

# Wants and Needs, Supply and Demand, and the Value of Work

Do you ever hear yourself say, "I want . . ." or "I need . . ."? Do those two statements mean the same thing? What would you say if I told you they are very different? A want is not the same thing as a need, so how do you decide whether something is a want or a need?



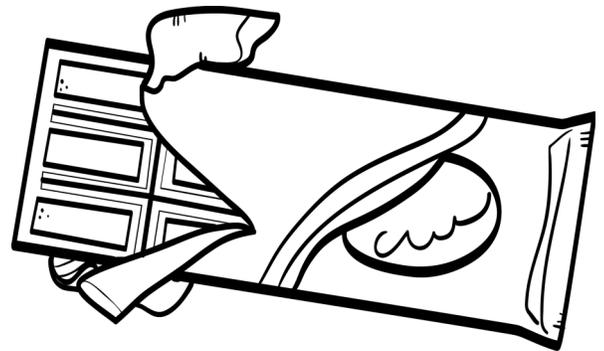
Let's start with things you need.

You need shelter, a place to be protected from the weather, bugs and animals, and other things outside that you don't want inside. Shelter doesn't have to be fancy or expensive, but it has to do the job.



You need clothes that cover your body and protect you from the rain, sun, cold, etc. They need to keep you warm or cool. Your shoes or sneakers need to protect your feet from potential dangers, such as glass, stones, etc. that could be in the area where you are walking outside. Just remember that needing clothes is not the same as needing clothes that cost a ton of money. Sneakers that cost \$12 might do just as good of a job as ones that cost \$150. Sometimes, what is popular is a want, not a need.

You also need food. You need things to eat that provide your body with the vitamins and minerals you need to grow and be healthy. An apple and a piece of cheese can make a good start to a lunch, but what about that doughnut or chocolate bar? Just because it is "food" does not mean it is a need. Some foods are needs, but some are wants. Now, that doesn't mean you can't enjoy a doughnut or piece of chocolate sometimes, but you can't call them a need. Needs are something you can't survive without.



What are some things you want? Maybe you want your own room so you don't have to share with a sibling. Or maybe you want a new pair of sneakers that are just like the ones it seems everyone else is wearing. You might want a doughnut or a chocolate bar because you really like them. There is nothing wrong with having wants. Everyone wants certain things. It's just important to learn how to tell needs

and wants apart so you know how to prioritize how you spend your money. Prioritizing just means that you decide what is most important and make sure you take care of it first. After all, if you buy the expensive sneakers because you want them but can't afford the winter coat to keep you warm and healthy, you will have a problem.



How do we get the things we need or want? There are two ways that usually work well in most situations. You can barter for something or pay for it with money.

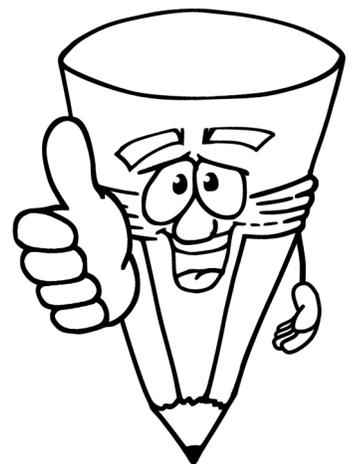


Bartering is a way of trading for something. For example, imagine you collect sports cards. Your friend has a sports card that you really want. You don't have one that your friend wants, but you talk to your friend and agree to give him two or three of the cards you do have for the one you want. You traded, or bartered, for the card you want.

The other usual way you could use to get the sports card you want is to buy it. If you go to a store that sells sports cards, they might not take something in trade for what you want. They may make you pay money to buy something.

So that brings us to an important question. If you need money to pay for what you want, how do you get it? The best way to get the money you need is to work for it.

What types of work can you do? Maybe you could mow grass, babysit, walk dogs, clean out garages, weed gardens, rake leaves, deliver newspapers, and many other things. One important thing to remember is that if you want people to hire you more than once, it's important to do your best for them. If you do a good job each time you get a job, you will get a reputation for being dependable and a good worker. That means more people will be willing to hire you. If you do a poor job, people will tell others, and no one will want to hire you again. If you do a great job and the people you work for start recommending you to their friends, you might end up with more work than you have time for! Many businesses have started in this way.



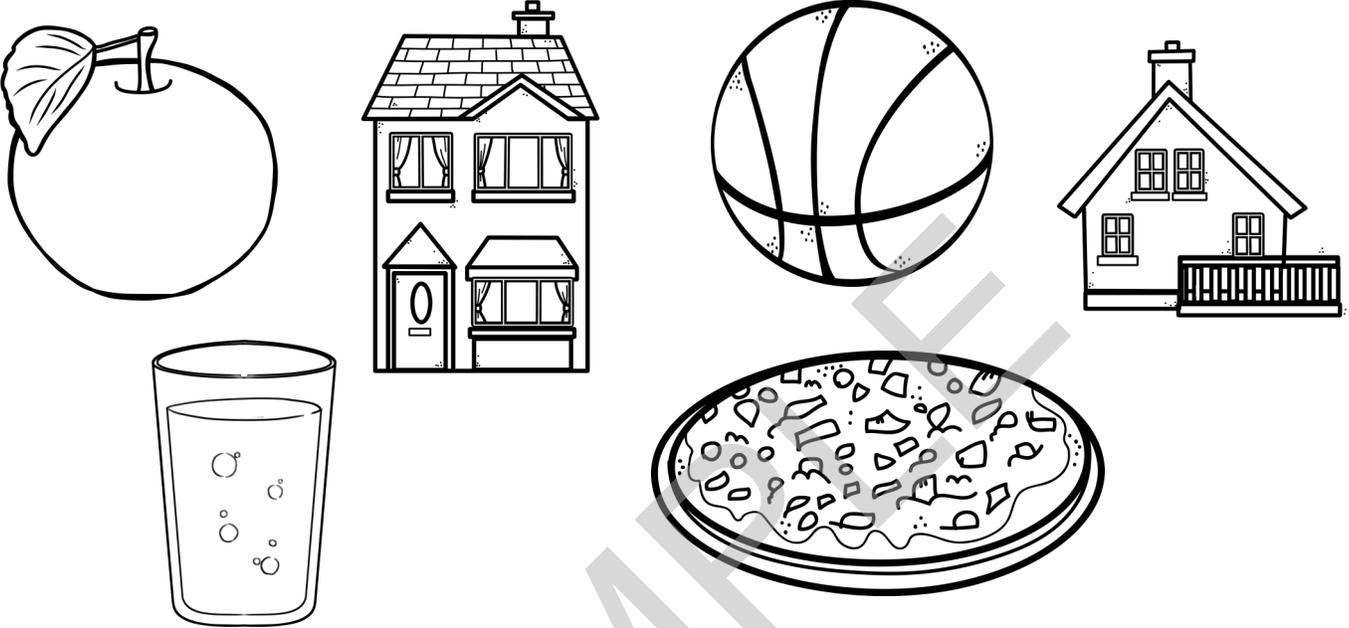
Let's imagine that you have looked at your needs and found that all your basic needs are taken care of, but you want to buy something. Many years ago,

## Let's Review

What is a need?

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Which of the following might be needs? Circle them.

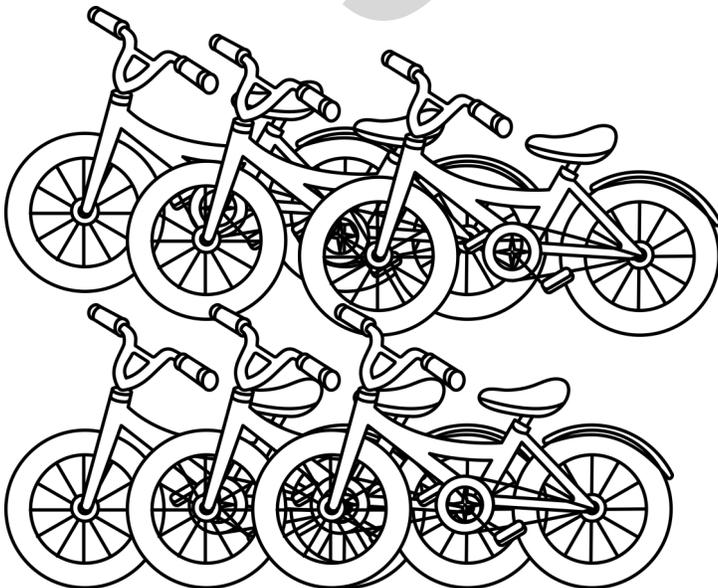


What does it mean to prioritize?

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If there is a lot of supply (picture on the left) and a small demand (picture on the right), will the item most likely be expensive or inexpensive?

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## Let's Review Answer Key

What is a need?

Something you cannot survive without

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Which of the following might be needs? Circle them.

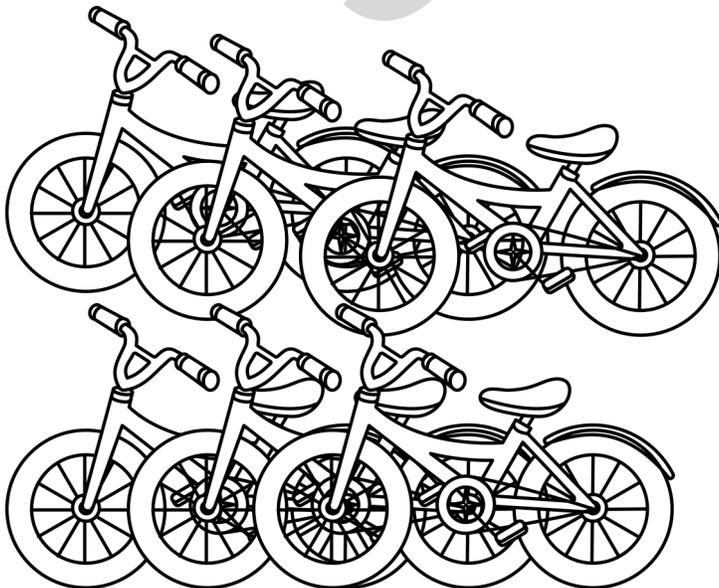


What does it mean to prioritize?

Decide what is most important and take care of it first

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If there is a lot of supply (picture on the left) and a small demand (picture on the right), will the item most likely be expensive or inexpensive?



Inexpensive

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