

## Introduction

As the students walked in to the classroom, they looked up to see “Money” written in large letters on the whiteboard. Grumbling could be heard as kids elbowed each other and pointed to the board.

David finally spoke up. “It’s about time this class got interesting.”

The kids sat down just as the guest professor walked in.

“Hi, my name is Catherine. I am here to teach you about money. Let’s start with a question—let me qualify, every answer is right—so, what is money?”

There was silence for a while. Then finally, the answers started to come...

“Money makes you popular.”

“Money is power.”

“Money means shopping.”

“Money means rich.”

“Money means you can buy whatever you want.”

“Money means you don’t have to work.”

“Money is something you fight over.”

“Money is greed.”

“Money is fun.”

The answers paused at this point, so Catherine asked if anyone else had anything to say.

Amal spoke very quietly. “Money is responsibility.”

Joseph smiled. “Money grows on trees!”

Everyone laughed.

Dayo spoke up. “Money is everywhere.”

Prisha added, “Money is necessary.”

Sean said, “Money is abundance.”

“And what is abundance?” Catherine asked.

Sean smiled. “I don’t know, but I saw it on the board over there.”

With this the whole class laughed again. Catherine smiled and looked around the classroom. “You each have a true definition of money. Yes, they are all very different, but we each are very different. Our definition of money comes from our families, our cultures, and our society. We each have a paradigm, or a picture in our heads, about what money means to us. Today we are going to look at those definitions and try to

come up with a class definition.

“So, what is money? Simply put, money is the resource that we use for exchange. We exchange work for money. We exchange other resources like food or shelter for money. But that definition did not come up in our brainstorming.

“It seems that we have added so much to the meaning of money that we all mean something very different when we say the same word. Why?”

“Many aspects of our lives have become complicated. It is the price to pay for industrialization and globalization. The truth is, as we became industrialized, our demand for resources dramatically increased. So we wanted more things, and for that we needed more money. And we kept accumulating.”

“And the more things that we have, the richer we are, and the more popular we are,” Zoe said.

“But each culture still has its own teaching about money and our relationship with it. Each family has its own history and experience with money on top of the cultural teaching. So when we add this all up...it’s complicated.

“It is time to simplify and break it down into its basic components. What is money? What are our beliefs about money? What are society’s beliefs about money that are similar to our own? How do we follow our own beliefs about money rather than someone else’s?”

“Are you ready? Let’s start.”