Contents — Page

Welcome to Smart Spending! 4

🔁 The Spending Choice
🕰️ Spending Then & Now
⚙️ What Makes a Smart Spending Decision?
🏞️ Money Can Have Different Jobs
⏸️ Smart Spenders PAUSE
🚀 Your Smart Spending Journey

💵 LEVEL 1 — Needs, Wants, Values & Tradeoffs 10

Needs & Wants — The Situation Matters 10
Priorities — What Matters Most Right Now? 10
Personal Values — Different People Can Make Different Choices 12
Tradeoffs & Opportunity Cost — Every Choice Has Another Side 12
Spend • Save • Give — Choosing a Job for Your Money 13
Putting It Together — Make the Best Choice You Can Defend 14
🧠 **Mental Workout: A Weekend of Choices** 16
🚀 **Future-Ready Challenge — A New Goal Changes Priorities** 18
📄 **REFLECT & EXPLAIN** 20

🎯 LEVEL 2 — Price, Quality & Value 21

Price — What Does It Cost? 21
Quality — How Well Does It Do Its Job? 22
Usefulness — Will I Actually Use What I Am Paying For? 22
Durability & Frequency of Use — How Long and How Often? 23
Cost per Use — Looking Beyond the Price Tag 23
Putting It Together — Which Choice Gives the Best Value? 24
🧠 **MENTAL WORKOUT: Eldon's $50 Value Mission** 26
🚀 **FUTURE-READY CHALLENGE — When Use Changes, Does Value Change?** 29
📄 **REFLECT & EXPLAIN** 30

🪤 LEVEL 3 — Spending Traps & Smart Decisions 31

Advertising — Information + Persuasion **31**
Urgency & FOMO — "Buy It Now!" **32**

Trends, Influencers & Peer Pressure — Who Is Affecting the Choice?	**32**
Impulse Buying — From "I Saw It" to "I Bought It"	**33**
Easy-to-Buy Spending — Small Clicks Can Add Up	**33**
PAUSE — Think First. Choose on Purpose	**34**
Putting It Together — Who Is Making the Decision?	**35**
🧠 **MENTAL WORKOUT: Kayla School-Supply Mission**	**36**
🚀 **FUTURE-READY CHALLENGE: A Better Offer Appears**	**38**
📄 **REFLECT & EXPLAIN**	**39**
🛒 **Level 4: Smart Shopping Math: Compare the True Cost**	**40**
Unit Price — Compare the Cost of One	40
Discounts — How Much Do I Really Save?	41
Shopping Offers — More Is Not Always a Better Deal	42
Sales Tax — The Price Can Increase at Checkout	42
Fees & Extra Costs — What Else Gets Added?	43
Putting It Together — Which Offer Has the Lower True Cost?	44
🧠 **MENTAL WORKOUT: Eldon's Dinner Delivery Decision**	47
🚀 **FUTURE-READY CHALLENGE — Extras at Checkout**	49
📄 **REFLECT & EXPLAIN**	51
CAPSTONE PROJECT ⚙️ **LEVEL 5 — Build a Smart Spending Plan**	**52**
Start With Purpose & Money Available	52
Build a Shortlist — Need • Want • Maybe • Skip	53
Research & Verify — What Do I Actually Know?	54
Compare Quality & Value	54
Check the Spending Influence	55
Calculate the True Cost	55
The Smart Spending Plan: A Step-by-Step Workflow	56
💻 **WORKED EXAMPLE 1** — Eldon Builds an Online Tech Plan	58
🛍️ **WORKED EXAMPLE 2** — Kayla's Workshop Shopping Plan	60
🧠 **MENTAL WORKOUT — Build Your Smart Spending Plan**	63
📄 **REFLECT & EXPLAIN**	67
✅ **ANSWER KEY**	69
⭐ **Your Next Future-Ready Money Skills Mission**	72

💡 Welcome to Smart Spending!

How Choices, Value & Priorities Shape the Way We Use Money

When you think about spending money, you might picture walking into a store, choosing something you want, and paying for it. That is one kind of spending decision—but much more happens behind every choice.



When we spend money, we choose **what matters to us, what something is worth, and what we are willing to give up to get it**.

We might spend money on things we **need**, like food or school supplies, and things we want, like games, treats, hobbies, or entertainment.

But a want isn't automatically a bad choice—and the cheapest option isn't automatically the smartest one.

Smart spenders learn to ask questions such as:

- **Do I really need or want this?**
- **Is it worth the price?**
- **Could another choice give me better value?**
- **What will I give up if I spend my money here?**
- **What will this purchase really cost?**

Every time you spend money, you are making a choice.

💡 **Smart spending means using your money in ways that match your needs, priorities, values, and goals.**

The Spending Choice

Spending means using money to pay for a product, service, or experience. **Smart spending** is different. **Smart spending means making thoughtful choices about when, where, and how to use your money based on your needs, priorities, values, and the value you receive.**

Smart spending does **not** mean never buying things you want. It means deciding whether something is **worth giving up part of your money for**. Like any skill, smart spending improves with practice.

A simple way to think about spending is:

💵 LEVEL 1 — Needs, Wants, Values & Tradeoffs

Every time you use money, you make a **choice**. Some choices help meet important needs. Others allow you to enjoy hobbies, activities, gifts, or experiences. But because money is limited, you usually cannot choose everything at once.



Four important ideas will help you understand smart spending decisions:

- **Need** — something important for health, safety, learning, or daily life.
- **Want** — something you would like to have but can usually manage without.
- **Priority** — something you decide is more important than other choices right now.
- **Tradeoff** — what happens when choosing one option means giving up another.

A purchase isn't automatically smart just because it is a need, and it isn't automatically a bad choice just because it is a **want**. The situation, your available money, and what matters most all affect the decision.

💡 **Future-Ready Tip:** Smart spending is not about always saying **"No"** to wants. It is about deciding which choices deserve your limited money.

🥪 1.1 Needs & Wants — The Situation Matters

A **need** is something important for living, staying safe and healthy, learning, or completing everyday responsibilities. Common needs might include:

Food • Basic clothing • Shelter • Medicine • School supplies

A **want** is something that can make life more enjoyable or convenient but is usually not essential. Examples might include:

Games • Treats • Collectibles • Extra clothing • Entertainment

At first, separating needs and wants may seem easy. But real-life decisions are not always that simple. Imagine Eldon needs shoes for school. If his only pair no longer fits, he needs a new pair of shoes. But suppose Eldon already owns good shoes and wants another pair because he likes the newest style. The second pair is more likely a **want**.

The item is still **shoes**. What changed? The situation.

That is why smart spenders do not classify an item solely by its name. They ask: **"Why do I need or want this?"**

🧠 MENTAL WORKOUT: A Weekend of Choices

Kayla and Eldon are visiting their grandparents for the weekend. Before they leave, their grandparents give each of them some cash to use however they choose. Their grandparents remind them: **"You don't have to spend it all. Think about what matters most to you."** Kayla receives **$60,** and Eldon receives **$55**. They both have several ideas.

💜 Kayla's Choices

Kayla's old lunch bag has a broken zipper and no longer stays closed. She needs a replacement for school. She is also thinking about two things she would enjoy.

Choice	Cost
🥪 New lunch bag	**$15**
🧁 Cupcake-decorating set	**$24**
📚 Mystery book	**$18**
🐾 Give to an animal rescue	**$5**

Kayla loves baking, so the $24 cupcake-decorating set is her first-choice want. The $18 mystery book is her next-best choice. She cannot choose both while following her other priorities, so choosing one means giving up the other. Her first plan is: **Lunch Bag + Cupcake Set + $5 Give → Save What Remains**

💙 Eldon's Choices

Eldon's bicycle helmet has a damaged strap and needs to be replaced before he rides his bike again. He is also considering two wants.

Choice	Cost
🚲 Replacement bike helmet	**$20**
💻 Coding adventure game	**$22**
🏀 Mini basketball hoop	**$14**
🥫 Give to a community food bank	**$6**

Eldon's first choice is the **coding game**. His next-best choice is the basketball hoop. His first plan is: **Bike Helmet + Coding Game + $6 Give → Save What Remains**

Now help Kayla and Eldon work through their decisions.

---

① **Kayla's Need:** Why is the **$15 lunch bag** a need in this situation?

☐ A. Kayla likes its color.
☐ B. Her current lunch bag no longer works properly for school.
☐ C. It costs less than the cupcake set. ☐ D. All bags are always needs.

🎯 LEVEL 2 — Price, Quality & Value

🧭 2.6 Putting It Together — Which Choice Gives the Best Value?

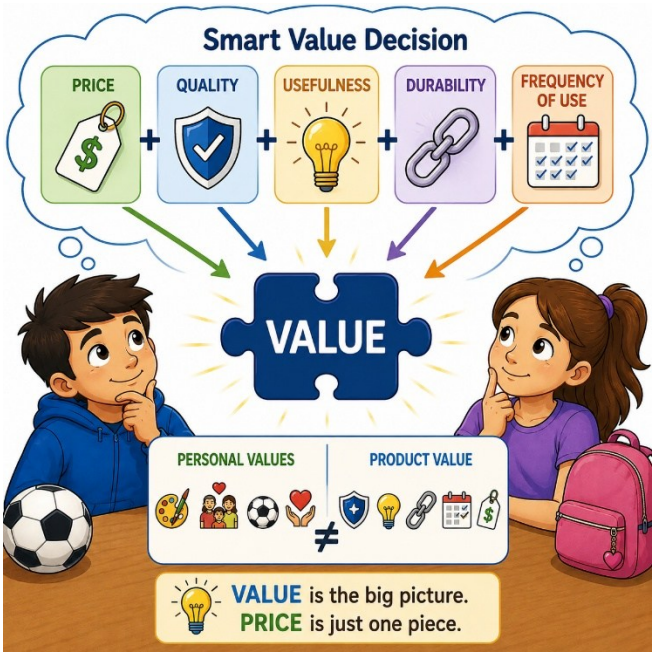
Value brings the different pieces together. Value asks whether what you receive is worth what you pay. A smart value decision may consider:

Price + Quality + Usefulness + Durability + Frequency of Use

Value here is different from **personal values**:

Personal values are things that matter to you, such as creativity, family, sports, or helping others.

Product value asks whether something is **worth what you pay for it**.



💡 Example — Eldon's Three Portable Speakers

Eldon wants a small speaker for music while exercising.

Choice	Price	Quality	Features
A	$18	Basic	Music
B	$28	Good	Music + longer battery
C	$45	Excellent	Music + longer battery + lights + several extra features

Which speaker offers the best value?

Speaker A has the **lowest price**. Speaker C has the **highest quality and most features**.

But Eldon expects to use the speaker often and wants a long battery life. He does not care about decorative lights or most of Speaker C's extra features.

Speaker B may give him a useful balance: **Good Quality + Useful Feature + Regular Use + Reasonable Price.**

That could make **Speaker B the best value for Eldon**.

Someone else might reasonably choose A or C depending on their needs, use, and available money.

A Future-Ready spender asks:

1. What is the price?

2. How good is the quality?

3. Which features will I actually use?

4. How long might it last?

🧠 MENTAL WORKOUT: Eldon's $50 Value Mission



Eldon helped organize a local community event by setting up tables, sorting activity supplies, and helping with cleanup. As a thank-you, he receives **$50**.

He has been thinking about three things he would like to buy:

🚲 a **bike light** for evening rides
💻 a **tablet stand** for homework and coding
🏀 a **sports gear bag** for basketball practices

Eldon wants to buy one of each, but he doesn't want to choose something just because it is cheap. His goal is:

Buy all three for $50 or less while choosing options that fit how he plans to use each item.

Here is what matters to Eldon:

🚲 Bike Light

Eldon expects to use it about **80 times this year**. He wants something **weather-resistant and reliable**, but he doesn't need extra features like a power bank.

Option	Price	What Eldon Learns
Light A	**$11**	Basic quality; one brightness setting; not weather-resistant
Light B	**$16**	Good quality; weather-resistant; three useful brightness settings
Light C	**$22**	Excellent quality; weather-resistant; extra settings + power-bank feature

💻 Tablet Stand

Eldon expects to use his stand about **60 times this year** for coding lessons and homework. He needs an **adjustable viewing angle**, but not a rotating base.

Option	Price	What Eldon Learns
Stand A	**$7**	Basic plastic; fixed angle
Stand B	**$12**	Sturdy; adjustable angle
Stand C	**$18**	Heavy-duty metal; adjustable + rotating base + extra features

🚀 FUTURE-READY CHALLENGE: When Use Changes, Does Value Change?

Eldon originally chose **Bag B — $14** because he expected to use it about **70 times** and wanted its stronger fabric and reinforced straps. Later, he learns that most of his sports equipment will stay at the gym. He now expects to use the bag only **20 times** this year. For occasional use, Eldon thinks the basic **Bag A — $9** may now be enough.

Challenge: Should Eldon **keep Bag B or switch to Bag A**? Decide which now gives him the better value and explain how the change in **frequency of use** affects his decision.

💡 **Future-Ready Hint**: You may want to compare:

Bag A: $9 ÷ 20 uses = $_____ per use
Bag B: $14 ÷ 20 uses = $_____ per use

If Eldon switches to Bag A:

$16 Light + $12 Stand + $9 Bag = $_____

Then ask yourself: **"Will Eldon use the extra durability of Bag B enough to make the extra cost worthwhile?"**

🔎 REFLECT & EXPLAIN

① **Price vs. Value**: Which statement is most accurate?

☐ A. The cheapest product always has the best value.
☐ B. The most expensive product always has the best quality.
☐ C. Price is one part of a value decision, but other factors matter too.
☐ D. Price does not matter when making a purchase.

---

② **Quality**: Which statement best describes **quality**?

☐ A. How expensive an item is
☐ B. How well an item is made or performs its job
☐ C. How many advertisements an item has
☐ D. How much money someone has available

---

③ **Usefulness**: A pair of headphones has six additional features, but Mia plans to use them only for listening to music. What should she ask?

☐ A. Does it have the most features?
☐ B. Is it the most expensive?
☐ C. Will I actually use the features I am paying for?
☐ D. Does someone else own it?

---

④ **Durability & Frequency of Use**: Why might durability matter more for something you use **every day** than something you use only a few times each year?

☐ A. Daily-use items are always cheaper.
☐ B. Frequent use can put more wear on an item, so lasting longer may provide more value.
☐ C. Rarely used items cannot break.
☐ D. Expensive items never wear out.

⏸️ 3.6 PAUSE — Think First. Choose on Purpose

Recognizing a spending influence is useful—but you also need a strategy for responding to it. Use: **P • A • U • S • E**

🎯 **P — Purpose: Why do I want this?** What job would the purchase actually do?

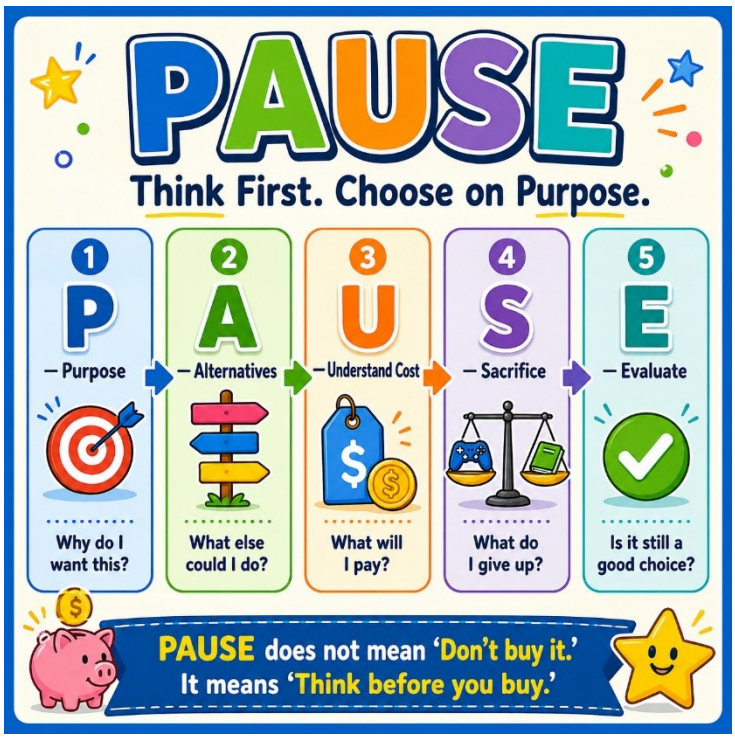
🔍 **A — Alternatives: What other choices do I have?** Could another product, something I already own, or waiting be a better choice?

💲 **U — Understand the Cost: What will I actually pay?** Do I understand the price and any recurring costs?

⚖️ **S — Sacrifice: What will I give up if I spend the money here?**

✅ **E — Evaluate: After thinking about everything, is this still a good choice for me?**

PAUSE does **not** mean: "**Don't buy it.**" It means: "**Don't let the pressure make the decision for you.**"



💡 Example — Kayla PAUSES Before Buying

Kayla has **$40**. She sees a popular desk organizer advertised for: $**28** — "**TODAY ONLY!**"

At first, she wants to buy it immediately. Instead, she uses **PAUSE**.

P — Purpose: She wants something to organize her art supplies.
A — Alternatives: She compares another organizer that does the same job for $20
It does not have the trendy design, but it has the compartments Kayla actually needs.
U — Understand the Cost: Advertised organizer: **$28**, Alternative: **$20** → Difference: $28 − $20 = $8
S — Sacrifice: If Kayla buys the $28 organizer: **$40 − $28 = $12 remaining**
If she chooses the $20 organizer: **$40 − $20 = $20 remaining**
She keeps **$8 more** for another priority.
E — Evaluate: Kayla decides the extra design isn't worth $8 more, so she chooses the $20 organizer.

PAUSE helped Kayla: **Notice the pressure → Compare → Keep $8 More → Make her own decision**

🛒 Level 4: Smart Shopping Math: Compare the True Cost

A price tag tells you what an item **starts at**—but it does not always tell you what you will actually pay.

A larger package may cost more but have a lower **unit price**. A sale may reduce the price. Sales tax may increase it again. Shipping or other required fees can make a lower advertised price cost more in the end. Five important ideas will help you use shopping math:



⊙ **Unit Price** — the cost of one item or one unit inside a package.

⊙ **Discount** — an amount taken off the original price.

⊙ **Sales Tax** — an amount added to many purchases based on a percentage of the taxable price.

⊙ **Fees & Extra Costs** — additional charges such as shipping, delivery, or service fees.

⊙ **True Cost** — the final amount you actually pay after discounts, taxes, required fees, and any optional costs you choose are included.

A smart shopper doesn't ask only, "**Which price looks lowest**?" A stronger question is: "**What will I really pay—and what am I getting for that amount**?"

💡 **Future-Ready Tip:** The number printed largest on a sign is not always the number that matters most at checkout.

📦 4.1 Unit Price — Compare the Cost of One

Two packages can have different prices **and quantities, making** them hard to compare. That is where **unit price** helps.

$$\textbf{Unit Price} = \textbf{Package Price} \div \textbf{Number of Units}$$

Suppose Kayla needs markers for several school projects.

Choice	Package Price	Quantity
Marker Pack A	**$6.40**	8 markers
Marker Pack B	**$8.40**	12 markers

🧭 A Future-Ready Shopper's Math Path

When comparing shopping choices:

1. **Check the Quantity**: Are the packages the same size?
2. **Compare Unit Price**: What does one unit cost?
3. **Apply Discounts or Coupons**: What is the price after savings?
4. **Add Sales Tax**: How much will tax add?
5. **Add Required Fees**: Is there shipping, delivery, or another required charge?
6. **Compare True Cost**: Which choice actually costs less overall—and does it fit what you need?



Quantity → Unit Price → Discount → Tax → Fees → True Cost

🔑 **Important Idea:** Smart shopping math is not about finding the biggest discount sign. It is about comparing the **complete cost of the choices you are actually considering**.

🔎 Smart Shopping Math Quick Check

Before beginning the Mental Workout, remember what each number tells you:

Idea	What It Means	Question to Ask
📦 **Unit Price**	Cost of one unit in a package	**What does one cost?**
🏷️ **Discount**	Amount removed from the original price	**How much do I save?**
💲 **Sale Price**	Price after the discount	**What is the new price?**
🛒 **Shopping Offer**	A deal based on quantity or conditions	**Do I actually need what the deal requires?**
🧾 **Sales Tax**	Percentage added to a taxable purchase	**How much will tax add?**
🚚 **Required Fee**	Additional amount needed to complete the purchase	**What else must I pay?**
💰 **True Cost**	Final amount after discounts, tax, required fees, and chosen optional costs.	**What will I really pay?**

🚀 LEVEL 5 — Build a Smart Spending Plan

🧭 5.7 The Smart Spending Plan: A Step-by-Step Workflow

A smart spending plan can be used for many different situations.

The products may change.
The amount of money may change.
The shopping place may change.

But the **decision process can stay the same**. Use these **8 steps**:



① Set Your Purpose & Money Available

Ask: **Why am I shopping? How much money can I use?**

Your purpose tells you what the shopping is supposed to accomplish. Your available money limits your plan.

---

② Set Priorities & Build a Shortlist

Sort possible choices into: **NEED • WANT • MAYBE • SKIP**

Then decide: **What must come first?**

A shortlist keeps your attention on the choices that actually matter.

---

③ Research & Verify

Before choosing a product, gather useful information.

Check: **Product Details • Features • Materials • Size/Quantity • Reviews • Warranty/Return Information • Seller Information**

Ask: "**What do I actually know—not just what does the advertisement claim**?"

④ Compare Quality & Value

Compare the strongest alternatives using:

Price • Quality • Usefulness • Durability • Frequency of Use

Ask: "**Which option gives me what I need for what I will pay**?"

💻 WORKED EXAMPLE 1 — Eldon Builds an Online Tech Plan

Eldon is preparing for a **school coding showcase**. His laptop works, but he needs equipment to connect and present his project. He shops mostly **online**, so this example emphasizes: **Product Research • Features • Online Promotions • Shipping • Discounts • True Cost**

① Set Purpose & Money Available

Purpose: Prepare his laptop and presentation for the coding showcase.

Money Available: $70 (Eldon does not need to spend all $70.)

---

② Set Priorities & Build a Shortlist: Eldon considers:

Choice	Category	Reason
USB-C Hub	**NEED**	Needed to connect to the projector
Presentation Clicker	**WANT**	Would make presenting easier
Laptop Stand	**MAYBE**	Could improve viewing angle
Animated Coding Theme Pack	**SKIP / MAYBE**	Fun, but not needed for presenting

Priority: **USB-C Hub comes first.**

---

③ Research & Verify: Eldon researches two hubs.

	Hub A	Hub B
Listed Price	**$24**	**$32**
Connections	4 basic ports	6 ports
HDMI	**No**	**Yes**
Warranty	6 months	2 years
Shipping	$5	Free
Promotion	None	15% OFF

An advertisement calls Hub B: "**ULTIMATE STUDENT HUB**!" Eldon does not rely on the slogan. He checks the actual specifications and learns that Hub B includes the **HDMI connection he needs**.

④ Compare Quality & Value

Hub A starts at a lower price. But it doesn't include HDMI; Eldon needs HDMI for the projector; Hub B has a longer warranty; Hub B also offers useful extra connections.

For Eldon's purposes, Hub B offers better value. The extra features matter because he will actually use them.

---

⑤ PAUSE & Check Spending Influences

🧠 MENTAL WORKOUT — Build Your Smart Spending Plan

For this final Mental Workout, **you are the smart shopper**. Your mission is to create a spending plan using the same **8-step Smart Spending Plan** followed by Eldon and Kayla: **Purpose & Money** → **Priorities & Shortlist** → **Research & Verify** → **Compare Value** → **PAUSE** → **True Cost** → **Build Plan & Tradeoffs** → **Check, Decide & Defend**

Choose Scenario A or Scenario B below—or create your own shopping situation with an adult's approval. Whichever you choose, follow the same 8-step Smart Spending Plan

🛍️ Scenario A: Birthday Gift Mission

You have **$50** to buy a birthday gift for a cousin who enjoys magic tricks.

Magic Kit A — $18
Basic materials • 12 tricks • simple instructions

Magic Kit B — $26
Stronger materials • 20 tricks • storage case

Other choices:
Birthday Card — $4
Gift Bag — $3
Candy Add-On — $6
Plush Keychain — $9

Store message beside Kit B:
"ONLY 2 LEFT!"

Assume **10% sales tax**.

📦 Scenario B: Online Organization Mission

You have **$70** to improve your room's organization.

Storage Organizer A
$22 + $6 shipping
Basic fabric • 4 sections

Storage Organizer B
$30 — 20% OFF + FREE SHIPPING
Reinforced material • 6 sections • lid

Other choices:
Cable Organizer — $8
Shelf Labels — $6
Decorative Wall Sign — $15

The website calls Organizer B:
⭐ "TOP-RATED CHOICE!"

Assume **10% sales tax after discounts**.

① STEP 1 — Set Your Purpose & Money Available: What are you shopping for?

My purpose: _____

Why is this purchase or shopping trip important?

_____

How much money is available? $_____

Do you want some money to remain afterward? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, about how much? **$**_____

_____

② STEP 2 — Set Priorities & Build a Shortlist: List at least **four possible choices**.

Choice	Need / Want / Maybe / Skip	Why?

✅ ANSWER KEY

💵 LEVEL 1 — Needs, Wants, Values & Tradeoffs

Mental Workout:
1.1 B
1.2 $15 + $24 + $5 = **$44**
1.3 $60 − $44 = **$16** → Spend **$39** • Give **$5** • Save **$16**
1.4 $15 + $18 + $5 = **$38**; Save **$22**; **$6 more** than first plan
1.5 C — **$18 mystery book**
1.6 $20 + $22 + $6 = **$48**; Save **$7**
1.7 $20 + $14 + $6 = **$40**; Save **$15**; **$8 more**
1.8 $20 + $22 + $14 + $6 = **$62** → **No; $7 short**
1.9 $16 + $7 = **$23 saved together**
1.10 No. Personal values and priorities can lead to different reasonable choices.

Challenge: They need **$50 − $23 = $27 more** saved. Answers may vary.
Example 1: Kayla chooses **Lunch Bag + Mystery Book + $5 Give → saves $22**; Eldon chooses **Helmet + $6 Give → saves $29**. Together = **$51**.
Example 2: Kayla keeps no wants and saves **$40**; Eldon keeps the **Basketball Hoop** and saves **$15**. Together = **$55**.
Earlier wants were not bad choices—the **new goal changed their priorities**.

Reflect & Explain: ① **B** ② **C** ③ **B** ④ **C** ⑤ **B** ⑥ **No** — a new priority can change the best use of money. ⑦ **Answers vary**; plan should total $50 and use at least three concepts.

🎯 LEVEL 2 — Price, Quality & Value

Mental Workout:
2.1 $11 + $7 + $9 = **$27** → **Yes**; cheapest may not meet his quality/use needs.
2.2 B — Light B; C adds features such as a power bank that Eldon does not need.
2.3 $16 ÷ 80 = **$0.20/use**
2.4 B — Stand B; A lacks the adjustable angle Eldon needs.
2.5 B = **$0.20/use**; C = **$0.30/use** → **Stand B**; Does C add a needed feature? **No**
2.6 B — Bag B; stronger fabric/straps matter with frequent use.
2.7 $16 + $12 + $14 = **$42**; $50 − $42 = **$8** → **Yes**
2.8 $22 + $18 + $20 = **$60** → **$10 short**; higher price ≠ better choice.
2.9 Sample: The $42 plan provides better **quality, usefulness and durability** for items Eldon will use often.
2.10 No. Being able to afford an upgrade does not make unused extra features good value.

Challenge: Bag A = $9 ÷ 20 = **$0.45/use**; Bag B = $14 ÷ 20 = **$0.70/use**. Switching gives $16 + $12 + $9 = **$37**. **Bag A is a reasonably better-value choice now** because use dropped sharply; accept Bag B if well defended.