



Less Than Zero



Use these questions to discuss with children 8 to 10 years old the following economic concepts in *Less Than Zero* by Stuart J. Murphy (ISBN: 978-0-06-000126-1): **saving**, **goals**, and **borrowing**.

- 1. Currency is a type of money. Dollars are an example of currency. What do Perry, his family, and friends use as currency?**

They use clams as currency.

- 2. How did Perry use currency?**

He used currency to buy goods and services, such as a ticket to the Ice Circus and a Fishy Float, and saved it.

- 3. A savings goal is something you want to buy in the future. What was Perry's savings goal?**

Perry's savings goal was an ice scooter.

- 4. The money that Perry earned is called income. How much income did he earn from his mom for trimming the ice in front of his house?**

Perry earned 4 clams.

- 5. Borrowing means using someone else's money and repaying them later—in the future. What did Perry borrow for, and how many clams did he borrow?**

Perry borrowed 1 clam from Fuzzy to go to the Ice Circus, 2 clams from Baldy for a Fishy Float, and 4 clams from Mr. Spike to buy the scooter.

- 6. How did Perry keep track of all the money that he earned, borrowed, and spent?**

Perry used a graph to keep track of all of his money. (This is a good idea, since he always knew exactly how much he had and whether he owed money.)

- 7. Why was Perry's graph sometimes "less than zero"?**

Perry borrowed money from Fuzzy, Baldy, and Mr. Spike. The "less than zero" part of his graph showed how much he owed.

- 8. Why do you think Perry turned down Baldy's offer to buy him Fishy Fries for 3 clams at the end of the book?**

Perry knew that he still owed Mr. Spike 4 clams, so he didn't want to be even more "less than zero" and owe 7 clams.