **Key Ideas and Details**

RL.3.1, RL.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RL.5.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

RL.3.3, RL.4.3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

Writing

- **Text Types and Purposes**

W.4.2, W.5.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

W.4.2a, W.5.2a: Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

W.3.3, W.4.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

W.3.3a, W.4.3c: Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.

- **Production and Distribution of Writing**

W.4.4, W.5.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.