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The Impulse Trap

Lesson 2.2.4 · The pause that saves money

I CAN

notice when I am buying on impulse and use a pause before I spend.

An impulse buy is one you did not plan. Small ones add up fast. Work out the year.

One impulse snack costs	
Times per week	
Cost per week	
Weeks in a year	
Cost for one year	

The 24-hour rule

Write down something you wanted badly last month and did not buy. Do you still want it?
What does that tell you?

MILO SAYS

"The wanting fades. The money does not come back. That is why the pause works."

Answers and talking points

What a good answer looks like, and one question to ask when the pencils go down.

Line	Worked example	How to get it
One impulse snack costs	\$3.00	The child's own number
Times per week	3	Be honest, not hopeful
Cost per week	\$9.00	cost × times per week
Weeks in a year	52	Given
Cost for one year	\$468.00	cost per week × 52

3-5

Working the numbers

The numbers are the student's own, so there is no single key — but the shape of the answer is fixed, and the worked example above is a realistic one. **The jump from \$3 to \$468 is the entire page.** Nobody is shocked by three dollars. Everybody is shocked by four hundred and sixty-eight.

Ask: "What would you rather have — this year of snacks, or the thing \$468 would buy?" Let them name the thing. The trade is only real once it has a name.

3-5

The 24-hour rule, and the honest half

The second half has no right answer and should not be marked. The useful discovery is that **most students cannot remember what they wanted** last month, or no longer want it. That is the argument for the pause, and it lands harder coming from their own memory than from an adult.

Ask: "If you still want it a month later, is it still an impulse buy?" No — and that is the point. The rule is not there to stop you buying things.

Want the rest of the unit?

This page is one activity, unchanged, from **Unit 2.2 — Smart Spending**, a Financial Foundations™ unit of 10 to 12 lessons with teacher scripts, family letters and a unit checkpoint. For a free five-day money game your students can play in a browser, try **The \$100 Week™**. Everything is at wealthwisekids.org.