

Chapter 1

What is money?






- Knock
- knock!

– Knock knock! – Sophie knocked at the door of her grandparents’ house. After a while the door opened slowly and grandma’s smiling face appeared from behind it.

– Hi, dear? – grandma welcomed Sophie warmly.

– Hi, granny! – answered Sophie.

– Come in. You’ll find grandad in the living room. I’ll join you in a moment.



Sophie took off her shoes, jumped into her favourite bunny slippers and headed for the living room. She found her grandad sitting comfortably in the armchair and admiring something through a magnifying glass.

– Hi grandad, what are you doing?

– Hello, love! I'm looking at my collection of old money – responded the elderly man.

– *What is money?*

– Sophie asked with interest.

– Money is something with which you can buy various things.







*- So, what can you buy
with this money?*

- Well, actually with this particular money we can buy nothing. It is no longer used in shops or banks, because it is very, very old – explained grandad.

- Is it older than you? – asked Sophie.

- Yes, some of it is – and the elderly man responded with laughter. – But for a numismatist the older the money, the more exceptional it is.

- Mmm, and who is a ... mu-ni-ma... – Sophie struggled to repeat the word correctly.

- A numismatist is a person who collects old money, just as I do.





Sophie looked at the table and started to look at the objects gathered on it. She took them one by one and examined each of them from all angles.

– Are these papers money? – asked the girl.

– Yes, Sophie. These are *banknotes*.

– And are these round discs also banknotes?

– *No, these are coins*

– responded the man.



Sophie looked at the money gathered on the table and after a while she asked:

- Is there any other money?

- A long, long time ago, rare objects such as:

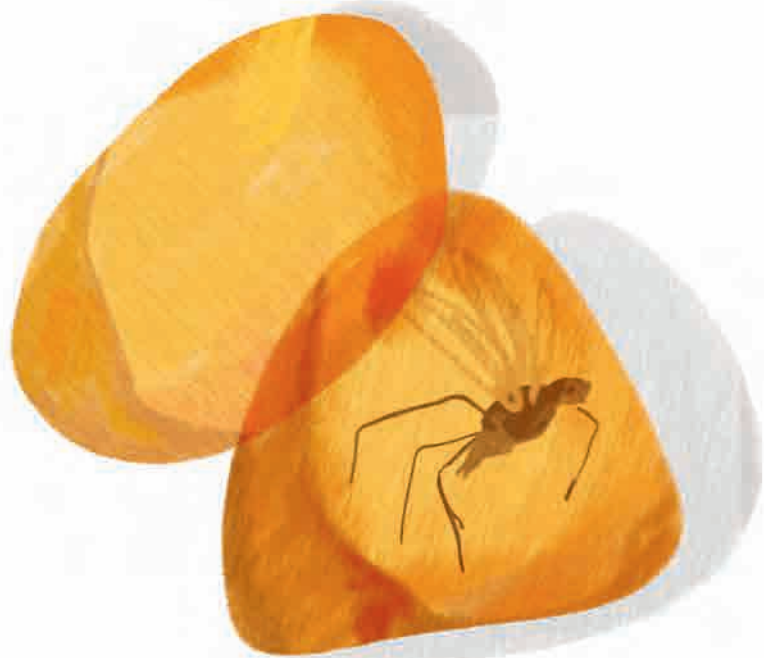
gold, silver, amber or shells

were used for exchange.

- When I was at the seaside with my parents I collected shells on a beach. Does it mean I am also a numismatist?

- No, no - said the man. - Numismatists do not collect shells. Would you like to see...





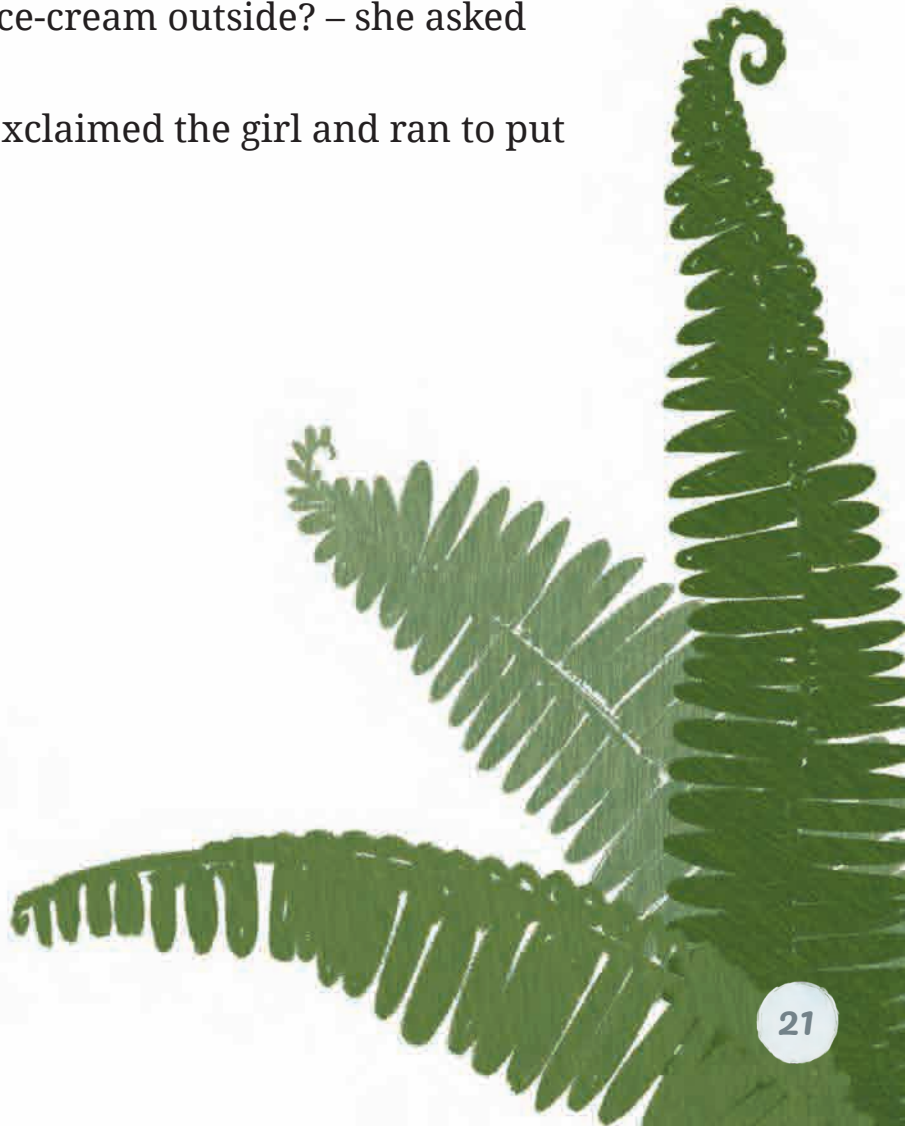





He failed to finish the sentence because grandma entered the room. She was wearing a hat and sunglasses.

– The weather is so lovely. Do you feel like having some ice-cream outside? – she asked with a smile.

– Yes, sure! – exclaimed the girl and ran to put on her shoes.





A moment later her grandparents were walking through the park, holding hands and Sophie was skipping from one leg onto another. When they arrived at an ice-cream shop and decided on the ice cream flavours, Sophie asked her grandma:

Are we going to pay with coins or banknotes?

- Neither banknotes nor coins – said grandma.
- With shells? – Sophie came up with a clever idea.
- Shells? – The elderly lady did not hide her surprise. – We will pay with

a credit card.




Ice-cream
Shop



- What card?

- With a special card which is used to buy something with the money that is located in a bank. It's really simple. Having said that, grandma put the card close to a black plastic box which lit up and made a beeping sound.
- Now you have to enter the PIN, which is a personal identification number, and it's done...
- Grandad winked and smiled at Sophie.
- Lovers of old money are no strangers to novelty.





After a while, all three of them were sitting on a bench in the park savouring the ice cream. The grandparents started to chat. Sophie remained silent for a few minutes and then she suddenly posed a new question:

- Grandpa, where does money come from?

