

Needs and Wants

“What is success?” Mr. Gruber asked his 6th grade business class. It was his opening conversation for the first class of the semester.

“Success is rolling in a sweet car, watching an 80 inch TV, and living in a place with at least twelve rooms.” One student answered, earning a chorus of laughter.

Mr. Gruber smiled, but shook his head. “Tom, that is *excess*. That is not *success*.”

“How about being able to provide for your family?” A blonde girl named Sandy in the front suggested as an answer.

“Now we’re getting closer,” Mr. Gruber smiled, “but try thinking about it in terms of what you need and what you want.”

“Getting everything you want.” Tom shouted out an answer again, trying for more laughs.

Mr. Gruber sighed. “I believe we’ve already talked about excess versus success.”

“Getting everything you need, but some of what you want?” James, sitting in the back, wondered aloud.

“Exactly!” Mr. Gruber clapped. “Success is getting everything you need and some of what you want. The more you get that you want, the more successful you are. You do reach a point where you are living in excess, though.”

“What does this have to do with business?” Tom demanded. It seemed if it wasn’t funny, he wasn’t happy.

“Well, Tom, think of it this way: the point of business is to make a living to support your family. Once you have properly seen to their needs, you can then see to getting the extras that you want.”

“What if I don’t have a family?” He continued to be difficult.

“Then you have to provide for yourself, a family of one.”

“He has goldfish to think about!” Peter, Tom’s friend, shouted out.

“Then he needs to provide for a family of one with a fishbowl.” Mr. Gruber corrected himself.

Tom nodded, satisfied with that answer.

“So in the next nine weeks, we’re going to study basic business situations, like having a checking account, balancing household budgets, and understanding credit cards.”

Tom rubbed his hands together excitedly. “When do we get to start spending?”

“You already are, Tom. You’re spending time with us!” Mr. Gruber laughed. “Now, let’s see what you guys know about credit cards...”



Needs and Wants

Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What class does Mr. Gruber teach?
 - A. history
 - B. science
 - C. math
 - D. business

2. What is the main point of this discussion?
 - A. Get what you want
 - B. Wants vs. Needs
 - C. Money
 - D. How to play the stock market

3. Which student doesn't seem to be taking the class seriously?
 - A. Tom
 - B. James
 - C. Peter
 - D. Sandy

4. How does Mr. Gruber try to keep the students interested?
 - A. He is showing a movie.
 - B. He is giving a lecture where only he talks.
 - C. He is involving the students in a discussion.
 - D. He is reading from a textbook.

5. Based on the story, how could you NOT describe Mr. Gruber?
 - A. patient
 - B. humorous
 - C. involved
 - D. grumpy

Needs and Wants – Answer Key

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 - C. involved
 - D. angry**