

Course Overview – TEKS Financial Math (§130.180)

This course is designed to equip students with practical skills for confident financial management through a hands-on, project-based curriculum. It is fully aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for Financial Mathematics (§130.180) and satisfies the state's high school mathematics graduation requirement.

Course Philosophy and Methodology

Financial Mathematics equips students with the quantitative thinking and everyday decision skills they will use long after graduation. The course blends *math* (budgets, rates, compound growth, taxes) with *personal choices* (jobs, apartments, cars, investing, insurance). Each subunit builds on a capstone project: **Funding Your Desired Life**—a cumulative project in which students build, test, and defend a complete personal financial plan.

The course design balances three modes of learning:

1. **Direct Instruction:** teacher-led mini-lessons that establish core ideas and vocabulary.
2. **Individual Study:** short lessons or activities with self-grading quizzes to gauge understanding.
3. **Project Work:** hands-on activities that apply math to personal scenarios and data obtained from the Budget and Stock Games.

Throughout, students use calculators, spreadsheets, and realistic artifacts (pay stubs, loan estimates, policy builders, etc.) so the decisions feel meaningful.

How the Course is Organized

Each unit advances a coherent storyline—from earning and budgeting to building wealth, making major purchases, and protecting your plan—so students can see how one decision influences the next. The sequence below summarizes what's covered in each unit at a glance.

Unit 1 - Funding Your Desired Life

Launch the capstone project. Students analyze an in-game monthly budget, explore careers, calculate education ROI, and learn how gross pay becomes net pay. They finish the unit with a baseline cost-of-living and a first pass at income targets.

- **Subunit 1: Introducing the Budget Game (& Stock Game if using)**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2G, 15A, 15B
- **Subunit 2: Career Exploration & Economic Context**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2G, 17A, 17B, 15C
- **Subunit 3: Calculating Education Costs & Return on Investment**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2G, 17C, 17D, 17E, 17F, 17G

Unit 2 - Earning an Income

Students learn to analyze paychecks, interpret benefits, and navigate essential employment forms. They compare total compensation (salary + benefits + taxes) and map a 10-year financial vision that includes additional income streams and a learning strategy to stay employable.

- **Subunit 4: From Gross to Net Earnings**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2G, 3C, 3D, 3E, 3F, 3H
- **Subunit 5: Comparing Compensation Options**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2G, 3B, 3G, 3I, 3J, 3K
- **Subunit 6: The Big Picture of Your Income**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2G, 3A, 3L

Unit 3 - Navigating the Tax System

Students practice filing income taxes, compare standard vs. itemized deductions, calculate tax liability using progressive brackets, and connect the math to marginal vs. effective rates—including implications for side hustles.

- **Subunit 7: The Building Blocks of a Tax Return**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 1D, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2G, 4G, 4H, 4I, 4J, 4M
- **Subunit 8: Calculating Tax Liability**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 1D, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2G, 4A, 4F, 4L
- **Subunit 9: Other Types of Tax**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 1D, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2G, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E, 4K

Unit 4 - Saving Money to Build Long-Term Wealth

Build the saving toolkit (banks vs. credit unions, account types, payment methods), then explain compound interest and the Rule of 72. Students translate saving habits into long-term growth and draft a first retirement plan.

- **Subunit 10: Your Tools for Saving**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2G, 5A, 5B, 5E, 5F, 5G
- **Subunit 11: The Math of Building Wealth**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2F, 2G, 5C, 5D, 11B, 11D
- **Subunit 12: Creating Your Retirement Income**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2F, 2G, 11A, 11C, 12

Unit 5 - Investing in Your Future

Move from saving to investing. Students research asset classes (stocks, bonds, ETFs), evaluate performance and risk, and create their own investment plan with allocation, contributions, and rebalancing rules.

- **Subunit 13: What Can You Invest In?**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2G, 9C, 5B
- **Subunit 14: How to Evaluate Your Investments**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2E, 2F, 2G, 9A, 9B, 3A
- **Subunit 15: Building Your Portfolio**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2G, 9D, 14, 11A, 15C

Unit 6 - Managing Credit & Debt

Clarify how credit works (APR, grace periods, CARD Act), compute the true cost of carrying a balance, and compare Snowball vs. Avalanche payoff strategies. Students also read credit reports, learn their rights, and how to fix errors if needed.

- **Subunit 16: Understanding Credit Products**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 1D, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2E, 2F, 2G, 6A, 6C, 6D, 6E
- **Subunit 17: The Cost of Borrowing**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 1D, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F, 2G, 6B, 6F
- **Subunit 18: Managing Your Credit Profile**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 1D, 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2F, 2G, 6G, 6I, 6H

Unit 7 - Major Purchases

Students calculate Total Cost of Ownership, conduct buy vs. lease and rent vs. buy analyses, build mortgage amortization tables, and account for taxes, insurance, and maintenance as part of their monthly budget.

- **Subunit 19: Purchasing a Vehicle**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F, 2G, 8A, 8B, 8C, 8D
- **Subunit 20: Renting Your First Apartment**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 1D, 1B, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2F, 2G, 7I, 7J, 7K
- **Subunit 21: The Financials of Home Ownership**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2E, 2F, 2G, 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D, 7E, 7F

Unit 8 - Protecting Yourself & Your Assets

Round out the plan with health, disability, life, auto, renter's, and homeowner's insurance, then stress-test the plan against recessions and scams. Students practice a verification protocol and produce a recovery/prevention plan.

- **Subunit 22: Insuring Your Health & Income**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2E, 2F, 2G, 10A, 10B, 10C, 10D, 10E, 10F, 10G
- **Subunit 23: Insuring Your Major Assets**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2F, 2G, 7D, 7G, 7L, 8B, 8E, 8G
- **Subunit 24: Securing Your Financial Future**
 - **TEKS Focus:** 1A, 1D, 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2F, 2G, 7H, 8F, 13, 16A, 16B, 16C

Assessment System at a Glance

- **Capstone Project:** *Funding Your Desired Life* grows across all eight units. Students submit brief updates throughout the course (spreadsheets, short explanations, comparison tables) where they justify their plan with math and research notes.
- **Activity Rubrics:** Each project activity uses a four-level rubric (Beginning → Exemplary) with criterion-level weights totalling 100%. Language is student-friendly, specific, and aligned to the math performed.
- **Checks for Understanding (TEKS (2D)):** Individual Study modules include short auto-graded quizzes to confirm key ideas before project work.
- **Evidence of Reasoning (TEKS (2B, 2G)):** Students "show their work" (assumptions, formulas, sources) and end each activity with a one-line decision statement, justifying their mathematical ideas.

Unit 1 – Funding Your Desired Life

A practical, student-centered launch into budgeting, career planning, and the total cost of higher education.

Unit Overview

Welcome to Unit 1. In this opening unit, students begin connecting everyday money choices to long-term life goals. The sequence is deliberately scaffolded: first, students learn the language and logic of budgeting; next, they test those ideas against career possibilities and salaries; finally, they examine education financing and calculate ROI so they can make informed decisions about training and degrees.

Teaching Goals for Unit 1

- Establish a common vocabulary (needs vs. wants; fixed vs. variable; ROI, etc.).
- Help students see how budgets support goals and reduce stress.
- Connect career aspirations with real salaries and actual living costs.
- Demystify financial aid and student loans; practice calculating education ROI.



Pacing Tip: The direct instruction segments are intentionally brief to preserve work time for applied practice. If your class needs more frontloading, extend DI time by 5–10 minutes and reduce project time slightly, keeping the sequence intact.

Subunit 1: Introducing the Budget Game (and Stock Game, if using)

This subunit builds the foundation. Students first encounter the core budgeting concepts in a short presentation. They then explore the same ideas independently through short media and activities before applying them in an in-class research project and the first project activity. If you're also using the Stock Game, students will complete a guided "first trade" to get familiar with the platform.

Direct Instruction

Budgeting Presentation (~ 15 minutes)

[Resource Link: "Budgeting Presentation."](#)

What You'll Teach:

Introduce budgeting as both a planning tool and a decision-making habit. Differentiate between project budgets and monthly living budgets, and practice sorting expenses into needs vs. wants and fixed vs. variable categories.

Learning Objectives:

- Define a budget and its application to projects and monthly living expenses.
- Differentiate between needs and wants.
- Categorize expenses as fixed or variable.

Individual Study

Prerequisite: Students must complete at least 1 month of the Budget Game before completing Activity 1.

1. Break Free From Money Stress with a Budget (~12 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Break Free From Money Stress with a Budget Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Define a budget and its role in reaching financial goals.
- Categorize expenses as needs vs. wants and fixed vs. variable.
- Explain the "Pay Yourself First" strategy and the purpose of an Emergency Fund.

Key Vocabulary: *Budget, Fixed Expenses, Variable Expenses, Pay Yourself First, Emergency Fund*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz on key concepts.

2. How to Research & Compare Stocks (~12 minutes; if using Stock Game)

Resource Link: ["How to Research and Compare Stocks Activity"](#)

Students Will:

- Use Symbol Lookup to find a company's Ticker Symbol.
- Apply *Buy What You Know* to select a company for initial research.
- Compare a company to competitors to make a basic investment decision.

Key Vocabulary: *Ticker Symbol, Symbol Lookup, Buy What You Know, Parent Company, Sector*

Assessment: Guided hands-on activity to place a first stock trade (no quiz).

In-Class Activity

Budgeting App Research Project (~ 75 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Budget App Research Project"](#)

What Students Do:

Investigate and compare two real-world budgeting apps. Students analyze features and pricing models (including how "free" apps make money) and compare app-based budgeting with manual methods (e.g., spreadsheets).

Learning Objectives:

- Research and compare key app features.
- Analyze revenue models for free vs. paid tools.
- Evaluate strengths/weaknesses based on personal needs.
- Compare long-term effectiveness of automated vs. manual methods.



Teacher Tip: Create a shared comparison template (features, cost, data privacy notes, pros/cons). Encourage students to tie recommendations to their own spending patterns from the Budget Game.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 1: Analyzing Your In-Game Budget

Time: ~30 Minutes

Description: Using Budget Game data, students calculate their total monthly cost of living to establish a baseline for future planning.

- **Required Resources:** Student's exported bank account and credit card statements from the Budget Game.
- **Prerequisites:** Students must have completed at least 1 month of the Budget Game. Students must also complete the lesson, "[*Break Free From Money Stress with a Budget*](#)" and the activity "[*How to Research & Compare Stocks*](#)" and buy at least 1 stock.
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 1 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Expense Categorization (30%)	<i>Accurately and insightfully categorizes all expenses as fixed or variable, providing clear reasoning for complex items.</i>	<i>Correctly categorizes nearly all expenses with clear understanding of fixed and variable costs.</i>	<i>Categorizes some expenses correctly but shows confusion between types.</i>	<i>Misclassifies most expenses or shows limited understanding.</i>
Budget Calculation (35%)	<i>Calculates total monthly expenses with complete accuracy; data is clearly organized and visually easy to read.</i>	<i>Calculates a mostly accurate total budget with only minor errors.</i>	<i>Attempts to calculate budget but omits key items or includes major errors.</i>	<i>Fails to produce a coherent or accurate calculation.</i>
Data Analysis (35%)	<i>Provides a thorough, data-supported analysis identifying specific spending trends and savings opportunities.</i>	<i>Identifies general spending patterns with some supporting evidence.</i>	<i>Offers a limited or surface-level analysis.</i>	<i>Provides little or no analysis.</i>

Subunit 2: Career Exploration & Economic Context

Students connect their interests to real jobs and evaluate whether the associated salaries align with their desired living standards. This subunit emphasizes *evidence-based decision-making* by comparing income against actual costs.

Direct Instruction

Post-High School Education Presentation (~ 20 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Post-High School Education Presentation."](#)

What You'll Teach:

Outline pathways after high school—on-the-job training, apprenticeships, the military, certificates, and degrees. Emphasize planning ahead and matching training to the skills demanded in different fields.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify diverse training and education options.
 - List careers associated with each pathway.
 - Explain why early planning supports success.
-

Individual Study

Planning Your Career Path (~10 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Planning Your Career Path Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Compare outcomes for university degrees, trade schools, and certifications.
- Explain Lifelong Learning and why upskilling matters.
- Draft a basic career plan by researching job qualifications.

Key Vocabulary: *Career Development, Post-secondary Education, Trade School, Lifelong Learning, Lifetime Earnings*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on pathways and planning.



Teacher Tip: Invite students to find one local employer and identify a certification that boosts entry-level pay in that industry.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 2: Dream Job Search

Time: ~45 Minutes

Description: Students align interests with real job postings and analyze whether the salary supports their desired lifestyle.

- **Required Resources:** Computer with internet access
- **Prerequisites:** Students must have completed "Activity 1: Analyzing Your In-Game Budget" and know their "Total 'Game' Monthly Budget" amount. They must also complete the lesson, "[Planning Your Career Path.](#)"
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 2 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Career Research & Alignment (35%)	<i>Conducts in-depth research connecting personal interests and skills to a well-suited career.</i>	<i>Conducts solid research with a logical link between interests and career.</i>	<i>Research is minimal or connections are weak.</i>	<i>Provides little or no relevant research.</i>
Salary & Lifestyle Analysis (35%)	<i>Presents a detailed, accurate comparison of salary and living standards, with a justified personal lifestyle goal.</i>	<i>Accurately compares salary to living standards with clear understanding.</i>	<i>Comparison is partial or contains noticeable gaps or errors.</i>	<i>Lacks a meaningful comparison.</i>
Job Requirement Analysis (30%)	<i>Thoroughly analyzes job requirements—education, skills, salary—and explores alternate paths (e.g., trades, military).</i>	<i>Identifies key education, skills, and salary details accurately.</i>	<i>Lists some requirements but misses key details.</i>	<i>Provides little or no analysis.</i>

Subunit 3: Calculating Education Costs & ROI on Investment

Here students confront the full cost of education and practice weighing costs against likely earnings. They learn practical steps for financing (FAFSA, loan types) and build spreadsheet and visualization skills to calculate ROI.

Direct Instruction

How to Apply for Student Loans Video (~ 4 minutes)

Resource Link: ["How to Apply for Student Loans? YouTube Video"](#)

Video Summary:

Esteban breaks down all the steps to apply for the FAFSA. Clarifying subsidized vs. unsubsidized federal loans, outlining all the required documents to complete the form and identifying other ways to finance training programs or degrees.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the purpose and process of the FAFSA.
- Distinguish between subsidized and unsubsidized federal loans.
- Identify the steps for applying for student loans.

Individual Study

Financing Your Education (~14 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Financing Your Education Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Explain the FAFSA's role as the first step in seeking financial aid for education.
- Differentiate federal loans (subsidized/unsubsidized) from private student loans.
- Identify loan risks (e.g., generally not dischargeable in bankruptcy).

Key Vocabulary: *Student Loan, FAFSA, Federal Loans (Subsidized/Unsubsidized), Private Student Loans, Refinance*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on loan types and steps



Teacher Tip: Have students highlight where interest accrues in each loan type—this often clarifies why subsidized loans cost less over time.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 3: Education ROI & Debt Calculation

Time: ~85 Minutes

Description: Students calculate the total cost and Return on Investment (ROI) for their selected postsecondary path and estimate potential student loan debt.

- **Required Resources:** Computer, calculator, "Desired Lifestyle Budget" from Activity 2. Students will use a [Student Loan Repayment Calculator](#) to complete the activity.
- **Prerequisites:** Students must have completed Activities 1 & 2 and have completed the "[Financing Your Education](#)" lesson.
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 3 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Education Cost Calculation (30%)	<i>Provides a complete, precise estimate of education costs including all major expenses.</i>	<i>Accurately estimates total cost with minor omissions.</i>	<i>Attempts an estimate but with major errors or omissions.</i>	<i>Fails to provide a clear or correct estimate.</i>
Funding Resource Identification (30%)	<i>Identifies multiple funding sources and explains how each lowers total cost.</i>	<i>Identifies several relevant funding options and cost-saving strategies.</i>	<i>Lists limited funding sources with little explanation.</i>	<i>Fails to identify viable funding options.</i>
ROI Analysis & Visualization (40%)	<i>Accurately calculates and visualizes ROI with a high-quality graph and clear interpretation.</i>	<i>Correctly calculates ROI and creates a clear, labelled graph.</i>	<i>Attempts ROI or graph but contains significant errors or lacks clarity.</i>	<i>ROI or graph missing or incorrect.</i>



Common Pitfall to Anticipate: Students sometimes compare starting salary to lifetime cost. Prompt them to use realistic earnings projections over a relevant time horizon and to label axes and units clearly on graphs.

Unit 2 – Earning an Income

Helping students connect the paycheck they expect to the life they want to build.

Unit Overview

Unit 2 equips students to read a pay stub, evaluate total compensation (not just salary), and understand how broader economic forces and job status affect their long-term earning power. The subunits flow from “*What’s taken out of my paycheck?*” to “*What else counts as pay?*” and finally to “*How do income sources and the economy shape my plan over time?*”

Across the unit you’ll see short, focused direct instruction, supported individual study, and applied project work within the **Funding Your Desired Life (FYDL)** project (Activities 4–6). The tone throughout is practical and encouraging: students calculate, compare, and then make a reasoned decision—a skillset they’ll need beyond your classroom.



Pacing Tip: Keep direct instruction concise so students have ample time to work with calculators, real examples, and their project spreadsheets. When possible, model one complete example live (with numbers) before releasing students to practice.

Subunit 4: From Gross to Net Earnings

Students begin by learning how to read a pay stub—moving from **gross pay** to **net pay** and understanding the purpose of each payroll deduction. Individual study widens the view to compensation beyond wages (benefits, equity, and other income sources). The FYDL project then puts these concepts to work through net-pay calculations for different employment scenarios.

Direct Instruction

Understanding Payroll Deductions Presentation (~ 15 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Understanding Payroll Deductions Presentation."](#)

What You'll Teach:

Help students see where each dollar goes—and why. Clarify the difference between income taxes and FICA; noting the role of the employer contribution.

Learning Objectives:

- Distinguish between gross pay and net pay.
- Identify four main payroll deductions: federal, state/local, Social Security, Medicare.
- Explain the purpose of Income Taxes versus FICA (Social Security + Medicare).
- Understand the employer's FICA matching contribution.

Individual Study

What's in Your Compensation Package (~14 minutes)

Resource Link: ["What's in Your Compensation Package Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate direct compensation (wages/salary) and indirect compensation (benefits/perks).
- Identify common benefits (insurance, retirement contributions, paid time off).
- Explain how investments and Social Security contribute to overall financial well-being.

Key Vocabulary: *Compensation Package, Direct Compensation, Indirect Compensation, Gross Pay, Equity Compensation*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz on compensation types and retirement income

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 4: Take-Home Pay Analysis

Time: ~50 Minutes

Description: Students calculate net (take-home) pay for salaried, hourly, and contractor scenarios using provided calculators.

- **Required Resources:** Computer with internet access, and the [Paycheck Variation Simulator](#).
- **Prerequisites:** Students must know their chosen career's starting salary and their "Desired Lifestyle Budget" from previous activities. Students must complete the lesson, "[What's in Your Compensation Package?](#)"
- **Resource Link:** ["Activity 4 - Student Worksheet"](#)

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Net Pay Calculation (35%)	<i>Precisely determines net pay in all scenarios with a clear step-by-step explanation.</i>	<i>Accurately uses tools to find net pay with minor errors.</i>	<i>Calculates some scenarios correctly but shows data or interpretation mistakes.</i>	<i>Fails to calculate or explain net pay.</i>
Analysis of Deductions (35%)	<i>Thoroughly explains each deduction (e.g., Social Security, Medicare) and its impact on take-home pay.</i>	<i>Accurately identifies and explains major deductions.</i>	<i>Identifies some deductions but explanations lack detail or accuracy.</i>	<i>Fails to identify or explain deductions.</i>
Comparison of Pay Structures (30%)	<i>Insightfully compares pay types (hourly, salary, contract) and explains trade-offs in income, taxes, and benefits.</i>	<i>Accurately compares pay structures and how they affect income.</i>	<i>Provides a limited or unclear analysis.</i>	<i>Does not compare pay structures meaningfully.</i>

Subunit 5: Comparing Compensation Options

Here students step back from just wages and consider the full value of a job offer—benefits, taxes, and forms that signal employment status. Direct instruction clarifies the essential tax forms and how they fit together. Students then study benefits in depth before synthesizing everything in a total compensation comparison.

Direct Instruction

Essential Tax Forms Presentation (~ 20 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Essential Tax Forms Presentation"](#)

What You'll Teach:

Make the paperwork navigable. Students should leave knowing which forms they'll see as employees versus independent contractors, and how documents flow through the tax year.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the purpose of the W-4, W-2, W-9, 1099-NEC, and Form 1040.
- Differentiate employee vs. contractor tax forms.
- Describe the lifecycle of tax documents from hire to income tax filing.

Individual Study

What Benefit to Look for in a Job Offer (~13 minutes)

Resource Link: ["What Benefits to Look for in a Job Offer Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Categorize benefits into insurance, retirement, savings, and how they impact your quality of life.
- Compare defined benefit vs. defined contribution retirement plans.
- Evaluate financial impact of HSAs/FSAs, tuition reimbursement, and similar benefits.

Key Vocabulary: *Workplace Benefits, Defined Benefit, Defined Contribution, Health Savings Account (HSA), Flexible Spending Account (FSA)*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on retirement plans and savings benefits

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 5: Total Compensation Comparison

Time: ~75 Minutes

Description: Students perform quantitative and qualitative analysis of three job offers to determine best overall value beyond salary alone.

- **Required Resources:** Calculator, spreadsheet software, and your dream career's starting salary.
- **Prerequisites:** Students must complete the lesson, "[What Benefits to Look for in a Job Offer.](#)"
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 5 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Benefit Valuation (35%)	<i>Accurately calculates and clearly explains the total monetary value of all benefits, using sound methods and detailed examples.</i>	<i>Correctly calculates the value of major benefits for each job offer with clear logic.</i>	<i>Attempts to calculate benefits but includes notable errors or omissions.</i>	<i>Does not calculate or explain benefit values.</i>
Tax Burden Comparison (35%)	<i>Provides an accurate, side-by-side tax comparison for W-2 vs. contractor roles, clearly explaining self-employment tax and overall impact.</i>	<i>Accurately compares tax burdens between W-2 and contractor roles with minor omissions.</i>	<i>Comparison is attempted but contains significant errors in tax application.</i>	<i>Comparison missing or inaccurate.</i>
Decision Synthesis & Justification (30%)	<i>Synthesizes financial and personal factors into a persuasive, data-backed decision that demonstrates strong critical thinking.</i>	<i>Makes a clear, logical career decision supported by quantitative and qualitative data.</i>	<i>Decision presented but lacks complete justification or integration of data.</i>	<i>States a decision without analysis or support.</i>

Subunit 6: The Big Picture of Your Income

Students broaden their understanding of income streams and the economic context that shapes them. This subunit connects personal choices (upskilling, diversification of income) with macro factors (inflation, technological change), culminating in a 10-year vision that is both realistic and adaptable.

Direct Instruction

Sources of Income and Economic Factors Presentation (~ 35 minutes)

Resource Link: [*"Sources of Income and Economic Factors Presentation"*](#)

What You'll Teach:

Introduce multiple income sources beyond a pay check and analyze the external forces that can affect those streams over time.

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate earned, rental, dividend, interest, and capital gains income.
- Explain how inflation and recessions affect personal finances.
- Analyze the impact of technological change and industry shifts on careers.
- Articulate the importance of lifelong learning for financial security.

Individual Study

1. The Ultimate Employee Guide (~8 minutes)

Resource Link: [*"The Ultimate Employee Guide Lesson"*](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Distinguish the legal status and benefits of employee vs. contractor.
- Identify legally required benefits (e.g., employer-paid taxes, unemployment insurance).
- Explain the purpose of an Employee Handbook.

Key Vocabulary: *Employee, Contractor, Gig Economy, Required Benefits, Optional Benefits (Fringe Benefits)*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on employment status.

2. The Impact of Inflation on Your Wallet (~13 minutes)

Resource Link: [*"The Impact of Inflation on Your Wallet Lesson"*](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Define inflation and its effect on purchasing power.
- Differentiate between inflation measurements: the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the GDP Deflator.
- Analyze how it erodes savings but also encourages spending and investment.
- Explain the economic dangers of deflation and hyperinflation.

Key Vocabulary: *Inflation, Purchasing Power, Consumer Price Index (CPI), GDP Deflator, Deflation, Hyperinflation, Real Interest Rate*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 6: Building Your 10-Year Financial Vision

Time: ~45 Minutes

Description: Students project income growth, plan for multiple income streams, and design a lifelong learning strategy that keeps their earning power resilient.

- **Required Resources:** Calculator, computer with internet access.
- **Prerequisites:** Students must have completed Activity 5 and chosen their "winning" job offer. They must also complete the lessons, "[The Ultimate Employee Guide](#)" and "[The Impact of Inflation on Your Wallet](#)."
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 6 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Income Growth Projection (35%)	<i>Builds a realistic, detailed 10-year income model with well-justified assumptions for raises and promotions.</i>	<i>Accurately projects 10-year income growth using reasonable assumptions.</i>	<i>Provides a basic or partially inaccurate income projection.</i>	<i>Does not create a coherent income projection.</i>
Diversified Income Planning (30%)	<i>Thoughtfully integrates multiple, viable income streams into the 10-year plan with clear reasoning.</i>	<i>Identifies and plans for at least one secondary income stream.</i>	<i>Mentions additional income but fails to integrate it into the plan.</i>	<i>Does not identify any additional income sources.</i>
Economic & Learning Strategy (35%)	<i>Analyzes how inflation and technology affect the plan and creates an actionable lifelong learning strategy.</i>	<i>Discusses general effects of the economy and includes a reasonable learning plan.</i>	<i>Mentions economic or learning factors without clear connection to the plan.</i>	<i>Fails to address economic or learning considerations.</i>

Unit 3 – Navigating the Tax System

Turning tax terms into usable tools for confident financial decision-making.

Unit Overview

In this unit, students gain a practical understanding of the U.S. tax system. The curriculum is logically sequenced, starting with foundational concepts like filing status and deductions. Students then move to hands-on practice, calculating taxable income and applying tax brackets to determine a final refund or amount owed. The unit concludes by exploring advanced topics such as tax credits and the impact of side income. The goal is for students to confidently read tax forms, make strategic filing decisions, and explain the calculations behind their tax liability.

Subunit 7: The Building Blocks of a Tax Return

This subunit prepares students to assemble the essential parts of a tax return. They learn how filing status and deduction choices affect taxable income, and they see how pre-tax contributions reduce what's taxed. Individual study tightens up form literacy and core concepts before students apply their knowledge in the project on standard vs. itemized deductions.

Direct Instruction

Preparing Your First Tax Return Presentation (~ 25 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Preparing Your First Tax Return Presentation"](#)

What You'll Teach:

Walk through the decisions that shape a return: choosing a filing status, selecting standard or itemized deductions, understanding how pre-tax contributions (401(k), HSA) reduce taxable income, and comparing prep options (DIY software vs. professional help).

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the five main tax filing statuses.
- Differentiate between the standard deduction and itemized deductions.
- Explain how pre-tax contributions reduce taxable income.
- Compare tax preparation options (software vs. professional services).

Individual Study

1. Income Tax Filing Tips & Tricks (~8 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Income Tax Filing Tips & Tricks Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Identify who must file and which forms are needed (W-2, 1099, 1040).
- Differentiate gross, net, and taxable income.
- Describe how to correct a return and the possibility of an IRS audit.

Key Vocabulary: *Income Tax, W-2 Form, 1099 Form, Form 1040, Taxable Income*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on forms and audit timelines

2. Tax Basics You Need to Know (~10 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Tax Basics You Need to Know Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate progressive vs. regressive taxes with examples.
- Explain capital gains taxes and why long-term investing is favored.
- Analyze how sales and property taxes influence consumer choices.

Key Vocabulary: *Progressive Tax, Regressive Tax, Tax Bracket, Capital Gains Tax, Property Tax*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on tax types and capital gains

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 7: Standard vs. Itemized Deduction

Time: ~45 Minutes

Description: Students analyze a sample year of expenses, calculate potential itemized deductions, and compare the total to the standard deduction to choose the better option.

- **Required Resources:** Calculator, computer with internet access.
- **Prerequisites:** Students should know their chosen career, salary, location, and projected student loan payment from Unit 1. Students must complete the lessons, "[Income Tax Filing Tips & Tricks](#)" and "[Tax Basics You Need to Know](#)."
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 7 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Deduction Calculation (35%)	<i>Accurately calculates all itemized deductions and identifies the correct standard deduction for the filing status.</i>	<i>Correctly calculates totals for both deduction types with minor errors.</i>	<i>Attempts deduction calculations but with major errors or omissions.</i>	<i>Deductions not calculated or incorrect.</i>
Comparative Analysis (35%)	<i>Provides a clear, data-driven comparison and selects the better option with well-supported reasoning.</i>	<i>Accurately compares itemized vs. standard deductions and makes the correct choice.</i>	<i>Comparison is incomplete or based on calculation errors.</i>	<i>Does not provide a meaningful comparison.</i>
Data Visualization (30%)	<i>Creates an accurate, well-labeled chart that effectively shows savings from the chosen deduction method.</i>	<i>Creates a clear visualization with minor labeling or clarity issues.</i>	<i>Visualization unclear, incomplete, or inaccurate.</i>	<i>Visualization missing.</i>

Subunit 8: Calculating Tax Liability

Students now put the pieces together: compute total income, subtract deductions for taxable income, then apply progressive brackets to find tax liability. They finish by comparing liability to withholding to determine a refund or amount owed.

Direct Instruction

Get Practice Filing a Sample 1040 Tax Return Walkthrough (~ 30 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Get Practice Filing a Sample Tax Return Activity"](#)

In this teacher-led activity, the entire class will go through the process of calculating tax liability using a sample scenario. Students will follow along, filling out the steps together, to understand the core mechanics of a tax return before applying these skills to their own career path.

Instructions

Step 1: Introduction & Calculating Total Income (5 mins)

- **Teacher:** *Today, we're going to fill out a tax return together for a fictional person named Alex Smith. This is our practice round. By the end, you'll understand exactly how tax liability is calculated. The first step is always to figure out total income. Where do we find Alex's main source of income?*
 - Guide students to identify the W-2 form.
- **Teacher:** *Okay, let's find Alex's wages. On the W-2, Box 1 shows a gross income of **\$45,000**. Let's write that down. Alex also earned a little money from a savings account. Where would we find that?*
 - Guide students to identify the 1099-INT form.
- **Teacher:** *The 1099-INT shows **\$100** in interest. Let's add that to the wages. What is Alex's Total Income?*
 - Have students calculate: $\$45,000 + \$100 = \$45,100$.

Step 2: Taking Deductions to Find Taxable Income (5 mins)

- **Teacher:** *Great. So Alex's Total Income is \$45,100. Do we tax this entire amount?*
 - "No," leading to a discussion about deductions.
- **Teacher:** *Correct. We get to subtract a deduction. As we learned in Activity 7, we have two choices: Standard or Itemized. For this practice round, Alex has no major expenses and will take the Standard Deduction. For a single filer, what is that amount?*
 - Students should identify **\$14,600**.
- **Teacher:** *Now for the most important calculation: finding Taxable Income. We take Total Income and subtract the deduction. What do we get?*
 - Have students calculate: $\$45,100 - \$14,600 = \$30,500$. This is the amount of income that will actually be taxed.

Step 3: Calculating Tax Liability with Brackets (10 mins)

- **Teacher:** We need to calculate the tax on Alex's \$30,500 of taxable income using the progressive tax brackets. (Project the tax brackets for Single filers).
- **Teacher:** How much of Alex's income falls into the first bracket, which is taxed at 10%?
 - Guide them to see it's the first **\$11,600**.
- **Teacher:** Let's calculate that tax: $\$11,600 \times 0.10 = \mathbf{\$1,160}$
- **Teacher:** "Okay, we've taxed the first chunk. How much of Alex's taxable income is left?"
 - Have students calculate: $\$30,500 - \$11,600 = \mathbf{\$18,900}$
- **Teacher:** Which bracket does that remaining \$18,900 fall into?
 - Guide them to the 12% bracket.
- **Teacher:** Let's calculate the tax on that part: $\$18,900 \times 0.12 = \mathbf{\$2,268}$
- **Teacher:** Now we just add the tax from each bracket together. What is Alex's Total Tax Liability?
 - Have students calculate: $\$1,160 + \$2,268 = \mathbf{\$3,428}$

Step 4: Tax Refund or Owe? (5 mins)

- **Teacher:** So, we know Alex should have paid \$3,428 in taxes for the year. But did Alex already pay anything?
 - Guide them to remember tax withholding from pay checks, found on the W-2.
- **Teacher:** Let's look at the W-2 again. Box 2 shows that **\$5,000** was already withheld. Is that more or less than the \$3,428 Alex actually owes?
 - Students should identify it's more.
- **Teacher:** Since Alex paid more than was owed, Alex gets a refund. How much is that refund?
 - Have students calculate: $\$5,000 \text{ (paid)} - \$3,428 \text{ (owed)} = \mathbf{\$1,572 \text{ Refund}}$

Step 5: Transition to Independent Work (5 mins)

- **Teacher:** "Excellent work, everyone. You've just completed a tax return from start to finish. You understand how to calculate taxable income, apply the tax brackets, and determine the final outcome. Now, you are ready to apply these same steps to your own career path. Please begin the individual assignment, 'Calculating My Tax Liability', which builds on your work from Activity 7."

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 8: Calculating Your Tax Liability

Time: ~30 Minutes

Description: Using their chosen deduction, students manually calculate taxable income and total federal tax liability, applying the progressive brackets and then comparing to withholding.

- **Required Resources:** Calculator and the Federal income tax bracket table.
- **Prerequisites:** Students must have completed Activity 7 and the teacher-led activity, "[Get Practice Filing a Sample 1040 Tax Return.](#)"
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 8 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Taxable Income Calculation (30%)	<i>Correctly calculates taxable income with clear formula and step-by-step explanation.</i>	<i>Accurately calculates taxable income with minor errors.</i>	<i>Attempts calculation but omits or misapplies key data.</i>	<i>Fails to calculate taxable income correctly.</i>
Application of Tax Brackets (40%)	<i>Applies progressive tax brackets flawlessly, showing each step and achieving a precise total liability.</i>	<i>Correctly applies brackets to calculate tax owed.</i>	<i>Attempts calculation but includes significant bracket or math errors.</i>	<i>Fails to apply brackets correctly.</i>
Refund/Owed Calculation (30%)	<i>Accurately compares tax liability to withholding and clearly states refund or balance owed.</i>	<i>Correctly determines refund or amount owed with minimal error.</i>	<i>Attempts comparison but conclusion is inaccurate.</i>	<i>Comparison missing or incorrect.</i>



Teacher Tip: Have students annotate each bracket line with the taxed amount and the subtotal. This habit prevents skipped steps and makes checking work faster.

Subunit 9: Other Types of Tax

Finally, students look beyond income tax to understand how wealth-building and transfers are taxed, how local services are funded, and how credits reduce taxes dollar-for-dollar. Individual study sharpens knowledge of credits vs. deductions and self-reported income, then students apply everything to analyze marginal/effective rates and side-hustle implications.

Direct Instruction

Advanced Tax Strategies Presentation (~ 30 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Advanced Tax Strategies Presentation"](#)

What You'll Teach:

Explain taxation of investments (short-term vs. long-term capital gains), rules for passing assets (estate, inheritance, gift taxes), the role of property taxes, and the forms students are likely to see as they begin investing or receiving transfers.

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate short-term vs. long-term capital gains tax.
 - Distinguish estate, inheritance, and gift taxes.
 - Explain the purpose and function of property taxes.
 - Identify key tax forms related to capital gains and wealth transfer.
-

Individual Study

1. Tax Credits & Deductions You Need to Know (~11 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Tax Credits & Deductions You Need to Know Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate tax deductions and tax credits (refundable vs. non-refundable).
- Identify common deductions (standard deduction, student loan interest).
- Identify common credits (education AOTC, CTC, EITC).

Key Vocabulary: *Tax Deduction, Tax Credit (Refundable/Non-Refundable), Standard Deduction, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC)*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on deductions and credits

2. Uncovering Hidden Income Taxes You Owe (~8 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Uncovering Hidden Taxes You Owe Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Identify self-reported income sources (tips, rental income, capital gains).
- Explain use tax on out-of-state online purchases.
- Describe penalties for late filing or payment.

Key Vocabulary: *Tax Additions, Tips, Rental Income, Capital Gains, Use Tax*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on reporting and penalties

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 9: Marginal & Effective Tax rates

Time: ~60 Minutes

Description: Students calculate their marginal and effective tax rates from a sample return and analyze how a side hustle changes their tax picture, including self-employment tax.

- **Required Resources:** The Federal income tax bracket table and the [Paycheck Variation Simulator](#).
- **Prerequisites:** Students must have completed Activity 8 and know their Taxable Income and Total Tax Liability. Students must complete the lessons, "[Tax Credits & Deductions You Need to Know](#)" and "[Uncovering Hidden Income Taxes You Owe](#)."
- **Resource Link:** ["Activity 9 - Student Worksheet"](#)

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Taxable Income Calculation (30%)	<i>Calculates both marginal and effective tax rates with perfect accuracy and explains their meaning clearly and concisely.</i>	<i>Accurately calculates both rates and compares results with minor errors.</i>	<i>Attempts both calculations but includes major errors or omissions.</i>	<i>Fails to correctly calculate tax rates.</i>
Self-Employment Tax Analysis (35%)	<i>Accurately calculates self-employment tax and insightfully compares it to W-2 taxation, highlighting key financial implications.</i>	<i>Correctly calculates self-employment tax and explains main differences from W-2 taxes.</i>	<i>Attempts calculation but uses incorrect rates or reasoning.</i>	<i>Does not calculate or explain self-employment tax.</i>
Filing Justification (30%)	<i>Provides a thoughtful, data-backed filing strategy that demonstrates clear understanding of tax planning principles.</i>	<i>Justifies a filing strategy logically using evidence from calculations.</i>	<i>Offers weak or unclear justification lacking data connection.</i>	<i>No justification provided.</i>

Unit 4 – Saving Money to Build Long-Term Wealth

From everyday banking choices to lifelong investing habits.

Unit Overview

Unit 4 helps students turn saving from a hopeful intention into a reliable routine. The arc of this unit moves from tools (financial institutions, account types, and payment methods) to math (compound interest and time value of money), and culminates in designing a reliable retirement plan. Each subunit blends short, focused instruction with practical investigation and updates to the Funding Your Desired Life project, so students immediately apply what they learn to real numbers and realistic choices.

Subunit 10: Your Tools for Saving

Students may be ready to start saving but are unsure where to put their money or how to move it. This subunit explains how to choose a financial institution, matching account types to goals, and selecting payment methods that balance convenience, safety, and cost.

Direct Instruction

Saving Toolkit Presentation (~ 25 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Saving Toolkit Presentation"](#)

What You'll Teach:

Compare banks and credit unions; match account types (checking, savings, money market, CD) with specific purposes; and weigh pros/cons of cash, debit, and credit. Make the trade-off between accessibility and growth potential explicit.

Learning Objectives:

- Compare features and ownership structures of banks and credit unions.
- Identify the primary purpose of checking, savings, money market, and CD accounts.
- Analyze benefits and risks of five common payment methods.
- Explain how account accessibility relates to growth potential.

Individual Study

Choose the Best Banking Option for You (~16 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Choose the Best Banking Option for You Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Compare services, ownership, and insurance (FDIC/NCUA) for banks, credit unions, and savings & loans.
- Differentiate between checking and savings functions.
- Analyze which institution best matches different consumer needs.

Key Vocabulary: *Bank, Credit Union, Savings & Loan, FDIC/NCUA Insurance, Checking Account*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on institution differences.

In-Class Activity

Finding the Best Local Bank (~ 50 minutes)

In this activity, students will work in small groups, they will research a real local bank or credit union, gather key data on its basic accounts, and present their findings to the class. The goal is to collaboratively build a comparison of local banking options, empowering students to make an informed choice for their first account.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify and explain the advantages and disadvantages of different interest-bearing accounts (savings and checking).
- Compare financial services offered by various institutions in the community.
- Synthesize research into a clear presentation for peer-to-peer learning.

Resource Links:

- **NCUA Credit Union Finder:** <https://mapping.ncua.gov/>
- **FDIC BankFind Suite:** <https://banks.data.fdic.gov/bankfind-suite/bankfind>

Instructions

Part 1: The Setup (5 minutes)

- Divide the class into small groups of 3-4 students.
- Assign each group a local bank or credit union from a pre-prepared list (e.g., "Group 1, you have Frost Bank. Group 2, you have Randolph-Brooks..."). Alternatively, allow groups to choose their own institutions to research.

Part 2: Investigation & Presentation Prep (25 minutes)

- Instruct groups to navigate to their assigned institution's website and research its most basic, entry-level checking and savings accounts.
 - Their goal is to find the following specific information:
 - Institution Name and Type (Bank or Credit Union)
 - Monthly Checking Account Fee (if any)
 - Requirements to Waive the Checking Fee (e.g., minimum balance, direct deposit)
 - Savings Account Interest Rate (APY)
 - One Other Major Pro or Con (e.g., "Huge ATM network," "Poorly rated mobile app," "Signup bonus available")
- Once groups have this data, they should designate a spokesperson to share findings in a brief (1-2 minute) presentation.

Part 3: Class Comparison (10 minutes)

- **Teacher:** Before presentations, create a master comparison table on a whiteboard or projected document with the following columns:
 - **Institution & Type**
 - **Checking Fee / How to Waive**
 - **Savings APY**
 - **Key Pro / Con**
- Call on each group to present their findings. As they share, fill in the master table to create a powerful visual comparison for the entire class.

Discussion Questions

1. Which institution offered the best checking account with the fewest requirements?
2. Was there a clear winner when it came to savings account interest rates (APY)?
What does this tell you?
3. What was the most common "catch" or requirement you saw for waiving a monthly fee?
4. Which institution would you personally choose to open your first account with?
Justify your choice with at least two specific reasons from the data we collected.

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (POINTS)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING
Research Accuracy (4 pts)	<i>The group found all required data points (Institution, Type, Fee, Waiver, APY) with complete accuracy.</i>	<i>The group found most of the required data with only minor errors or omissions.</i>	<i>The group was missing key data points or the information presented was significantly inaccurate.</i>
Critical Analysis (3 pts)	<i>The group identified a thoughtful and relevant "Pro/Con" and clearly explained why it would matter to a new account holder.</i>	<i>The group identified a relevant "Pro/Con" but the explanation of its importance was basic or unclear.</i>	<i>The group's "Pro/Con" was irrelevant, just a restatement of a basic feature, or was not identified.</i>
Presentation Clarity (3 pts)	<i>The group presented their findings clearly, concisely, and effectively, contributing valuable information to the class comparison.</i>	<i>The group presented their findings, but the information was somewhat disorganized or difficult to follow.</i>	<i>The presentation was unclear, ran over time, or did not effectively communicate the key research findings.</i>
Discussion & Participation (3-individual pts)	<i>Student actively contributes to the discussion, referencing specific data from the class comparison table and building on the comments of others.</i>	<i>Student participates in the discussion by answering questions and offering relevant comments based on the activity's findings.</i>	<i>Student contributes little to the discussion, or comments are off-topic or unsupported by the activity's data.</i>

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 10: Analyzing Your Savings Habit

Time: ~30 to 60 Minutes

Description: Students audit their Budget Game savings history and create an action plan to build or maintain a healthy emergency fund.

- **Required Resources:** Computer with internet access to the PersonalFinanceLab Budget Game.
- **Prerequisites:** Students must have played at least 3 months of the Budget Game. They must also complete the lesson, "[Choosing the Best Banking Option for You.](#)"
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 10 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Bank Statement Analysis (35%)	<i>Thoroughly analyzes all income and expenses, identifying spending trends and providing a clear cash flow summary.</i>	<i>Accurately analyzes income and expense flow to assess financial habits.</i>	<i>Provides partial or inaccurate analysis of spending patterns.</i>	<i>No meaningful analysis provided.</i>
Evaluation of Savings Goals (35%)	<i>Reflects deeply on progress toward savings goals using specific data from the simulation.</i>	<i>Evaluates success in meeting savings goals based on statement data.</i>	<i>Reflection is vague or lacks connection to data.</i>	<i>No reflection provided.</i>
Emergency Fund Plan (30%)	<i>Creates a detailed, realistic, and actionable plan with measurable goals and clear timelines.</i>	<i>Provides a general plan to build an emergency fund.</i>	<i>Plan is incomplete or lacks realism.</i>	<i>No plan developed.</i>

Subunit 11: The Math of Building Wealth

There is a common investing saying that, “*time in the market beats timing the market.*” This subunit makes that real: students differentiate simple vs. compound growth, practice the Rule of 72, and calculate the future value of recurring contributions so they can see the payoff of starting early—and staying consistent.

Direct Instruction

Compound Interest & The Rule of 72 (~ 30 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Compound Interest & The Rule of 72 Presentation"](#)

What You'll Teach:

Reveal how compounding accelerates growth, why early investing matters, and how to estimate doubling time quickly.

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate simple vs. compound interest.
 - Apply the Rule of 72 to estimate doubling time.
 - Explain the impact of starting early on long-term wealth.
 - Calculate future value of a series of investments.
-

Individual Study

1. How to Harness Your Money's Full Potential (~14 minutes)

Resource Link: ["How to Harness Your Money's Full Potential Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Define Time Value of Money using opportunity cost and interest rates.
- Explain present value comparisons.
- Analyze how personal TVM preferences shape saving/spending.

Key Vocabulary: *Time Value of Money, Opportunity Cost, Interest Rates, Present Value*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on time value of money.

2. A Simple Yet Powerful Way to Build Wealth (~14 minutes)

Resource Link: ["A Simple Yet Powerful Way to Build Wealth Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Define the "Pay Yourself First" strategy and explain how automating transfers makes it effective.
- Differentiate between long-term savings and a separate Emergency Fund, and explain the purpose of each.
- Explain the benefits of converting savings into less liquid investments to promote growth and prevent casual spending.

Key Vocabulary: *Pay Yourself First, Automatic Transfers, Emergency Fund, Liquid Asset, Savings Strategy*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz this saving strategy and emergency fund building.

In-Class Activity

Compound Interest (~5 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Compound Interest Video"](#)

This video contrasts simple and compound interest with formulas and a side-by-side example (e.g., S&P 500 long-run illustration).

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate simple and compound interest.
- Calculate future value with each method.
- Explain why compounding drives greater long-term returns.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 11: From Savings to Wealth

Time: ~55 Minutes

Description: Using the Stock Game, students calculate their personalized rate of return, then project the long-term growth of their Budget Game savings.

- **Required Resources:** Computer with internet access to the PersonalFinanceLab Budget Game, Stock Game, and the "[Watch How Your Savings Could Grow](#)" calculator.
- **Prerequisites:** Students must complete the lessons, "[How to Harness Your Money's Full Potential](#)" and "[A Simple Yet Powerful Way to Build Wealth](#)."
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 11 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Rate of Return Calculation (30%)	<i>Accurately calculates both simple and annualized returns with clear formulas and accurate data from the simulation.</i>	<i>Correctly calculates annualized rate of return with minor rounding issues.</i>	<i>Attempts calculation but includes major errors.</i>	<i>Fails to calculate rate of return.</i>
Long-Term Growth Projection (35%)	<i>Skillfully uses compound interest tools to forecast growth, explaining key variables and their long-term impact.</i>	<i>Accurately projects growth using compound interest with sound reasoning.</i>	<i>Attempts projection but includes calculation or interpretation errors.</i>	<i>No valid projection provided.</i>
Application & Self-Reflection (35%)	<i>Connects investment lessons to personal goals with deep insight on risk, return, and time horizon.</i>	<i>Reflects on how simulated investing applies to real-life decisions.</i>	<i>Reflection is surface-level or loosely connected to real application.</i>	<i>No reflection provided.</i>

Subunit 12: Creating Your Retirement Income

Retirement can feel distant; this subunit makes it concrete and actionable. Students decode the “alphabet soup” of retirement accounts (401(k), IRA, Roth vs. Traditional), explore annuities, and build a simple plan that prioritizes employer match and consistent contributions.

Direct Instruction

The Alphabet Soup of Retirement (~ 30 minutes)

Resource Link: [*"The Alphabet Soup of Retirement Presentation"*](#)

What You'll Teach:

Clarify account types and tax treatment so students can choose a starting path and commit to the first steps. Addresses long-term financial goals, showing students how to plan for their future financial freedom.

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate 401(k) vs. IRA.
- Explain tax advantages of Traditional (pre-tax) vs. Roth (after-tax) accounts.
- Articulate the importance of an employer match.
- Create a simple four-step action plan to begin saving for retirement.

Individual Study

1. The Secret to a Comfortable Retirement (~15 minutes)

Resource Link: [*"The Secret to a Comfortable Retirement Lesson"*](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Explain compounding as the foundation of long-term wealth.
- Compare retirement income sources (401(k), Social Security, IRAs).
- Analyze benefits of starting early (especially Roth IRA).

Key Vocabulary: *Compound Interest, Defined Contribution Plan (401k), Social Security, Traditional IRA, Roth IRA*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on compounding and account types.

2. Is an Annuity Right for You? (~6 minutes)

Resource Link: [*"Is an Annuity Right for You Lesson"*](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Define an annuity as an insurance contract for retirement income.
- Differentiate fixed, indexed, and variable annuities.
- Explain tax-deferred growth inside an annuity.

Key Vocabulary: *Annuity, Fixed Annuity, Indexed Annuity, Variable Annuity, Tax-deferred*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on types and tax treatment.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 12: Preparing for Your Retirement

Time: ~55 Minutes

Description: Students work backward from a desired retirement lifestyle to determine the savings rate and investment returns needed to reach the goal.

- **Required Resources:** Calculator, completed activities from the entire course and the "[Crack the Code to Becoming a Millionaire](#)" calculator.
- **Prerequisites:** Students must complete the lessons, "[The Secret to a Comfortable Retirement](#)" and "[Is an Annuity Right for You?](#)"
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 12 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Goal Synthesis (35%)	<i>Seamlessly integrates data from past activities to form a cohesive, well-supported retirement goal.</i>	<i>Combines key data from prior work into a clear long-term plan.</i>	<i>Attempts synthesis but the plan is disjointed or lacks accuracy.</i>	<i>Fails to connect data into a coherent plan.</i>
Savings Calculation (35%)	<i>Calculates savings targets and rates accurately with clear step-by-step logic and presentation.</i>	<i>Correctly determines savings needed to reach the goal with minor errors.</i>	<i>Attempts calculation but omits key elements or miscalculates.</i>	<i>Does not calculate savings goal.</i>
Action Plan (30%)	<i>Develops a specific, actionable retirement strategy with account selection and contribution details.</i>	<i>Creates a clear plan with account choice and general contribution strategy.</i>	<i>Plan lacks detail or realism.</i>	<i>No retirement plan developed.</i>

Unit 5 – Investing in Your Future

Giving students the confidence to move from saving to smart, long-term investing.

Unit Overview

Unit 5 invites students to put their savings to work. The sequence progresses from foundations (what you can invest in and why), to evaluation (how to assess performance and risk), and culminates in building a diversified, long-term portfolio. Lessons emphasize explaining key vocabulary, hands-on analysis using the Stock Game, and structured decision-making that students can carry into real life.

Subunit 13: What Can You Invest In?

Before students buy anything, they need a clear plan: from knowing the key terms to investing strategies that match different goals and risk levels. This subunit equips them with the skills to know how to build their virtual portfolios in the Stock Game.

Direct Instruction

Building an Investing Strategy Presentation (~ 15 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Building an Investing Strategy Presentation"](#)

What You'll Teach:

Establish core vocabulary—liquidity, risk, potential returns—and explore the spectrum of securities (from cash equivalents to derivatives). Introduce approachable strategies such as Buy and Hold and Value Investing

Learning Objectives:

- Define liquidity, risk, and potential returns.
 - Identify major security types (stocks, bonds, real estate, collectibles, etc.).
 - Describe common investing strategies.
-

In-Class Activity

How Do You Build a Diversified Portfolio (~6 minutes)

Resource Link: ["How Do You Build a Diversified Portfolio Video"](#)

This video explains diversification as a risk management strategy in investing. It details four key methods for diversifying stock investments: by market capitalization, sector, geographic region, and investing style, while also covering dividend yield calculation and understanding risk tolerance.

Learning Objectives:

- Define investment diversification and its importance in risk management.
- Identify four key strategies for diversifying a stock portfolio.
- Explain the concepts of risk tolerance and time horizon in investing.

Individual Study

This series of self-paced lessons provides students with the core vocabulary and concepts needed to understand different investment types and strategies. Students will complete these lessons concurrently with **Activity 13: Your First Investor's Journal** project.

1. A Beginner's Guide to Investing in Stocks (~9 minutes)

Resource Link: ["A Beginner's Guide to Investing in Stocks Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Define a stock as a share of ownership in a company.
- Differentiate between common and preferred stock.
- Explain how new shares are created through Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) and stock splits.

Key Vocabulary: *Stock, Common Stock, Preferred Stock, Initial Public Offering (IPO), Stock Split*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz on stock terminology and concepts.

2. Getting Started with Bond Investing (~9 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Getting Started with Bond Investing Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Define a bond as a loan to a government or corporation.
- Identify key bond terminology, including face value, coupon, maturity, and rating.
- Explain the inverse relationship between a bond's price and its yield.

Key Vocabulary: *Bond, Face Value, Coupon, Maturity, Yield*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on bond terminology and trading mechanics.

3. A Simple Explanation of ETFs (~7 minutes)

Resource Link: ["A Simple Explanation of ETFs Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Define an Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) as a security that tracks an index and trades like a stock.
- Identify different types of ETFs, including index, commodity, inverse, and leveraged ETFs.
- Compare the key differences between ETFs and mutual funds.

Key Vocabulary: *Exchange Traded Fund (ETF), Index, Inverse ETF, Leveraged ETF*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz on ETF types and comparison to mutual funds.

4. How to Develop an Investing Strategy (~11 minutes)

Resource Link: ["How to Develop an Investing Strategy Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Evaluate investments based on the trade-offs between liquidity, risk, and potential returns.
- Compare different security types, including stocks, bonds, and real estate.
- Differentiate between major investing strategies like Buy-and-Hold, Value Investing, and Active Trading.

Key Vocabulary: *Liquidity, Risk, Potential Returns, Diversification, Buy-and-Hold*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz on investing strategies.

5. How to Read a Stock Quote Like a Pro (~4 minutes)

Resource Link: ["How to Read a Stock Quote Like a Pro Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the key components of a stock quote, including price, volume, and day's change.
- Define dividend rate and dividend yield and explain how they are calculated.
- Explain the difference between the bid and ask price.

Key Vocabulary: *Stock Quote, Day's Change, Volume, Dividend Yield, Bid/Ask Price*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on stock quote components.

6. How to Use Order Types? (~6 minutes)

Resource Link: ["How to Use Order Types Tutorial Video"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate between market, limit, and stop orders.
- Explain how a trailing stop order functions to protect profits.
- Identify different order terms like "Good for Day" and "Good Til Cancel."

Key Vocabulary: *Market Order, Limit Order, Stop Order (Stop Loss), Trailing Stop Order, Order Term*

Assessment: Tutorial video. No pop quiz.



Teacher's Note: This is a practical, skills-based tutorial. The assessment is the student's ability to apply these order types correctly in the upcoming project, not a separate knowledge check.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 13: Your First Investor's Journal

Time: ~90 to 120 Minutes

Description: Students conduct several “research missions” on stocks, bonds, and ETFs using the research tools on PersonalFinanceLab. They learn step-by-step how to complete trades in the Stock Game, completing a trade journal tracking their rationale.

- **Required Resources:** Access to the PersonalFinanceLab lessons and the Stock Game platform.
- **Prerequisites:** None. Students will complete lessons along with making calculations and using the platform to research and execute trades outlined in this activity.
- **Resource Link:** ["Activity 13 - Student Worksheet"](#)

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Asset Class Research (35%)	<i>Demonstrates strong understanding of stocks, bonds, and ETFs, comparing their portfolio roles clearly and accurately.</i>	<i>Differentiates between stocks, bonds, and ETFs, describing their functions correctly.</i>	<i>Shows partial understanding or mixes up asset class concepts.</i>	<i>Does not accurately identify or compare asset classes.</i>
Portfolio Design & Diversification (35%)	<i>Builds a logical, well-diversified portfolio with justified asset allocation and clear reasoning for each decision.</i>	<i>Designs a diversified portfolio with reasonable allocation and calculations.</i>	<i>Portfolio lacks diversification or contains calculation errors.</i>	<i>Portfolio shows no clear design or strategy.</i>
Trade Justification & Journaling (30%)	<i>Provides insightful, data-driven reasoning for each trade and order type, showing understanding of strategy and timing.</i>	<i>Justifies trades and order types clearly in the journal.</i>	<i>Provides minimal reasoning or misunderstands order types.</i>	<i>Does not justify trades or maintain a journal.</i>

Subunit 14: How to Evaluate Your Investments

Picking stocks or other investments is only half the job—evaluating their performance keeps an investing plan on track. This subunit moves from understanding risk to calculating returns and comparing alternatives, so students can make evidence-based buy/sell/hold decisions.

Direct Instruction

Assessing Investment Risk (~ 20 minutes)

Resource Link: [*"Introduction to Investing Lesson Plan"*](#) pages 16-18

What You'll Teach:

In this teacher lead activity, students will be learning about the different levels of risk that come with each different type of investment. Through a quick sorting exercise, students classify investments as low/medium/high risk and justify placements.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify investment asset types.
 - Categorize assets by risk level.
 - Explain the fundamental concept of risk in investing.
-

Individual Study

1. The Math of the Stock Market (~7 minutes)

Resource Link: [*"The Math of the Stock Market Lesson"*](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Use fractions, percentages, and ratios to analyze portfolio composition and performance.
- Calculate portfolio return and individual stock return as a percentage.
- Calculate and interpret a Price-to-Earnings (P/E) ratio.

Key Vocabulary: *Fraction, Percentage, Portfolio Return, Ratio, Price-to-Earnings (P/E) Ratio*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on applying fractions, percentages, and ratios to investment scenarios.

2. Model Your Financial Future (~8 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Model Your Financial Future Calculator"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Use a calculator to model the long-term growth of an investment.
- Analyze the impact of variables like rate of return, annual contributions, and inflation on a final investment value.
- Compare different saving scenarios to understand the power of starting early.

Key Vocabulary: *Rate of Return, Initial Investment, Annual Investment, Inflation, Compound Interest*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz requiring use of the investment return calculator to solve problems.

3. The Pros and Cons of Mutual Funds (~8 minutes)

Resource Link: ["The Pros and Cons of Mutual Funds Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Define a mutual fund as a professionally managed pool of investments.
- Differentiate between open-ended and closed-ended mutual funds.
- Analyze the advantages (diversification) and disadvantages (fees) of investing in mutual funds.

Key Vocabulary: *Mutual Fund, Open-Ended Fund, Closed-Ended Fund, Net Asset Value (NAV)*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on mutual fund types and their key characteristics.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 14: Your First Portfolio Performance Review

Time: ~45 Minutes

Description: Students calculate portfolio performance and run head-to-head comparisons of holdings vs. alternatives to inform buy/sell/hold choices.

- **Required Resources:** Access to the PersonalFinanceLab lessons, your Stock Game portfolio, and a calculator.
- **Prerequisites:** Students must complete the lesson, "[The Math of the Stock Market](#)" and the activity, "[Model Your Financial Future](#)."
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 14 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Performance Calculation & Analysis (35%)	<i>Accurately calculates and interprets performance metrics (return, yield, ratios), offering a deep, clear analysis.</i>	<i>Correctly calculates and analyzes portfolio performance with minor errors.</i>	<i>Attempts analysis but includes significant calculation or interpretation errors.</i>	<i>Does not calculate or analyze performance metrics.</i>
Comparative Investment Analysis (35%)	<i>Performs a data-backed comparison of holdings and alternatives, using evidence to support decisions.</i>	<i>Compares holdings with alternative options using available data.</i>	<i>Provides limited or unclear comparison without supporting data.</i>	<i>Makes no meaningful comparison.</i>
Buy/Sell/Hold Justification (30%)	<i>Offers persuasive, data-supported reasoning for each buy, sell, or hold decision.</i>	<i>Provides logical justifications for buy/sell/hold actions.</i>	<i>Offers weak or incomplete reasoning disconnected from data.</i>	<i>Gives no justifications for decisions.</i>

Subunit 15: Building Your Portfolio

With fundamentals and evaluation skills in place, students now formalize a long-term strategy: target allocation, contribution plan, and rebalancing rules—plus how charitable goals and tax-advantaged accounts fit into the bigger picture.

Direct Instruction

There are no presentations for this unit.

Guide students through building their plan by asking these four key questions on the board:

- **My Goal:** *What am I saving for and how much do I need?* (e.g., Retirement, \$750,000)
- **My Strategy:** *What is my target mix of investments?* (e.g., 70% ETFs, 20% Stocks, 10% Bonds)
- **My Action Plan:** *How much will I invest and how often?* (e.g., \$200 every month)
- **My Maintenance Rule:** *How will I keep my plan on track?* (e.g., Rebalance once a year)

Individual Study

1. Why You Should Diversify (~11 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Why You Should Diversify Your Portfolio Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Define diversification as a strategy to reduce risk by investing in a variety of assets.
- Differentiate between sector/industry diversification and asset allocation.
- Identify the risks of over-diversification.

Key Vocabulary: *Diversification, Portfolio Return, Sector/Industry Diversification, Asset Allocation, Over-diversification*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz on key diversification concepts.

2. A Guide to Effective Charitable Donations (~7 minutes)

Resource Link: ["A Guide to Effective Charitable Donations Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Identify different types of charitable giving, including non-profit organizations.
- Analyze metrics like overhead ratios and program logic models to evaluate a charity's effectiveness.
- Use resources like Charity Navigator and GuideStar to research non-profit organizations.

Key Vocabulary: *Charitable Giving, Non-Profit Organization, Program Logic Model (PLM), Overhead Ratio, Tax-deductible*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on charity evaluation metrics and resources.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 15: Building Your Long-Term Portfolio

Time: ~45 Minutes

Description: Students create a formal investment policy: target asset allocation, contribution schedule, and rebalancing rules, with notes on account type and charitable intent.

- **Required Resources:** Your completed Activity 12 ("Preparing for Your Retirement"), your Stock Game portfolio, and a calculator.
- **Prerequisites:** Students must complete these two lessons, "[Why You Should Diversify Your Portfolio](#)" and "[A Guide to Effective Charitable Donations](#)."
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 15 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Diversified Strategy Development (35%)	<i>Creates a sophisticated, long-term investment strategy with well-justified allocation and rebalancing rules.</i>	<i>Develops a clear diversified portfolio strategy aligned with long-term goals.</i>	<i>Strategy shows partial diversification or weak goal alignment.</i>	<i>Fails to create a coherent investment strategy.</i>
Risk/Return Analysis (35%)	<i>Provides a clear, data-driven comparison of risk and return between diversified and non-diversified portfolios.</i>	<i>Compares risk and return of diversified vs. non-diversified portfolios.</i>	<i>Comparison lacks depth or misinterprets diversification effects.</i>	<i>No risk/return comparison made.</i>
Integration of Financial Planning (30%)	<i>Integrates investment strategy with tax-advantaged accounts and giving goals to form a holistic plan.</i>	<i>Includes relevant account choices and considers charitable elements.</i>	<i>Addresses financial planning but lacks integration or accuracy.</i>	<i>Fails to connect the portfolio to a broader plan.</i>

Unit 6 - Managing Credit & Debt

Practical skills for borrowing wisely, protecting credit, and paying off debt responsibly.

Unit Overview

Unit 6 equips students to make informed choices about credit—how it works, what it costs, and how to use it responsibly. The flow is intentional: students first understand credit products and terms, then analyze borrowing costs and repayment strategies, and finally learn how to protect and repair their credit profile. Throughout, students practice with calculators, analyze their credit card statements from the Budget Game, and apply consumer protections to realistic scenarios from the Funding Your Desired Life project.



Teacher Framing: Credit is neither “good” nor “bad”—it’s a tool. This unit helps students decide when and how to use that tool so it strengthens—not strains—their long-term financial plan.

Subunit 16: Understanding Credit Products

Students interact with debit and credit cards in the Budget Game, but the mechanics (grace periods, APRs, statement balances) can feel opaque. This subunit clarifies how revolving credit differs from paying with cash or debit, outlines key card terms, and highlights the consumer protections that safeguard consumers.

Direct Instruction

Credit Cards Presentation (~ 25 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Credit Cards Presentation"](#)

What You'll Teach:

Define credit cards as unsecured, revolving credit; contrast with debit; explain balance types and interest calculation; and introduce CARD Act protections.

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate credit vs. debit (advantages/disadvantages).
- Identify credit balance types and interest calculation methods.
- Summarize key rights under the CARD Act of 2009.



Teacher Prompt: "Every credit card statement has the same key details: the **Annual Percentage Rate (APR)**, the **grace period**, and the **minimum payment**."

Instruct students to log into their Budget Game account and navigate to their credit card statement to find these pieces of information.

Ask the class, "If you pay only the minimum amount, how much interest will you be charged? Let's figure that out."

Individual Study

1. A Beginner's Guide to Borrowing Wisely (~11 minutes)

Resource Link: ["A Beginner's Guide to Borrowing Wisely Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Define basic credit terms like principal, interest rate, and credit limit.
- Explain how responsible borrowing builds a positive credit history.
- Compare different credit products, such as credit cards (revolving credit) and mortgages (instalment credit).

Key Vocabulary: *Credit, Principal, Interest Rate (APR), Credit Limit, Grace Period*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz on credit terminology and concepts.

2. Credit Cards: Terms, Fees, and More (~11 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Credit Cards: Terms, Fees, and More Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate between a credit card (revolving credit) and a debit card.
- Identify different balance types on a credit card statement (purchases, balance transfers, cash advances).
- Explain the key consumer protections provided by the CARD Act of 2009.

Key Vocabulary: *Revolving Credit, Balance Transfer, Cash Advance, Grace Period, CARD Act of 2009*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz on credit card features and regulations.

3. How to Use Debt to Your Advantage (~7 minutes)

Resource Link: ["How to Use Debt to Your Advantage Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate between "good debt" (which builds assets or income) and "bad debt."
- Analyze the risks that can turn good debt, like a student loan or mortgage, into bad debt.
- Develop a process for identifying and evaluating financial risk before taking on debt.

Key Vocabulary: *Good Debt, Bad Debt, Student Loans, Mortgage, Refinancing*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz on the characteristics of good and bad debt.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 16: Your First Credit Card

Time: ~60 Minutes

Description: Students analyze in-game credit card habits and research real-world student credit cards to choose the best strategic tool for building credit.

- **Required Resources:** Access to the PersonalFinanceLab and a calculator.
- **Prerequisites:** Students must complete the following lessons, "[A Beginner's Guide to Borrowing Wisely](#)," "[Credit Cards: Terms, Fees, and More](#)," and "[How to Use Debt to Your Advantage](#)."
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 16 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
In-Game Habit Analysis (35%)	<i>Analyzes in-game credit use with precision, identifying patterns and linking them to financial responsibility.</i>	<i>Analyzes credit card use based on game data with general accuracy.</i>	<i>Analysis lacks depth or misses key behavioral patterns.</i>	<i>Provides no analysis of credit habits.</i>
Real-World Card Research (35%)	<i>Thoroughly compares multiple student cards, evaluating APR, rewards, and fees with accuracy and insight.</i>	<i>Researches and compares real-world card features with some accuracy.</i>	<i>Research incomplete or missing key comparisons.</i>	<i>Research minimal or inaccurate.</i>
Card Selection & Justification (30%)	<i>Selects the optimal card with a strong, data-supported justification that aligns with building credit responsibly.</i>	<i>Chooses a reasonable card with a logical explanation.</i>	<i>Choice or reasoning incomplete or poorly aligned to goals.</i>	<i>Fails to select or justify a card.</i>

Subunit 17: The Cost of Borrowing

Interest compounds against you just as reliably as it compounds for you. Students learn to quantify the full cost of credit card balances, compare repayment strategies, and which debts to prioritize paying off first.

Direct Instruction

There are no presentations for this unit.

Instead, guide students through the two different types of credit using these questions and drawing the table on the board:

- How is the monthly payment for a *car loan* different from a *credit card bill*? (e.g., *Fixed, predictable amount vs. Varies based on spending*).
- Do you know the exact date the loan will be paid off? (e.g., *Yes, it has a 60-month "term" vs. No, it's an ongoing, open-ended line of credit*).
- Besides a car or a house, what's another example of a big purchase you'd use an *installment loan* for?" (e.g., *Student loans, a boat, a personal loan for a major project*).

Types of Credit

FACTOR	INSTALLMENT CREDIT	REVOLVING CREDIT
Purpose	One-time big purchase	Ongoing, daily spending
Structure	Fixed payments , set end date	Variable payments , no end date.
Goal	Pay balance down to zero	Balance revolves

Individual Study

1. Calculate the True Cost of Credit Card Debt (~15 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Calculate the True Cost of Credit Card Debt Calculator"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Use a calculator to determine the total interest paid and time required to pay off credit card debt.
- Analyze how only making minimum payments significantly increases the total cost of borrowing.
- Compare repayment scenarios for multiple credit cards to prioritize payments.

Key Vocabulary: *Current Balance, Interest Rate (APR), Minimum Payment, Payoff Time, Total Payments*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz requiring use of the credit card payoff calculator.

2. Debt Snowball and Avalanche (~9 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Debt Snowball and Avalanche Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Compare the Debt Snowball (lowest balance first) and Debt Avalanche (highest interest first) repayment strategies.
- Explain why accelerated, focused repayment strategies are more effective than making minimum payments.
- Apply one of the strategies to a sample debt scenario to determine the order of repayment.

Key Vocabulary: *Debt Snowball, Debt Avalanche, Minimum Payments, Amortized Loans*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on the mechanics and application of the two debt repayment strategies.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 17: Repaying Your Debts

Time: ~35 Minutes

Description: Students use interactive calculators to analyze long-term costs and compare Snowball vs. Avalanche (and minimum payment) approaches.

- **Required Resources:** Access to the PersonalFinanceLab lessons, the "[Calculate the True Cost of Credit Card Debt](#)" calculator, and the "[Debt Snowball and Debt Avalanche](#)" lesson.
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 17 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Cost of Debt Calculation (35%)	<i>Accurately calculates total cost and repayment time for all debt scenarios, clearly explaining the impact of minimum payments.</i>	<i>Correctly calculates total interest and repayment time for a credit card balance.</i>	<i>Attempts calculations but includes significant errors or omissions.</i>	<i>Fails to calculate debt cost or repayment time accurately.</i>
Debt Strategy Comparison (35%)	<i>Provides a clear, data-supported comparison of Minimum Payment, Snowball, and Avalanche methods, identifying the best option.</i>	<i>Compares key repayment strategies accurately with minor errors.</i>	<i>Comparison lacks accuracy or understanding of repayment methods.</i>	<i>No valid comparison conducted.</i>
Data Organization & Judgment (30%)	<i>Organizes all loan data clearly and presents a well-justified conclusion supported by calculations and reasoning.</i>	<i>Organizes data effectively and provides a reasonable repayment conclusion.</i>	<i>Judgment lacks clarity or logical support from data.</i>	<i>Fails to organize or interpret loan data.</i>

Subunit 18: Managing Your Credit Profile

A strong credit profile lowers borrowing costs and opens doors to housing and employment. Students learn what's inside a credit report, how scores are used, and how to respond effectively to errors or hardship.

Direct Instruction

Credit Reports Presentation (~ 15 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Credit Reports Presentation"](#)

What You'll Teach:

Define credit reports vs. scores, show why they matter, outline report contents, and review consumer rights under the FCRA.

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate a credit report and a credit score.
- Explain why a good report creates opportunities.
- Identify information included in a report.

Individual Study

1. What Your Credit Report Says About You (~13 minutes)

Resource Link: ["What Your Credit Report Says About You Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate between a credit report (detailed history) and a credit score (a number summary).
- Explain how a credit report is used by lenders, landlords, and employers.
- Identify key consumer rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA).

Key Vocabulary: *Credit Report, Credit Score (FICO Score), Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), Credit Reporting Agencies*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz on credit reports, scores, and consumer rights.

2. How to Negotiate With Creditors (~7 minutes)

Resource Link: ["How to Negotiate With Creditors Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Explain the purpose of negotiating with creditors to lower finance charges and protect credit.
- Outline a three-step process for preparing for and conducting a debt negotiation call.
- Identify consumer rights under the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA).

Key Vocabulary: *Principal, Finance Charge, Hardship Assistance Program, Debt Negotiation, Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA)*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on the process and benefits of debt negotiation.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 18: Your Credit Profile

Time: ~50 Minutes

Description: Students audit their in-game score and history, then design action plans to resolve three real-world credit report crisis scenarios.

- **Required Resources:** Access to the PersonalFinanceLab and a calculator.
- **Prerequisites:** Students must complete the following lessons, "[What Your Credit Report Says About You](#)" and "[How to Negotiate With Creditors](#)."
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 18 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
In-Game Credit Analysis (35%)	<i>Provides an accurate, detailed analysis of the credit score and history, identifying all influencing factors.</i>	<i>Accurately identifies key factors affecting the in-game credit profile.</i>	<i>Analysis is incomplete or misidentifies main factors.</i>	<i>Fails to analyze credit profile meaningfully.</i>
Crisis Scenario Analysis (35%)	<i>Analyzes all credit report crisis scenarios accurately, explaining causes and financial implications clearly.</i>	<i>Identifies core issues and implications in credit report scenarios.</i>	<i>Provides limited or incorrect analysis of credit crises.</i>	<i>No valid analysis presented.</i>
Resolution Plan (30%)	<i>Creates a specific, actionable plan to resolve each credit issue, demonstrating understanding of rights and repair strategies.</i>	<i>Develops a general plan addressing identified issues with reasonable accuracy.</i>	<i>Resolution plan is vague or incomplete.</i>	<i>Fails to create a valid resolution plan.</i>

Unit 7 - Major Purchases

The financial roadmap for navigating the journey of buying a first car, renting an apartment, and owning a home.

Unit Overview

Unit 7 gives students a practical toolkit for understanding the opportunity costs involved with life's big purchases. The sequence moves from vehicles (total cost of ownership and financing) to housing choices (renting vs. buying), and then into the finances of homeownership (mortgages, monthly budgets, and tax implications). Each subunit blends instruction with hands-on analysis so students compare options side-by-side, quantify trade-offs, and defend a choice that fits their budget and goals.

Subunit 19: Purchasing a Vehicle

Cars are often a student's first major purchase—and a crash course in financing, depreciation, and sales tactics. This lesson helps students build a complete car budget, compare new vs. used options, and recognize how sales negotiations can obscure total cost.

Direct Instruction

Buying a Car Presentation (~ 20 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Buying a Car Presentation"](#)

What You'll Teach:

Look beyond the monthly payment to understand all the costs involved with owning a car. Compare new vs. used (depreciation, warranty), outline total costs (loan, insurance, taxes/fees, maintenance), and preview negotiation tactics like the 4-Square.

Learning Objectives:

- Establish a comprehensive car budget (loan + insurance + ongoing costs).
- Analyze trade-offs between new and used.
- Identify common sales tactics (e.g., 4-Square Presentation).

Individual Study

1. The Car Buying Checklist (~12 minutes)

Resource Link: ["The Car Buying Checklist Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Analyze the total cost of a car purchase, including interest and insurance, not just the monthly payment.
- Compare the financial trade-offs of buying a new versus a used car, including the impact of depreciation.
- Identify deceptive sales tactics like the "4-Square Presentation."

Key Vocabulary: *Installment Credit, Depreciation, 4-Square Presentation, Precomputed Interest*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz on budgeting for a car and negotiation tactics.

2. Find Your Best Car Loan Deal (~20 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Find Your Best Car Loan Deal Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Use a spreadsheet's PMT function to calculate the monthly payment for a loan.
- Analyze and compare the total cost of different car loan offers.
- Evaluate the impact of different down payment amounts on monthly payments and total cost.

Key Vocabulary: *APR, Loan Term, Down Payment, PMT function, Total Amount Financed*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz requiring spreadsheet calculations to compare loan options.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 19: Your First Car Budget

Time: ~85 Minutes

Description: Students research a vehicle and run a full Buy vs. Lease analysis, calculate Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), and consider the opportunity cost of each path.

- **Required Resources:** Computer with internet access, spreadsheet software (Google Sheets/Excel) and the [Buy vs. Lease a Car Calculator](#).
- **Prerequisites:** Students must complete the following lessons, "[The Car Buying Checklist](#)" and "[Find Your Best Car Deal](#)."
- **Resource Link:** ["Activity 19 - Student Worksheet"](#)

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) Calculation (35%)	<i>Calculates complete TCO for both vehicles, including all major costs, with clear accuracy and organization.</i>	<i>Calculates total vehicle costs and compares two options effectively.</i>	<i>Attempts calculation but omits key costs or makes major errors.</i>	<i>Does not calculate or compare TCO.</i>
Buy vs. Lease Analysis (35%)	<i>Performs accurate buy vs. lease analysis, explaining financial trade-offs and long-term implications clearly.</i>	<i>Uses calculator effectively to compare buy vs. lease decisions.</i>	<i>Comparison incomplete or contains calculation errors.</i>	<i>Fails to conduct valid analysis.</i>
Amortization & Opportunity Cost Analysis (30%)	<i>Builds a detailed amortization table and analyzes opportunity cost to make a data-backed final decision.</i>	<i>Creates a basic amortization table and provides sound conclusions.</i>	<i>Table incomplete or lacks data-supported reasoning.</i>	<i>Fails to produce an amortization analysis.</i>

Subunit 20: Renting Your First Apartment

Housing choices shape cash flow, savings capacity, and lifestyle. In this unit, students learn to determine an affordable rental budget, analyze the key terms of a lease agreement, and compare the long-term financial outcomes of renting versus buying.

Direct Instruction

There are no presentations for this unit.

Instead, launch the activity with a brief, 5-minute framing discussion.

"For most people, their biggest monthly expense is housing. Getting this one decision right sets you up for financial success, while getting it wrong can make everything else feel impossible.

Today, we're going to tackle this in two parts. First, we'll figure out the 'now': Based on your dream job's salary after you graduate, what can you realistically afford to rent?

But most people don't want to rent forever. So the second part is about the 'future': What are the financial trade-offs required to save for a down payment on a house? We'll calculate the actual time and money it would take to afford a realistic starter home that future-you could buy someday.

Individual Study

1. Rent or Buy: Which is Right for You? (~12 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Rent or Buy: Which is Right for You? Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Use a calculator to compare the long-term financial outcomes of renting versus buying a home.
- Analyze how variables like time until moving and investment returns affect the rent-vs-buy decision.
- Define the "break-even point" in the context of a home ownership decision.

Key Vocabulary: Down Payment, Mortgage, Rate of Return, Break-even Point

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz requiring use of the rent vs. buy calculator.

2. Rules for Renters & Homeowners (~7 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Rules for Renters & Homeowners Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the key components of a Lease Agreement, including fees, occupancy rules, and maintenance responsibilities.
- Explain the purpose of a Homeowner's Association (HOA).
- Analyze a sample lease to locate specific terms and conditions.

Key Vocabulary: *Lease Agreement, Late Fees, Security Deposit, Sub-leasing, Homeowner's Association (HOA)*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz requiring analysis of a sample lease agreement.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 20: Rent an Apartment or Buy a Home

Time: ~75 Minutes

Description: Students determine an affordable rental budget, then calculate the time and trade-offs to save for a down payment.

- **Required Resources:** Computer with internet access, your completed activities and the "[Rent or Buy: Which is Right for You?](#)" calculator.
- **Prerequisites:** Students must complete the lesson, "[Rules for Renters & Homeowners](#)" and the activity, "[Should You Rent or Should You Buy?](#)"
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 20 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Housing Research (35%)	<i>Conducts thorough, realistic housing research aligned with career budget and provides well-documented comparisons.</i>	<i>Uses online tools to identify suitable rental and for-sale properties.</i>	<i>Research incomplete or based on unrealistic data.</i>	<i>No meaningful housing research conducted.</i>
Cost Comparison (35%)	<i>Provides a detailed, accurate side-by-side comparison of renting vs. buying, including long-term implications.</i>	<i>Compares costs and implications of renting vs. buying accurately.</i>	<i>Comparison incomplete or contains significant data gaps.</i>	<i>Fails to compare renting and buying.</i>
Down Payment Savings Plan & Justification (30%)	<i>Develops a realistic savings plan with a strong, data-backed justification for renting or buying.</i>	<i>Provides a clear plan and rationale for chosen option.</i>	<i>Table incomplete or lacks data-support</i>	<i>No savings plan or justification provided.</i>

Subunit 21: The Finances of Homeownership

Buying a home introduces new expenses and financial terms—secured loans, PMI, escrow, and tax effects. Students learn the mortgage landscape, calculate an all-in monthly budget, and see how deductions change total cost.

Direct Instruction

There are no presentations for this unit.

Individual Study

1. Mortgage Options for First-Time Homebuyers (~13 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Mortgage Options for First-Time Homebuyers Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Define a mortgage as a secured loan and explain why its terms are favorable compared to unsecured loans.
- Identify key mortgage requirements, such as down payments and Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI).
- Differentiate between fixed-rate and variable-rate mortgages.

Key Vocabulary: *Mortgage, Secured Loan, Down Payment, Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI), Foreclosure*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on mortgage terminology and requirements.

2. Find Out Your Monthly Budget (~15 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Find Out Your Monthly Budget Calculator"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Use a calculator to create a comprehensive monthly budget from income and expense data.
- Analyze how changes in income or expenses impact the total amount available for savings.
- Calculate net income from a gross income figure after estimated taxes and withholdings.

Key Vocabulary: *Gross Income, Net Income, Withholdings, Debt Payments, Living Expenses*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz requiring use of the monthly budget calculator.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 21: Buying Your First Home

Time: ~75 Minutes

Description: Students build an amortization table and calculate the complete monthly cost of ownership (mortgage, taxes, insurance, maintenance), then analyze the impact of the mortgage interest deduction.

- **Required Resources:** Your completed Activity 20, spreadsheet software (Google Sheets/Excel), and a calculator.
- **Prerequisites:** Students must complete the lesson, "[Mortgage Options for First-Time Homebuyers](#)" and the activity, "[Find Out Your Monthly Home Budget](#)."
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 21 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS – EXEMPLARY	3 PTS – PROFICIENT	2 PTS – DEVELOPING	1 PT – BEGINNING
Amortization Table Creation & Analysis (35%)	<i>Creates an accurate, well-formatted amortization table and insightfully explains the effects of down and extra payments.</i>	<i>Builds a correct amortization table and analyzes how payments affect loan cost.</i>	<i>Table contains formula or calculation errors.</i>	<i>Fails to create a working amortization table.</i>
Total Cost of Ownership Calculation (35%)	<i>Accurately calculates all ownership costs (mortgage, taxes, insurance, maintenance) with realistic estimates.</i>	<i>Calculates most ownership costs with reasonable accuracy.</i>	<i>Misses key costs or provides unrealistic estimates.</i>	<i>Fails to calculate costs beyond the mortgage.</i>
Tax Deduction Analysis (30%)	<i>Accurately calculates and explains how the mortgage interest deduction impacts total cost of ownership.</i>	<i>Correctly analyzes the tax deduction's impact on ownership cost.</i>	<i>Demonstrates misunderstanding or errors in the analysis.</i>	<i>Does not analyze the deduction's effect.</i>

Unit 8 - Protecting Yourself & Your Assets

Build a strong financial defense with insurance and maintaining an emergency fund; also learn how to safeguard your identity online.

Unit Overview

In Units 1–7, students learned to earn, plan, save, invest, and make major purchases. Unit 8 completes the picture by focusing on protection—the defensive side of a healthy financial life. Students will (1) insure their ability to earn and stay well, (2) protect their major belongings, and (3) secure their broader financial plan against emergencies and fraud. Lessons emphasize plain-language explanations, real policy features, and practical checklists so learners can make confident, cost-effective choices.

Subunit 22: Insuring Your Health & Income

A budget is fragile if one illness, injury, or loss derails it. This subunit breaks down the three types of personal insurance—health, disability, and life insurance—so students can identify gaps and get the coverage they need for their situation.

Direct Instruction

There are no presentations for this unit.

Instead, launch the unit by establishing the theme of financial protection. Start by connecting this unit to all their previous work.

"For this entire course, we've been building your financial offense: creating a budget, setting goals, growing your income, and investing for the future. But a great offense is useless if you have no defense."

Then, provide a clear roadmap for the three layers of financial protection they will learn about.

"This final unit is all about building that defense. We'll cover it in three parts:"

1. **First, we protect YOU.**
 - *This is about insuring your health and your ability to earn an income.*
2. **Next, we protect your STUFF.**
 - *This covers insuring your major assets, like your car and your home.*
3. **Finally, we protect your PLAN.**
 - *This is about learning to spot and avoid scams, fraud, and other worst-case scenarios that can derail everything you've built.*

Individual Study

1. Why Health Insurance is So Expensive (~12 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Why Health Insurance is So Expensive Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate between public, group, and individual health insurance plans.
- Define key health insurance terms like premium, deductible, co-payment, and out-of-pocket maximum.
- Analyze the economic factors that contribute to the high cost of health insurance.

Key Vocabulary: *Premium, Deductible, Co-payment/Coinsurance, Out-of-Pocket Maximum, In-Network*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on health insurance types and cost factors.

2. Don't Let Disability Derail Your Finances (~6 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Don't Let Disability Derail Your Finances Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Define disability insurance as a product that replaces income if an illness or injury prevents work.
- Differentiate between Short Term Disability (STD) and Long Term Disability (LTD) insurance.
- Identify the various ways to obtain disability insurance.

Key Vocabulary: *Disability Insurance, Short Term Disability (STD), Long Term Disability (LTD), Pre-disability Wage, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on disability insurance concepts and sources.

3. Life Insurance: The Ultimate Safety Net (~7 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Life Insurance: The Ultimate Safety Net Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Define life insurance and identify the four parties to a policy (owner, insurer, insured, beneficiary).
- Differentiate between term life insurance and various types of permanent life insurance.
- Explain how the cash value component of a permanent life policy can be used.

Key Vocabulary: *Life Insurance, Beneficiary, Death Benefit, Term Life Insurance, Permanent Life Insurance (Cash Value)*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on life insurance types and terminology.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 22: Your Personal Protection Plan

Time: ~60 Minutes

Description: Students use interactive calculators to estimate health, disability, and life insurance needs and then design a cost-effective protection plan.

- **Required Resources:** Access to the PersonalFinanceLab lessons, the "[Cost of Healthcare](#)" Calculator, the "[Income Protection](#)" Calculator, and your career salary information.
- **Prerequisites:** Students must complete the following lessons, "[Why Health Insurance is So Expensive](#)," "[Don't Let Disability Derail Your Finances](#)," and "[Life Insurance: The Ultimate Safety Net](#)."
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 22 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Health Insurance Analysis (35%)	<i>Conducts thorough research to estimate costs and justifies plan choice with strong reasoning.</i>	<i>Accurately estimates plan costs and explains key features.</i>	<i>Research or cost estimates are incomplete or inaccurate.</i>	<i>Fails to research or estimate plan costs.</i>
Disability Insurance Justification (30%)	<i>Clearly explains the purpose of disability insurance and designs a thoughtful protection plan.</i>	<i>Explains the need and outlines a reasonable plan.</i>	<i>Explanation lacks clarity or depth; plan is incomplete.</i>	<i>Does not justify or design a plan.</i>
Life Insurance Calculation & Comparison (35%)	<i>Accurately estimates life insurance needs and compares term vs. whole life with data-based reasoning.</i>	<i>Provides a sound estimate and compares term vs. whole life coverage.</i>	<i>Estimates or comparisons contain notable errors.</i>	<i>Fails to estimate or compare life insurance.</i>

Subunit 23: Insuring Your Major Assets

Cars, apartments, and homes are big financial commitments. The right coverage prevents a single incident from becoming a long-term setback. Students compare what's covered, what isn't, and how to balance premiums vs. deductibles.

Direct Instruction

There are no presentations for this unit.

Instead, continue the "Offense vs. Defense" theme with a brief, 5-minute framing discussion. Start by recalling the first layer of their financial protection (defense).

"In the last section, we built the first layer of our financial defense: protecting you and your income with health and disability insurance. Now, it's time to build the second layer."

Then, introduce the new topic: protecting major assets.

"This second layer of defense is all about protecting your stuff. A single car accident or apartment fire could wipe out years of savings and put your entire financial plan at risk. The right insurance prevents a single bad day from becoming a years-long financial setback. Today, you'll learn how to protect these major assets by exploring three types of property insurance:"

1. First, Auto Insurance.

- *To cover your vehicle and protect you from liability on the road.*

2. Next, Renter's Insurance.

- *An affordable way to protect your belongings even while renting an apartment.*

3. Finally, Homeowner's Insurance.

- *To protect the biggest asset most people will ever own.*

Individual Study

1. Car Insurance: How to Lower Your Rates (~11 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Car Insurance: How to Lower Your Rates Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Identify different types of car insurance coverage (Liability, Collision, Comprehensive).
- Differentiate between "Tort" and "No-Fault" state insurance systems.
- Analyze the factors that can raise or lower car insurance premiums.

Key Vocabulary: *Liability Coverage, Collision Coverage, Comprehensive Coverage, Tort State, No-Fault State*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on car insurance coverage and premium factors.

2. What's Not Covered in Renter's Insurance? (~6 minutes)

Resource Link: ["What's Not Covered in Renter's Insurance? Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the three main areas of protection in a renter's insurance policy: personal property, loss of use, and liability.
- List common exclusions from a standard policy, such as floods and earthquakes.
- Differentiate between "Replacement Cost Value" and "Actual Cash Value" reimbursement.

Key Vocabulary: *Renter's Insurance, Personal Property, Loss of Use, Liability, Replacement Cost Value, Actual Cash Value*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on renter's insurance coverage and reimbursement types.

3. What Damage Does Home Insurance Cover? (~9 minutes)

Resource Link: ["What Damage Does Home Insurance Cover? Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate between "Named Perils" and "All Risk" homeowner's insurance policies.
- Identify the four primary types of coverage within a homeowner's policy.
- Analyze the factors that can increase or decrease insurance premiums.

Key Vocabulary: *Homeowner's Insurance, Named Perils, All Risk, Liability Coverage, Coverage Limits*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on policy types and coverage.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 23: Protecting Your Belongings

Time: ~65 Minutes

Description: Students use calculators to design and price auto, renter's, and homeowner's policies and compare coverage levels for different risk profiles.

- **Required Resources:** Your completed activities (especially your chosen car, apartment, and home), the "[Auto Insurance Quote Builder](#)", and the "[Property Insurance Quote Builder](#)".
- **Prerequisites:** Students must complete the following lessons, "[Car Insurance: How to Lower Your Rates](#)," "[What's Not Covered in Renter's Insurance?](#)" and "[What Damage Does Home Insurance Cover?](#)"
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 23 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Insurance Cost Determination (35%)	<i>Accurately uses calculators to determine insurance costs for vehicle, rental, and home scenarios.</i>	<i>Correctly calculates insurance costs for multiple scenarios.</i>	<i>Makes errors in calculations or omits scenarios.</i>	<i>Fails to use calculators or determine costs.</i>
Coverage Level Comparison (35%)	<i>Provides a detailed, well-reasoned comparison of coverage levels with clear trade-off analysis.</i>	<i>Compares different coverage levels with general understanding.</i>	<i>Comparison incomplete or lacks clarity.</i>	<i>Does not compare coverage options.</i>
Premium vs. Deductible Analysis (30%)	<i>Analyzes premium-deductible trade-offs insightfully, making strategic, data-supported choices.</i>	<i>Explains trade-offs and makes reasonable coverage choices.</i>	<i>Analysis is limited or inaccurate.</i>	<i>Fails to analyze the relationship.</i>

Subunit 24: Securing Your Financial Future

A durable financial plan needs both cash buffers and identity protection. Students examine emergency funds and insurance together, then practice a verification protocol to avoid scams and respond effectively if something goes wrong.

Direct Instruction

Protecting Your Financial Plan Presentation (~ 30 minutes)

Resource Link: [*"Protecting Your Financial Plan Presentation"*](#)

What You'll Teach:

Introduce the three essential layers of defense: an emergency fund, insurance, and digital identity protection—and practice a step-by-step verification routine for suspicious messages.

Learning Objectives:

- Explain the purpose of an emergency fund and key insurance types.
 - Identify best practices for digital identity protection: strong passwords, 2FA, verification protocols.
 - Analyze common scam tactics (urgency, fear, authority, scarcity).
 - Apply a verification protocol to assess suspicious communications.
-

Individual Study

1. Protect Yourself as a Consumer (~9 minutes)

Resource Link: [*"Protect Yourself as a Consumer Lesson"*](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate between implied and explicit consumer rights.
- Identify key consumer protection laws like the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA).
- Develop a checklist for researching products to make informed purchasing decisions.

Key Vocabulary: *Consumerism, Implied Warranty, Explicit Rights, Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA), Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz on consumer rights and responsibilities.

2. How to Avoid Identity Theft, Scams & Fraud (~9 minutes)

Resource Link: [*"How to Avoid Identity Theft, Scams & Fraud Lesson"*](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate between direct theft, identity theft, and deceptive business practices.
- Identify best practices for securing personal information, such as using unique passwords and recognizing phishing attempts.
- Describe the first steps to take if one's identity is stolen.

Key Vocabulary: *Fraud, Identity Theft, Phishing, Social Engineering, CVV Code*

Assessment: 5-question multiple-choice quiz on password security and safe information handling.

3. Who Gets Your ff When You're Gone? (~7 minutes)

Resource Link: ["Who Gets Your ff When You're Gone? Lesson"](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Explain the purpose of a Simple Will and identify its essential components.
- Differentiate between a will, a living will, and a durable power of attorney.
- Describe what happens to a person's assets and debts if they die without a will.

Key Vocabulary: *Simple Will, Beneficiary, Executor, Living Will, Durable Power of Attorney*

Assessment: 3-question multiple-choice quiz on wills and end-of-life documents.

Funding Your Desired Life Project

Activity 24: Financial Stress Test

Time: ~65 Minutes

Description: Students run a simulated worst-case against their plan, quantify the impact, and design a mathematical recovery—including identity-theft prevention steps.

- **Required Resources:** Access to the PersonalFinanceLab and your completed activities and the "[Financial Resilience Simulator](#)."
- **Prerequisites:** Students must complete the following lessons, "[Protect Yourself as a Consumer](#)," "[How to Avoid Identity Theft, Scams & Fraud](#)" and "[Who Gets Your Stuff When You're Gone?](#)"
- **Resource Link:** "[Activity 24 - Student Worksheet](#)"

Grading Rubric

CRITERIA (WEIGHT)	4 PTS - EXEMPLARY	3 PTS - PROFICIENT	2 PTS - DEVELOPING	1 PT - BEGINNING
Emergency Savings Analysis (35%)	<i>Accurately determines emergency savings needs and evaluates financial resilience within the simulation.</i>	<i>Determines suitable savings to cover key expenses in the simulation.</i>	<i>Estimate incomplete or not aligned with scenario data.</i>	<i>Does not calculate emergency savings.</i>
Recession Impact Analysis (35%)	<i>Provides in-depth analysis of recession effects, identifying key financial strengths and vulnerabilities.</i>	<i>Analyzes how recession impacts the financial plan with supporting details.</i>	<i>Analysis lacks depth or fails to connect to plan data.</i>	<i>Provides no meaningful analysis.</i>
Recovery & Prevention Plan (30%)	<i>Creates a proactive recovery and prevention plan addressing identity theft and financial shocks.</i>	<i>Develops a general plan for recovery and prevention.</i>	<i>Plan lacks specificity or feasibility.</i>	<i>No recovery or prevention plan created.</i>

What Students Learn & Practice

The Mathematical Process and Professional Standards (1, 2) are woven into the project work of every unit. By the end of the course, and in alignment with **TEKS §130.180**, students will demonstrate these skills as they learn to:

- Create a personal budget and analyze the Return on Investment (ROI) of various postsecondary and career plans. *(TEKS 15, 17)*
- Analyze employment earnings by comparing total compensation packages, calculating net pay, and differentiating between employee and contractor tax requirements. *(TEKS 3)*
- Calculate federal tax liability using standard vs. itemized deductions and explain the impact of filing status, tax brackets, and credits. *(TEKS 4)*
- Compare financial institutions, apply the time value of money to savings, and calculate compound growth. *(TEKS 5)*
- Evaluate investment options (stocks, bonds, ETFs) to construct a diversified retirement portfolio that incorporates tax-advantaged accounts, annuities, and charitable giving. *(TEKS 9, 11, 12, 14)*
- Analyze the cost of credit, interpret a personal credit report, and create a strategic debt repayment plan. *(TEKS 6)*
- Calculate the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) for vehicle and housing decisions by creating amortization tables and comparing buy vs. lease/rent scenarios. *(TEKS 7, 8)*
- Select appropriate insurance (health, life, disability, property), create a plan to prevent identity theft, and understand the function of a will. *(TEKS 10, 13, 16)*