

# Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday

By Judith Viorst • Illustrated by Ray Cruz  
Aladdin Books, 1987 • 32 pages • Grades ps-4  
ISBN 0-689-71199-9



*When Alexander's grandparents give him a dollar, he discovers that he has a lot to learn about managing money. With humor and keen insight into the mind of a young boy, Viorst describes Alexander's decision making and the disappointing results.*

## Dollar Decisions

**CONSUMER CHOICES, PERSUASIVE WRITING:** Alexander goes from being a proud owner of a dollar to being a disgruntled owner of bus tokens. Use this persuasive writing idea to explore his purchases. Read the book aloud a second time, pausing each time Alexander spends money. List the expense and its amount on the board; then ask each student to give a thumbs-up sign if she thinks it was a wise expense or a thumbs-down sign if she thinks it was unwise. Ask volunteers to share their reasoning.

Next each student writes how she thinks Alexander should have spent his money and why. The youngster mounts her writing on a slightly larger piece of white construction paper. Then she decorates the resulting border by coloring a money-related design or by using coin stamps. Display the work of each of your wise shoppers below the title "Decisions That Make 'Cents.'" For a related math extension, see page 59.

## Tempting Purchases

**IDENTIFYING WANTS AND NEEDS, MAKING DECISIONS, SPEAKING IN A GROUP:** Alexander is faced with several irresistible purchase choices. After reading this book, use this speaking activity to discover what your students would do if they had equally appealing choices. First review the concepts of *wants* and *needs*. Then have each student cut from discarded magazines and catalogs six pictures of items that he would like to buy, making sure that three satisfy needs and three satisfy wants. Ask him to glue each picture on a separate card and then draw a star on each of the two items he would buy if he only had enough money for two things.

Next divide the chalkboard into two columns labeled "Wants" and "Needs." Ask each student to show the class all of his cards, tell which two he chose, and explain why. Then have him tape each of the two cards below the appropriate heading. Ask students to study the resulting lists. Would students have purchased more items that meet needs or wants? Discuss the temptation of satisfying wants immediately and how it sometimes conflicts with meeting needs. What a valuable lesson!



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Money Matters

Cut out the coins on the dotted lines.  
Use the coins to **find** each answer.  
Write the answer in the blank.  
Draw coins in the box to **match** the answer.



1. When Alexander had 48¢ he lost 3¢. Then he had _____ left.		
2. When Alexander had 85¢, he paid 15¢ for bets. Then he had _____ left.		
3. When Alexander had 29¢, he lost 4¢ in a magic trick. Then he had _____ left.		
4. If Alexander had 45¢ and then lost 10¢, he would have _____ left.		
5. If Alexander had 37¢ and then paid 10¢ for candy, he would have _____ left.		
6. If Alexander had 50¢ and then gave away 25¢, he would have _____ left.		

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# Answer Keys

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(The order of the answers may vary.)

1. A 1
2. A 2
3. A 3
4. B 1
5. B 2
6. B 3
7. C 1
8. C 2
9. C 3

**Bonus Box:** Accept any reasonable responses.

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1. west or southwest
2. Minnesota Territory
3. Fort Laramie
4. Devil's Gate
5. Approximately 600 miles
6. Kansas, Nebraska, Utah, and Oregon Territories
7. New Mexico Territory
8. 31 states
9. Soda Springs
10. Columbia River

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my dear Prince Charmont,

I regret to inform you that Ella was not hear to except your latest letter. she ran off and eloped four days before it arrived. It seems that you were unaware of her selfish weighs. Her only desire was to be rich and powerful. Did you think that she cared? She wood have laughed at your sweet exclamations of love.

I wish I could offer you comfirt by telling you of her whereabouts. Mum, alive, and I havent any idea wear the dreadful girl has gone. Perhaps she got lost in the woods of ayortha or was eaten by an ogre.

I am sorry to dismay you. i only hope that you can forget foolish Ella and continue writting to me.

Your very devoted admirer,

Hattie

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(Drawings will vary. Accept any responses that match the following answers.)

1. 45c
2. 70c
3. 25c
4. 35c
5. 27c
6. 25c

