



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.