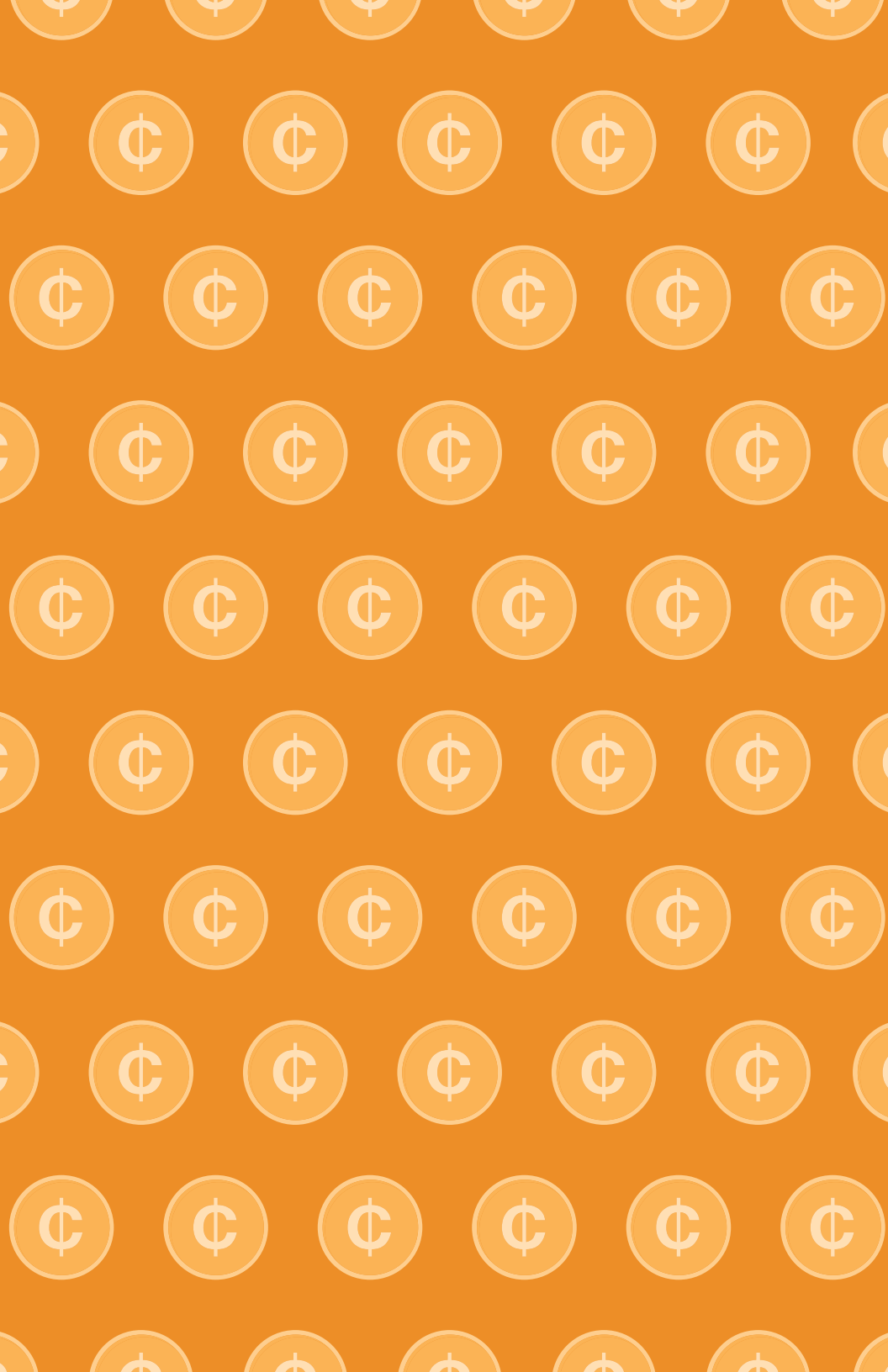
Parent reading guide for

"Alexander, Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday" by Judith Viorst

Ages 4+

Money as You Grow Bookshelf



Welcome

This guide will help you teach your child money management skills while reading "Alexander, Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday" by Judith Viorst. It will accomplish this by:

- Helping you explain the key ideas covered in the book, and then providing you with signs your child understands the key ideas and can use them in daily life.
- Giving you things to think about before reading the book with your child. These can help you spot key points in the book or spark ideas to discuss later.
- Helping you prepare for an enjoyable reading time with your child.
- Providing questions to talk about with your child.
- Suggesting activities that help your child put ideas and lessons into action.

Needs and wants — Ages 5+

This activity will help your child prioritize spending decisions.

Create a two column table. Label the left column "Needs" and the right column "Wants." Then flip through a magazine, store circular or catalog and ask your child to clip out pictures of things he or she needs or wants just for fun. Then, ask them to paste the pictures into the appropriate column.

Parents and children may not agree on what is a need and what is a want.

Coin rubbings — Ages 6+

This activity will help your child learn coin values.

Before we spend our money, we need to know how much we have. For this activity you will need scissors, blank paper, crayons, and a penny, nickel, dime, and quarter.

Start with the penny. Remind your child that a penny is one cent. Put the penny under the paper. Have your child rub the long side of the crayon across the covered penny. Rub until you see the penny appear on the paper. Do this with all the coins. Each time, remind the child of how much the coin is worth.

Cut out the shapes and practice counting the play money.

The story

Alexander started the week as a rich young man. There were so many things he could do with a dollar. The money began to disappear.

Key ideas

By the time you finish this discussion guide, your child will be able to **point to examples** of these key ideas in the book you read and **discuss real-life examples, too**. Use these definitions to explain the ideas. We've also included ways children can show they are ready to use them in their daily lives.

1. Making decisions

Many times there are different ways to use money. Taking the time to ask questions, learn about different choices, and compare what's good and bad about each choice helps you reach good decisions.

How kids show it: They can look at a few choices and select one that will bring the best results.

2. Prioritizing

Sometimes we need to make choices about what we want or do. These choices can change from day to day. Prioritizing is arranging things in order of their importance to us.

How kids show it: They can prioritize choices when they want two or more things at the same time.

3. Saving

Some things cost more money than we have at one time. Saving means putting some money aside until we have enough to buy what we want.

How kids show it: They keep money in a safe place and keep track of amount saved for future spending. **(Ages 7+)** They can explain why money saved in a bank or credit union is still a personal belonging.

4. Self-control

Sometimes we can't have what we want right away and need to wait. Choosing not to spend money can sometimes be a good decision.

How kids show it: They can talk about times when they were able to wait and how they were able to do it.

Something to think about

First, read the book yourself and think about these ideas:

- Alexander spent all his money.
- How he spent it did not make him happy.
- Sometimes we buy things we think we need instead of saving for something we really need or want.
- Alexander learned that fighting temptations to spend money is hard.
- Sometimes we need to think and plan how to best use our money. Every person has different ideas about how to use money.

Before you read

Read the book first yourself. Knowing the story will help you know what comes next. It is important to ask your child questions about the story as you read. Ask what might happen next in the story.

- Choose a quiet time for stories and make it part of your daily routine.
- Find a cozy, quiet place to read.
- Make sure your child can see the pictures.
- Talk about the pictures and characters in the book.
- Read with expression in your voice. Give each character in the story his or her own voice.
- Keep the story time short enough to leave them wanting more.
- Look for ways during the day to bring up the messages in the story.
- Continue to read aloud together even if your child can read alone.

Something to talk about

Before you begin to read the story with your child, look at the cover of the book together. Ask what the story might be about.

As you read the story with your child, talk about these ideas:

- How did Alexander get his money? Where does your child get money?
- Talk about all the ways Alexander used his money. Was Alexander happy with how he used his money?
- Ask your child what he or she has spent money for and then wished he or she had not spent it. How did this make your child feel?
- Ask your child if he or she ever saves for something. Talk about how hard it is to wait and not spend.
- Why did Alexander end up with only bus tokens?
- Talk about how hard it can be to decide the best way to use our money.

Something to do

Margarine bowl piggy bank — Ages 4+

This activity will help your child learn to save by creating a place to keep money.

Use a plastic margarine bowl or other container to make a place to save money. Cut a slit in the lid large enough to drop coins through. To decorate the bank, help your child glue on pictures, play money or bits of ribbon.

Dream cloud — Ages 5+

This activity will help your child decide what it is important to save for.

Ask your child to draw a big puffy cloud. Inside the cloud, ask your child to draw something he or she really wants or needs. The item inside the cloud can also be a picture cut from a magazine. Talk with your child about how long it will take to save for the dream item.

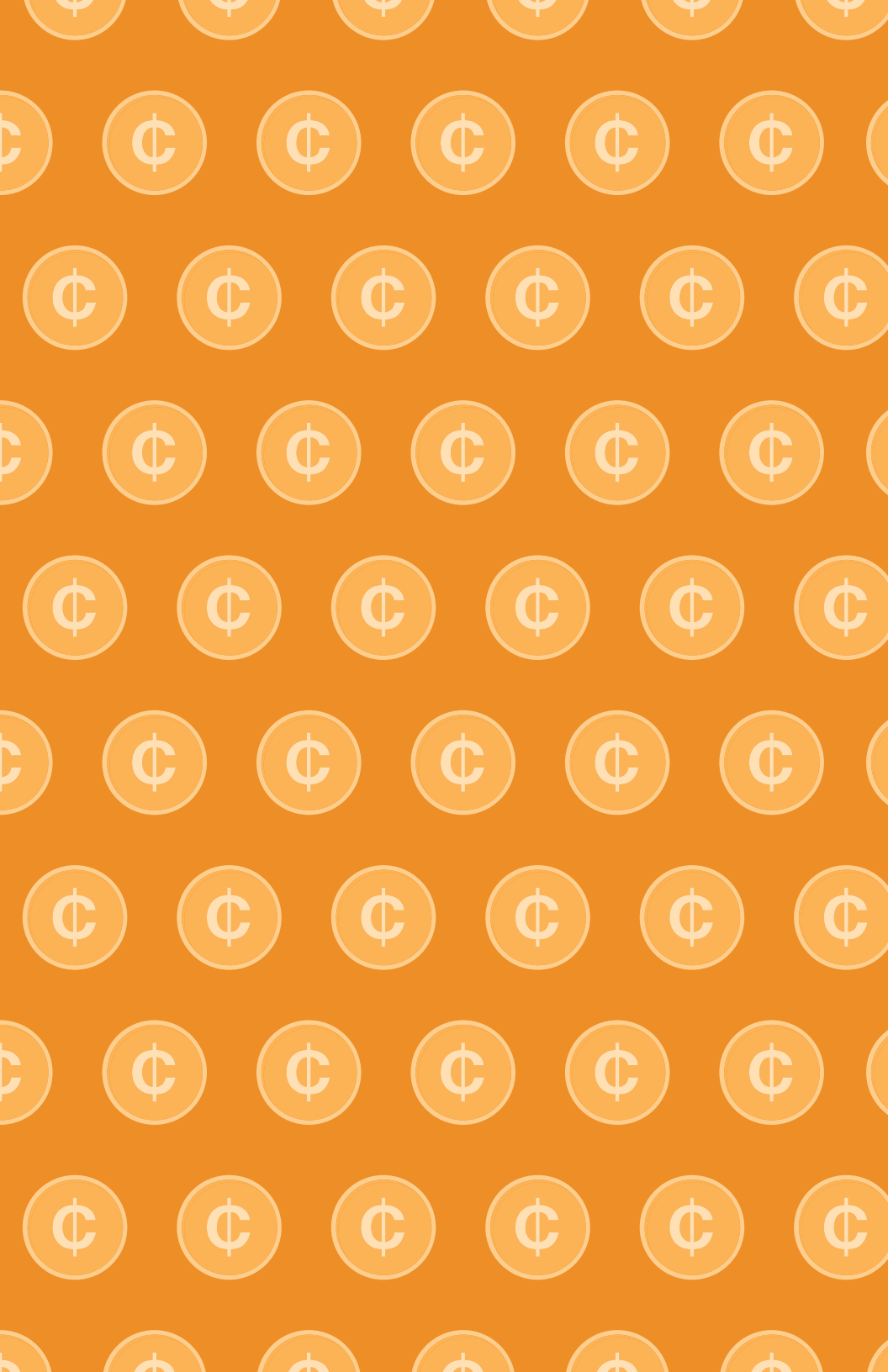
About this guide

Money as You Grow Bookshelf is a research-based program designed to help parents, caregivers, and others teach children ages 4 through 10 money skills through reading, activities, and play.

Money as You Grow Bookshelf is an updated version of the University of Nevada Extension's Money on the Bookshelf program. In collaboration with The University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Financial Security and the University of Wisconsin-Extension Family Living Programs, we are working together to expand the program and make it available to libraries, educators, and parents nationally.

For more tools and resources for parents, visit consumerfinance.gov/MoneyAsYouGrow.

The Center for Financial Security is a research center that seeks to help the public build financial knowledge and skills, increase access to financial services and increase the financial security of families. The University of Wisconsin-Extension is part of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) Cooperative Extension System, which brings vital, practical information to agricultural producers, small business owners, consumers, families, and young people.



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