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What Taxes Buy

Lesson 2.1.7 · Taxes · with Macon

I CAN

explain what taxes are and name things in my community that taxes pay for.

Macon's dad says taxes are just the government taking his money. His teacher said "kind of, but...". Finish the sentence — walk from your front door and list **six things** you pass that taxes helped pay for.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

The hard question

If nobody paid taxes, which **one** thing from your list would you miss the most? Why that one?

Answers and talking points

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

3-5

What a good answer looks like, and why there is no key

Every reasonable answer is correct, deliberately. A road, a sidewalk, a traffic light, a bus, a hydrant, a school, a library, a park, a streetlight, a crossing guard — all of it counts. What you are checking is whether a child can look at something ordinary and see that somebody paid for it. **Six is the target because the first two are easy and the last two are where the thinking starts.** On the hard question, accept any choice that arrives with a reason, and refuse any that does not — ranking is where value shows up.

Ask: “Which one did you nearly not write down?” The thing they almost missed is usually the thing they had never thought of as paid for.

3-5

The sentence Macon’s teacher did not finish

Macon’s dad is not wrong that taxes are money taken. The “kind of, but...” is that **the money comes back as things no one family could buy alone** — a road, a fire department, a traffic light. **Keep this off politics.** Whether taxes are too high or too low is a real argument and not this activity; the skill on this page is seeing what the money bought.

Ask: “Could your family buy a fire truck by yourselves?” That is the whole lesson in one question.

Want the rest of the unit?

This page is one activity, unchanged, from **Unit 2.1 — The Earning Engine**, 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.