



Money Management

Gain financial literacy skills to help you manage your income. Whether it's budgeting, saving, or understanding paychecks, this dimension helps you develop a healthy relationship with money.

About CanWork BC

CanWork BC aims to make it easier for youth with disabilities ages 15 to 30 years old to find and keep employment. There are a series of tools and resources for youth, employers, service providers, educators, and caregivers.

CanAssist at the University of Victoria, with the support of the BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, wrote the Provincial Employment Strategy for Youth with Disabilities (ESYD). This strategy informed the tools and resources.

The Youth Tool

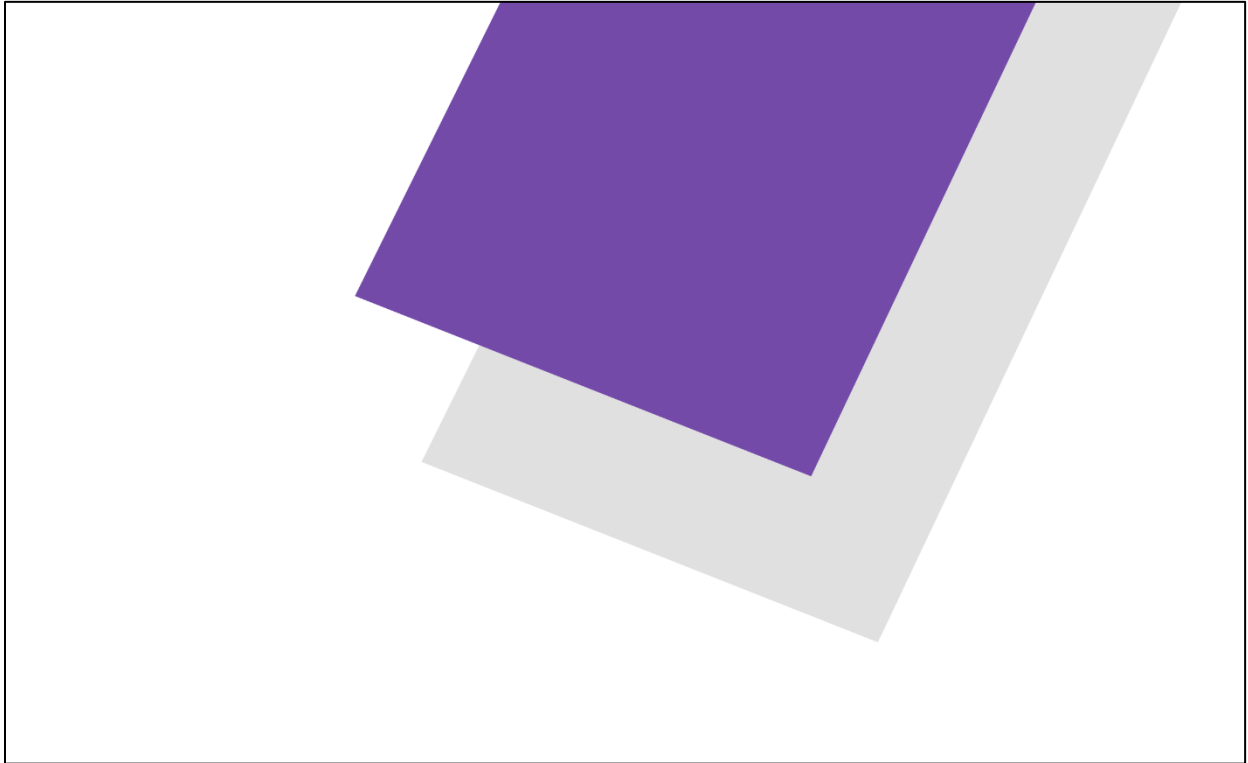
The CanWork BC youth tool is available as an interactive online platform at portal.canworkbc.ca and through PDF workbooks such as this one. There are five dimensions of content available.

For the full PDF workbook content and accompanying facilitator guides, as well as other CanWork BC tools and resources, go to canworkbc.ca.

Contents

| | |
|---|------------|
| Money Management..... | 1 |
| Module: Understanding Money Basics | 5 |
| Introduction..... | 6 |
| Section 1: Understanding and Earning Pay | 7 |
| Section 2: Understanding Banking Basics | 27 |
| Section 3: Ensuring Financial Safety | 45 |
| Module: Setting a Financial Foundation..... | 61 |
| Introduction..... | 62 |
| Section 1: Assessing Money Knowledge | 63 |
| Section 2: Exploring the Money Mindset | 74 |
| Section 3: Evaluating Earnings and Expenses | 88 |
| Module: Building Money Management Skills | 104 |
| Introduction..... | 105 |
| Section 1: Managing Spending..... | 106 |
| Section 2: Building Savings..... | 120 |
| Section 3: Understanding Credit and Debt..... | 133 |
| Module: Exploring Effective Budgeting | 147 |
| Introduction..... | 148 |
| Section 1: Creating a Budget | 149 |
| Section 2: Developing a Budgeting Strategy | 166 |
| Section 3: Identifying Financial Support Options..... | 175 |
| Module: Fostering Financial Futures | 187 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Introduction..... | 188 |
| Section 1: Building Credit | 189 |
| Section 2: Navigating Investments | 200 |
| Section 3: Seeking Financial Advice | 215 |
| Keep Going..... | 228 |



Module: Understanding Money Basics

This module covers knowledge and skills related to earning money, including how to earn income, read a pay stub, file taxes, open a bank account, and keep finances safe.

Introduction

This module has three sections to help you build your basic understanding of money. You'll explore:

- Understanding earning and pay, including reading a paystub and filing taxes.
- Learning the basics of banking, including types of accounts and how to choose the best options for your needs.
- Building strategies to keep your money and financial information safe.

Each section will take around 15-30 minutes to complete, and you're welcome to take breaks in between.

Each section has activities that connect money management to your own life to make sure this is useful for you. Be prepared to think about and record your answers in whatever way works best. That could be writing your answers in this workbook or using a different format that works for you like voice recording or typing in a notes app.

At the end of the module, you'll have the chance to put what you've learned into practice with reflection questions. Let's get started!

Section 1: Understanding and Earning Pay

One main reason many people work is to earn money! Earning money helps build independence and work toward goals, whether that's covering bills, saving up for something you want, or planning for the future. Knowing how to manage the money you make is important for making planned decisions with it.

In this section, we'll cover:

- Identifying and describing the different parts of a paystub.
- Understanding the basics of filing taxes.

By the end, you will have a better understanding of how to manage the money you earn. Let's get started!

Engage and Explore

Understanding Pay Stubs

Understanding where your money goes can be just as important as earning it. Reading a pay stub helps you see exactly how much money you've made and check that you're being paid correctly.

So, what is a pay stub?

A **pay stub** is a digital or physical document that shows details about your earnings and deductions each time you get paid. Check out the example pay stub below and about the different parts to

underneath to understand *what* they are and *why* they are important.

1

Business Name
 Business Address

2

Employee Name
 Employee ID Number

3

Net Pay
 Pay Period
 Pay Day
 Cheque Number

4

| Earnings | Hours | Rate | Current | YTD |
|------------------|-------|------|---------|-----|
| Basic Pay | | | | |
| Overtime Pay | | | | |
| Vacation Pay | | | | |
| Gross Pay | | | | |

5

| Deductions | Current | YTD |
|---------------------------------|---------|-----|
| Income Tax | | |
| Employment Insurance | | |
| Canadian Pension Plan Insurance | | |
| Total Deductions | | |

1. Employer information

This section includes important details about the company or organization you work for. It will include:

- **Employer name:** The name of your workplace or business.

- **Employer address:** The mailing address of your employer.

2. Personal information

This section shows information about you, the employee. It will include things like:

- **Name:** Your name as the employee.
- **Employee ID or number:** A unique number your employer uses to identify you.
- **Role or job title:** A description of the type of work you do.
- **Position type:** Whether you are paid hourly, on a salary, or on a one-time basis. Hourly employees are paid for each hour they work. Salaried employees are paid a set amount each pay period, no matter how many hours they work.
- **Pay rate:** Your hourly wage or salary amount for each pay period.

3. Information about pay cheque

This section includes important information about your pay for this period. It will include:

- **Net pay:** The total amount of money you get after deductions. This is your “take-home” money that is deposited in your account.
- **Pay period:** Shows the start and end date of this pay period. Often, pay periods are two weeks long.
- **Pay day:** The date you receive the money.

- **Payment type:** How the money is paid to you, such as direct deposit or cheque.
- **Pay cheque number:** A unique number to identify this specific pay cheque.

4. Information about earnings

This section shows how much you worked and any extra money you earned during the pay period. You'll see "*current*" for what you earned in this pay period and "*YTD*" which means year to date and shows the totals for the whole year. It will include:

- **Regular pay:** The standard amount you are paid before any deductions.
- **Overtime pay:** Any extra pay for hours worked beyond standard work hours.

Learn more about overtime standards in BC:

www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards/hours/overtime-pay

- **Vacation pay:** Money you earn so you can still receive pay when you take time off work. Your employer sets aside at least 4% of what you earn for vacation. Some employers pay it out each pay cheque for you to save yourself, while others save it for when you take vacation days to ensure you are still paid.

Learn more about vacation pay in BC:

www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards/time-off/vacation

- **Gross pay:** The total amount of money you earned in this pay period before any deductions were made.

5. Information about deductions

This section shows the different amounts that are taken off your pay. It will include:

Taxes

- **Canadian Income Tax (CIT):** Federal (Canadian) and provincial (British Columbian) taxes you pay to support community services such as healthcare and roads.
- **Canadian Pension Plan (CPP):** A fund you pay into for retirement. When you retire, you will receive monthly pay if you qualify. If you are earning tax-exempt income or are under the age of 18, you may not be required to make CPP contributions.

Learn more about the Canadian Pension Plan (CPP):

canada.ca/en/services/benefits/publicpensions/cpp.html

- **Employment Insurance (EI):** A fund that provides financial help if you lose your job. You contribute to EI while working and can use this benefit if needed.

Learn more about Employment Insurance (EI):

canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-regular-benefit.html

After-tax deductions and employer benefits

- **Optional extended health and dental plan:** Some employers may offer health and dental benefits in addition to what is provincially available. If you choose to

use them, you might pay a part of the cost, or your employer may pay it fully.

- **Optional life insurance:** Some employers may offer a life insurance plan that will provide a payment to someone you choose if you pass away. If you choose to use this benefit you might pay a part of it, or your employer may pay it.

Tips

- Track your hours! It's a good idea to keep track of the hours you work and compare them to your pay stub. If something doesn't match up, kindly ask your manager or HR about it as they should be able to explain any differences or help fix errors.
- If you're self-employed, you won't get a pay stub but tracking your earnings and expenses is still important, so you know how much tax you have to pay.
Learn more about self-employment in BC on the Work BC website:

workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers/self-employment

Make it Personal

Understanding Taxes

When you look at your pay stub, you'll see that some of your money is deducted to pay taxes.

Taxes are an amount that everyone pays to help support things in our communities such as hospitals, schools, and roads. Each person pays the same types of taxes, but the amount depends on your situation.

It's important to file a tax return with the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) every year to track how much you made and how much tax you paid to make sure you have paid the right amount.

Filing taxes might seem confusing at first, but this section should make it a little easier. Plus, it's very important. It's the only way to check if you paid the right amount in taxes and sometimes you even get a tax refund and get some money back! Use the tax tip sheet below to create a plan for filing your taxes.

The Who, What, Where, When, How, and Why of Taxes

Who?

You are responsible for filing your taxes with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) each year to find out if you owe money or get a refund.

- If you have any questions about taxes, contact the Canadian Revenue Agency for help: canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/corporate/contact-information.html
- If you're an employee, your employer will take taxes off each paycheque. When you start a new job, you'll fill out a TD1 form to tell your employer how much tax to take off. Learn more about TD1 forms: canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/businesses/topics/payroll/set-up-new-employee/filing-form-td1.html
- If you're self-employed, you must track your income and pay your taxes each year.

What?

Have these items ready to make filing taxes easier.

- **Income slips like:** T4 slips, record of self-employed income, record of other income, or T5 slips.

T4 slip (if you have worked): Showing your earnings and deductions from your employer for the year.

- **Where to get it:** Employers must give you a T4 by the end of February. You'll get a T4 from each employer if you have more than one job.
- **What if you don't get it:** Ask your employer or request a copy from the CRA.

Record of self-employed income: You will not get a T4 slip if you are self-employed. So, it's important to keep a record of your income and expenses for the year. Learn more about recording income from self-employment on the CRA website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/about-your-tax-return/tax-return/completing-a-tax-return/personal-income/employment-self-employment-income.html>

Record of other income: Keep a record of any extra earnings you might make, such as tips, odd jobs, or influencer income.

T5 slips: For any social benefits received or contract payments.

- **Supporting documents:** Receipts for any credits or deductions you're claiming, such as medical expenses, tuition, or donations.
- **Previous tax information:** If you've filed taxes before, keep details like your NETFILE access code, carry-forward amounts, or Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) details.

Where?

File taxes with the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) by sending your completed tax form either online, by mail, or over the phone.

When?

Checkout the important dates to know.

- **Tax filing opens:** You can start filing your taxes mid-February each year for any income made in the previous calendar year.

- **Tax deadline:** April 30. File by this day to avoid late fees and pay any balances you owe to avoid interest.
- You can learn more about important tax dates here:
canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/important-dates-individuals.html

How?

There are several ways to file your taxes. These steps can help:

1. Choose a way to file your taxes, either:

- Online yourself using a NETFILE-certified tax software: canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/e-services/digital-services-individuals/netfile-overview/certified-software-netfile-program.html#h_1
- By mail using CRA Tax Forms: apps.cra-arc.gc.ca/ebci/cjcf/fpos-scfp/pub/rdr?request locale=en_CA
- By phone using SimpleFile: canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/simplefile-by-phone.html
- With support from a professional or trusted family member or friend using EFILE-certified tax software: canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/e-services/about-auto-fill-return.html

2. Get support if you need it:

- **Use a representative:** You can authorize a trusted family member, friend, or accountant to file your taxes.
- **Attend free tax clinics:** Find free CRA Tax Clinics canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/community-volunteer-income-tax-program.html
- **Research information:** Check out the CRA's Step-by-Step Tax Guide canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/educational-programs/completing-basic-return.html

3. Submit your completed tax return:

Submit to the CRA online, electronically, by mail, or over the phone.

4. Get your Notice of Assessment (NOA):

After filing, the CRA will send you the outcome of your taxes and any next steps. Learn more about your notice of assessment canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/educational-programs/after-sending-tax-return.html

5. Follow-up with your next steps:

Pay any balances owed or set up a way to receive your refund. Learn more about:

- **Paying balances owed:** canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/payments/payments-cra/individual-payments/make-payment.html

- **Receiving refunds:**

canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/about-your-tax-return/refunds.html

Why?

Filing taxes is important because it:

- **Checks if you paid the right amount:** Filing taxes confirms if you've paid too much and get a refund or if you've paid too little and have a balance owing.
- **Helps you avoid CRA penalties:** If you don't file your taxes by the due date, the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) might file a tax return for you and take legal action to collect any unpaid taxes.
- **Gives you access to government benefits:** Filing taxes lets you access government benefits such as GST credits, Student Aid, or the Canada Child Benefit (CCB). If you don't file taxes, you might miss out on money that could help you with your expenses!

Tip

Beware of tax scams! Protect your money by remembering that the CRA will never:

- Send refunds by e-transfer or text message.
- Demand payment through e-transfer, cryptocurrency, or gift cards.
- Use aggressive language or threaten to arrest you.
- Charge a fee to talk to an agent.
- Set up in-person meetings in public places.

Learn more about avoiding tax scams from the CRA:

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/corporate/scams-fraud/recognize-scam.html>

Creating Your Personal Tax Plan

Consider the following questions and write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you to determine the best way for you to file your taxes.

Question: Why is it important for me to file my taxes?

- *Example: I need to file to keep getting government benefits like GST credits or Student Aid.*

Question: Where can I go if I need more information or have questions about taxes?

- *Example: I can visit the CRA website or ask a family member who files their taxes.*

Question: What personal information do I need to have ready to file my taxes? Where do I keep this information?

- *Example: I'll need my Social Insurance Number, which I keep in my desk at home.*

Question: What income do I have that I have to report on my taxes? What documents do I need for this?

- *Example: I need a T4 slip from my job that shows my earning for the year. I also need to keep a record of the tips I make in a year.*

Question: What can I do or where can I go if I am missing information I need to file my taxes?

- *Example: I lost my SIN, so I can contact Services Canada for a replacement.*

Question: How would I like to file my taxes?

- *Example: I'll probably use an online CRA-certified tax software like Wealthsimple or H&R Block.*

Question: Will I need help filing my taxes? Where can I go or who could help me?

- *Example: I could ask my parents who have filed taxes before or find a free tax clinic and get help there.*

Question: When will I start filing my taxes and when do they have to be done by? How will I remember to start filing my taxes?

- *Example: I'll set a reminder in my phone calendar to start at the beginning of March to make sure it's done well before April 30 in case I owe any money.*

Question: How will I make sure the information I submit is correct?

- *Example: I'll ask a trusted friend or my support worker if we can go through my taxes together and check for any errors before I send them.*

Question: How can I stay financially safe while filing my taxes?

- *Example: If someone calls saying they're from the CRA, I'll double check by calling the CRA directly using the phone number from their website.*

Great work! Taxes can feel overwhelming, but having a plan can make it more manageable. You can also check out these self-care tips below to help make it easier. Remember, take it one step at a

time, reach out if you need support, and good luck with filing your taxes this year!

Take care of yourself while doing your taxes

- **Break it down into steps**

Try not to tackle everything at once. Instead, break down the process into small steps, like gathering documents one day and filling out forms the next. Small steps make the task feel manageable!

- **Use a checklist or template**

Use a checklist to track everything you need to complete your taxes and everything you've already done. Knowing exactly what you need to do helps you stay organized and crossing off items can feel satisfying!

- **Ask for support if you need it**

If you feel lost or uncertain, don't hesitate to ask for help from someone you trust. You can also look for information on the CRA website or visit a free tax clinic. Sometimes, just knowing you don't have to do it alone can relieve a lot of stress!

- **Be kind to yourself**

Remind yourself that it's okay if you make a mistake or don't understand everything right away. You're learning, and taxes can be tricky for everyone. Self-compassion can reduce stress and make it easier to keep going if a challenge comes up!

- **Plan something fun when you're done**

Plan a treat or activity you enjoy as a reward for finishing your taxes. Having something to look forward to can motivate you to keep going and get it finished!

Section 2: Understanding Banking Basics

Now that you've explored the basics of earning and pay, the next step is deciding where to keep your money! Banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions are common choices, each offering different types of accounts and services that help you manage your money safely. Exploring the different types of institutions and accounts available can help you choose the best place to keep your money, making it easier to organize and work toward your goals.

In this section, we'll cover:

Understanding the different types of financial institutions and how they work.

- Understanding the different types of services financial institutions offer.
- Identifying which type of financial institutions and accounts fit your needs.

By the end of this section, you should have a better understanding of how to choose the right banking options for you. Let's get started!

Engage and Explore

Understanding Banking

Financial institutions like banks or credit unions are places where you can keep your money safe and access it when you need it. For example, if you get a paycheck from a job, you can go to a **financial institution**, like a bank, to deposit your money.

Check out the different types of financial institutions below:

Banks

Banks are places where you can safely store your money, borrow money, or get help managing it. Banks are often run by large companies and are easy to find in most cities and online. They offer many services, such as accounts for spending and saving and loans for big purchases.

RBC, TD, and Scotiabank are examples of banks, that do the following:

- Store your money in chequing and savings accounts.
- Have branches you can visit in person and also offer online banking.
- Issue credit cards and provide loans.
- Offer investment products.
- Provide financial advice.

| Pros | Cons |
|---|---|
| <p>Offer different financial services.</p> <p>Have many branches and ATMs available.</p> <p>Have strong security to protect your money.</p> | <p>Fees can be higher than other options.</p> <p>Services may be less personalized because they are so large.</p> |

Credit Unions

Credit unions are like a community-focused version of a bank. They are owned by the members who use them. Credit unions often have the same services as banks but try to focus more on helping their members than making profits. They might charge lower fees but are often not as widely available.

Vancity and First West Credit Union are examples of credit unions that do the following:

- Store your money in chequing and saving accounts.
- Have branches you can visit in person and also offer online banking.
- Issue credit cards and provide loans.
- Offer investment products.
- Provide financial advice, education, and community-focused programs.

| Pros | Cons |
|---|---|
| <p>Offer different financial services, usually at a lower price than banks.</p> <p>Offer personalized and community-focused service.</p> <p>Have strong security to protect your money.</p> | <p>Not as many branches and ATMs.</p> <p>Limited international options if you are travelling.</p> <p>Fewer digital service options.</p> |

Fintech Institutions

Fintech institutions are companies that use technology to offer financial services that make managing your money faster and easier, usually online or through apps. For example, they might make it easy to send money quickly, invest, or budget right from your phone. They're all about convenience and new ideas.

Wealthsimple, KOHO, and PayPal are examples of fintech institutions that do the following:

- Provide digital banking tools through apps or websites.
- Offer innovative financial services.
- Provide digital budgeting or financial tracking tools.

| Pros | Cons |
|--|---|
| <p>Easy to access through apps and websites.</p> <p>Often have lower fees.</p> <p>Can offer traditional financial services in innovative ways.</p> | <p>Limited physical locations and customer service.</p> <p>May not offer all financial services.</p> <p>Don't always have the same level of security and data privacy as banks and credit unions.</p> |

Financial institutions offer **financial services** to help make managing your money easier. These services can include keeping your money safe, helping you save for the future, giving you tools to pay for things, or lending you money. For example, the bank provides a **financial service**, such as a chequing account, where you'll securely store the money from your paycheck. This allows you to keep your money safe while giving you easy access for everyday use, like paying bills or buying things.

Chequing accounts

You can think of a chequing account like a wallet, but instead of carrying cash, you keep your money in this account. This type of account is meant for everyday spending and money management, like buying food or receiving your paycheque. Examples include Day to Day Banking Accounts and Student Everyday Banking Accounts.

| Uses | Tips |
|--|---|
| <p>You can easily deposit money by bringing cash or a cheque to the bank or electronically through methods like direct deposit.</p> <p>You can easily take out money using a debit card, writing cheques, or sending transfers online.</p> | <p>Ideal for managing regular transactions, but you may also want a savings account for saving money.</p> |

Savings accounts

You can think of a savings account like a piggy bank, it's a safe place to store your money for the future. It's designed to help you save, not spend the money frequently. With savings accounts, the bank will pay you a little extra money, called interest, for keeping your

money there. Examples include High-yield savings accounts and specialty savings accounts.

| Uses | Tips |
|---|---|
| <p>You put your money in and save it there for something in the future.</p> <p>A savings account is designed for money you plan to set aside for a while, so it's not meant for everyday use. These accounts may limit how often you can withdraw funds to encourage saving, but your money is still easily accessible online or at an ATM.</p> | <p>Best to use this type of account in addition to a chequing account and store money you don't want to use every day here.</p> |

Credit Cards

You can think of a credit card like a temporary money loan. The bank lets you borrow money to buy things now and pay them back by a later date. If you miss this date though and take too long to pay them back, you will have to pay extra money called interest. You can use a credit card for things that cost a bit more, like electronics, furniture or vacations. Credit cards offer a bit more security than

debit cards because the money is not directly linked to your bank account – this can be helpful for buying things online. Examples include Mastercard and Visa.

| Uses | Tips |
|--|--|
| <p>You have a credit limit, which is the maximum amount of money you can borrow.</p> <p>Each month, you get a bill for what you have spent.</p> <p>If you pay it all back on time you don't pay extra. If you don't interest is added and you will have to pay more.</p> | <p>Using credit cards responsibly helps you build your credit score, which is a number that financial institutions use to decide if they should lend you money and it can also be checked by places like landlords to decide if they should rent you an apartment.</p> |

Loans

A loan is a large amount of money you borrow from a bank or financial institution for significant expenses, like buying a car, paying for school, or starting your own business. You agree to pay it back over time, usually with interest, which is extra money you pay to the bank as a fee for borrowing money. Examples include personal loans, student loans, and mortgages.

| Uses | Tips |
|--|--|
| <p>You borrow a specific amount of money which must be approved by the lender.</p> <p>You and the lender agree on a repayment plan, for example, if you borrow \$10,000 for a car, you might agree to pay \$300 monthly for a few years.</p> | <p>If you are taking out a loan, compare loan terms and interest rates to find the best option and make sure you have a realistic plan to make the payments.</p> |

Investments

These accounts are used to grow your money over time. Instead of keeping your money in a regular savings account where it earns a small amount of interest, you can invest it in things such as stocks, bonds, or mutual funds to try and earn higher interest return. Examples include Tax Free Savings Accounts (TFSAs), Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs), and Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs).

| Uses | Tips |
|--|--|
| <p>You invest money in special accounts to grow it for the future.</p> <p>The money you invest is used to purchase things such as stocks, bonds, or mutual funds.</p> <p>It is not as easy to access because you have to sell the items to receive your money.</p> | <p>Investments can grow over time, but they also come with risks. Be cautious of high-risk investments that promise quick returns, and research your options before committing your money.</p> |

There are different types of financial institutions and services, so it's important to find the ones that work best for you. Check out the information below to learn about them and help you make the right choice!

Some people like to keep all their finances at one institution, while others like to use services from a few different places. Both have pros and cons. Take a look at the list below and consider which option you would prefer.

Pros of keeping all your finances with one institution:

- You can access all your financial services in one place, which makes it easier to keep track of everything and avoid confusion.
- Your financial institution might understand your needs better and give you more personalized service.
- You could get special offers, discounts, or other benefits.

Cons of keeping all your finances with one institution:

- You might miss out on new or better services offered by other institutions.
- Some institutions might have lower fees or better interest rates for specific services.
- If your financial institution has problems, like a data breach, it could impact all your accounts.

Make it Personal

Exploring Your Financial Accounts

Whether it's handling daily expenses, saving for the future, or navigating unexpected challenges, the right financial institutions and services can make managing money smoother and give you more time to focus on what matters to you – like your family, job, or hobbies.

Use the steps below to:

- Reflect on the financial institutions and accounts you currently use.
- Identify additional accounts or institutions that align with your needs and goals.

Write your answers to the questions below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

Step 1: Map your current financial picture

- Use the chart below, your computer, or a phone, write out the financial institutions you currently use and list the types of accounts you have with each.
- If you don't currently use any financial institutions, you can write down how you currently store your money.

Example 1:

| Financial Institution | Type of Account(s) | How I Use It | Any Fees and Benefits I Know About |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Name of Bank | Chequing, savings | Daily expenses, emergency fund | Fee: Monthly fee Benefit: Interest rate I earn |

| | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|----------|---|
| Credit Union | Personal loan | Car loan | Fee: Monthly payment & interest Benefit: Low interest rate |
|---------------------|---------------|----------|---|

Example 2:

| Financial Institution | Type of Account(s) | How I Use It | Any Fees and Benefits I Know About |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| My piggy bank | Savings | Saving for a new pair of shoes I want | Benefit: It doesn't cost anything and it's easy to get to. |

Record Your Own:

| Financial Institution | Type of Account(s) | How I Use It | Any Fees and Benefits I Know About |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Step 2: Reflect on your needs and goals

Consider these questions:

Question: Do the accounts I have or ways I manage my money meet my needs?

- *Example: My chequing account is good for paying bills and buying groceries, but I wish it had no monthly fee.*

Question: Are there better options I could explore for managing my finances or fees I could avoid?

- *Example: I heard some banks offer free chequing accounts for students, so I want to check that out.*

Question: Do I need any financial services I don't have yet?

- *Example: I'm starting a new job soon and I don't have a bank account. I need one to deposit my paycheques.*

Step 3: Research and plan next steps

Look up financial services or institutions that could better meet your needs and consider:

Question: What is the type of financial service you're considering?

- *Example: I'm considering opening a credit card for the first time. I want one with low interest rates and no annual fee since I'm new to using credits cards.*

Question: What are you looking for in a financial institution?

- *Example: I want to make sure that I use a bank with a good mobile app because I like doing my banking from my phone.*

Question: Are there any questions you need to ask before making a decision?

- *Example: What happens if I miss a credit card payment? Are there penalties? Do I have the option to set up an automatic payment?*

Step 4: Create a plan

Based on what you learned, create a short action plan.

- *Example: I will visit my bank's website and look at their TFSA options. I will research banks and try to find one that offers free chequing accounts for youth.*



Having the right financial tools can make managing your money easier and less stressful. Great job reflecting on your needs and exploring your options. You've taken an important step in your financial journey!

Remember, there's no one system that works for everyone. Like employment, managing your finances is an ongoing journey. Feel free to revisit this as needed to keep exploring and improving what works best for you.

Learn More

Here's some resources to help you keep going with your financial exploration:

- Compare different types of accounts with this tool: tools-ioutils.fcac-acfc.gc.ca/ACT-OCC/searchfilter-eng.aspx

- Compare different credit cards with this tool: ioutils.fcac-acfc.gc.ca/CCCT-OCCC/SearchFilter-eng.aspx

Section 3: Ensuring Financial Safety

Now that we've explored the basics of earning and storing money let's learn how to keep it safe. Unfortunately, there may be times when other people try to trick you and take your money without you realizing it – this is called **financial fraud or scams**. It's sneaky and it's wrong. The good news is you can learn how to spot these tricks and protect yourself.

In this section, we'll cover:

- Understanding common scams people might use.
- Using tips to keep your money and information safe.
- Identifying what to do if you've been scammed.

By the end of this section, you'll have a better understanding of some tools to protect yourself and feel more confident about keeping your money safe. Let's get started!

Engage and Explore

Understanding Financial Scams

What are scams? A scam is when someone tries to trick you into giving them something valuable, like your money or personal details, such as your full name, passwords, or bank account number. People might lie, pretend to be someone they're not, or use fake stories to trick you.

If someone scams you, they might:

- Steal your money.
- Use your personal information to pretend to be you. This is called identity theft.
- Make it harder or impossible for you to use your own money.

Scams can happen to anyone. Knowing about them will help you avoid losing money and save you stress!

Common Scams

Look through the following information to understand common scams.

| Scam | Description | Examples |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Investment scams | Scammers promise you a lot of money quickly for making | You get a message on social media about a way to double your |

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| | fake or risky investments. | money in a couple days through cryptocurrency. They ask you to make an upfront “investment,” but when you send it you don’t hear back, and you lose your money. |
| Loan scams | Scammers offer quick loans but require you to pay money right away or want access to your personal information. | You apply for a personal loan, and the lender asks you to pay a \$50 fee to process your application and get your money. Once you pay, they disappear, and you lose your \$50. |
| Online shopping scams | Scammers create fake websites or listings to sell products that don’t exist or are poor quality. | You buy designer sneakers online, but when you get them, they turn out to be fake. |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Rental scams | These scams target people looking for housing, usually by collecting deposits on places that don't exist. | You find a great apartment online and text the "landlord." They ask for a deposit to hold it since you can't find a time that works. They stop replying after you send the money and the apartment isn't real. |
| Phishing scams | These scams try to trick you into giving away personal information, like passwords, banking information, or your SIN (Social Insurance Number). | You receive a text message claiming to be from your bank that says, "Your account is locked, click this link to unlock it." |
| Social media and influencer scams | Scammers pose as influencers or use their media to make fake accounts or ads to trick you into sending money or | An "influencer" claims you've won a contest but asks you to pay a "shipping fee" to get your prize. After |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| | personal information. | paying, you never receive the prize. |
| Employment scams | Scammers target job seekers with fake job offers to steal money or personal information. | You're offered a remote job but asked to pay for training materials. Once you send the money, the "company" stops responding. |
| Fake bills or invoices | Scammers send fake bills or invoices to trick you into paying for services or products you never bought. | You get an email from a phone company saying your bill is overdue and you have to pay immediately, but you don't have a phone plan with that company. |
| Government scams | Scammers pretend to be government agencies and try to get you to pay them money or give them your personal information. | You get a call from someone claiming to be from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), saying you owe taxes and will be arrested if you don't pay them. |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Prize or lottery scams | <p>Scammers tell you you've won a prize or lottery but ask for payment or personal details to claim it.</p> | <p>You get an email saying you've won a vacation but need to pay a booking fee. After paying, you hear nothing further.</p> |
|-------------------------------|---|---|

As you can see there are all kinds of scams to try to steal money or personal information. They often target us through things we trust, like social media, online shopping, or even job offers. Knowing how these scams work can help you spot and avoid them to keep your information and money safe!

Learn More

Stay up to date on scams with this scam tracker:

- bbb.org/scamtracker/lookupscam

Make it Personal

Avoiding Scams

Scams can happen to anyone, but the good news is that the right tools and habits can help you avoid them. Use the steps below to

make a personal scam plan to protect yourself and handle anything that comes your way. Write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

Step 1: Check-out these strategies for avoiding scams.

Strategy 1: Stay safe

- **Keep your details private:** Only share your Social Insurance Number (SIN), banking information, or passwords if it's absolutely necessary and with a trusted source.
- **Be careful online:** Think before sharing personal information on the internet or social media.
- **Don't pay before confirming:** Don't pay upfront or make a deposit on something you or a trusted source hasn't seen in person or received. If purchasing online, confirm the site is real.
- **Ignore suspicious requests:** Don't respond to unexpected calls or messages asking for personal information.
- **Use strong passwords:** Create passwords with numbers, letters, and symbols. Use two-factor authentication when possible.
- **Protect your devices:** Update your phone and computer regularly. Avoid clicking on strange links or attachments.
- **Check your accounts:** Look at your bank and credit statements often to catch anything unusual.

- **Learn more through the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre:**
antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/protect-protegez-eng.htm

Strategy 2: Spot scams

- **Stay informed:** Learn about common scams so you know what to watch for.
- **Too good to be true?** If something sounds amazing but unrealistic, it's likely a scam.
- **Don't rush:** Scammers pressure you to act fast. Take your time. Decisions can wait!
- **Pause and investigate:** If something feels off, take a moment to check it out. Look up existing scams on the scam tracker at bbb.org/scamtracker/lookupscam
- **Look for fake IDs and emails:** Caller IDs and emails can be faked. Contact companies or agencies using their official details, not ones from suspicious messages.
- **Ask for help:** Talk to trusted friends or family if you're unsure.

Strategy 3: Report a scam

- **Help protect others:** Reporting scams helps law enforcement and can prevent others from being victims.
- **Confide in someone you trust:** Share your experience with trusted friends or family.
- **Report online:** Use the Online Reporting System to file a report services.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/chooser-eng.html?ipeReferer=CAFCFRS
- **Call to report:** You can also report scams by calling 1-888-495-8501.
- **Learn More:** Learn more about reporting scams through the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/index-eng.htm

Strategy 4: Seek help if you are a victim

- **Stay calm:** Reach out to someone you trust for support.
- **Collect evidence:** Keep documents, receipts, emails, or texts related to the scam.
- **Notify your bank:** Contact your financial institution immediately to secure your accounts.
- **File a report:** If you have lost money or provided personal financial information in relation to a fraud or scam reach out to your local RCMP to file a report.

- **Watch for follow-up scams:** Be cautious of offers that promise to recover lost money—they are often scams too. Share updates with the Canadian Anti-fraud Centre, and possible your financial institution or the police to prevent future scams.
- **Tell friends and family:** Let your family and friends know about the fraud to help prevent others from becoming victims.
- **Learn more:** Learn about what to do if you're the victim of a scam through the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/index-eng.htm

Step 2: Consider the questions.

Question: What personal information do you have that you need to keep safe?

Question: Have you experienced or come close to falling for a scam? What happened?

Question: What's one habit you can change to keep yourself safer from scams?

Step 3: Build your plan.

1. Spot risks

Think of some examples of where scams might target you.

- *Example: "I think I'm most at risk when I'm online shopping. I love deals and sometimes click on things that seem too good to be true."*

2. Protect yourself

Use the tips provided to brainstorm actions you'll take to protect yourself from scams.

- *Example: "If I get a text from a number I don't know asking for payment, I'll ignore it and report it as spam on my phone."*

3. Plan how you'll respond

Make some if/then statements! Think of how to respond to potential scams:

- *Example: “**If** I get an urgent call pressuring me to send money immediately, **then** I will ask them to send me the details in writing so I can review it with a friend or family member I trust.”*

4. Make an emergency plan

What will you do if you suspect you’ve been scammed?

- *Example: “If I think I’ve been scammed, I’ll reach out to someone I trust.”*

Reflect and Connect

We've covered a lot in this module, including:

- The basics of banking, including different types of accounts and their uses.
- Skills related to earning money, such as understanding a pay stub and filing taxes.
- Strategies for avoiding scams and protecting your financial information.

Take a moment to think about the questions below and how they relate to your experiences. Think of this as a reflective journal for yourself, which you can refer to later.

Happy reflecting!

Question: What's something new you learned about a pay stub?

Question: Why do you think it's important to check your pay stub every time you're paid?

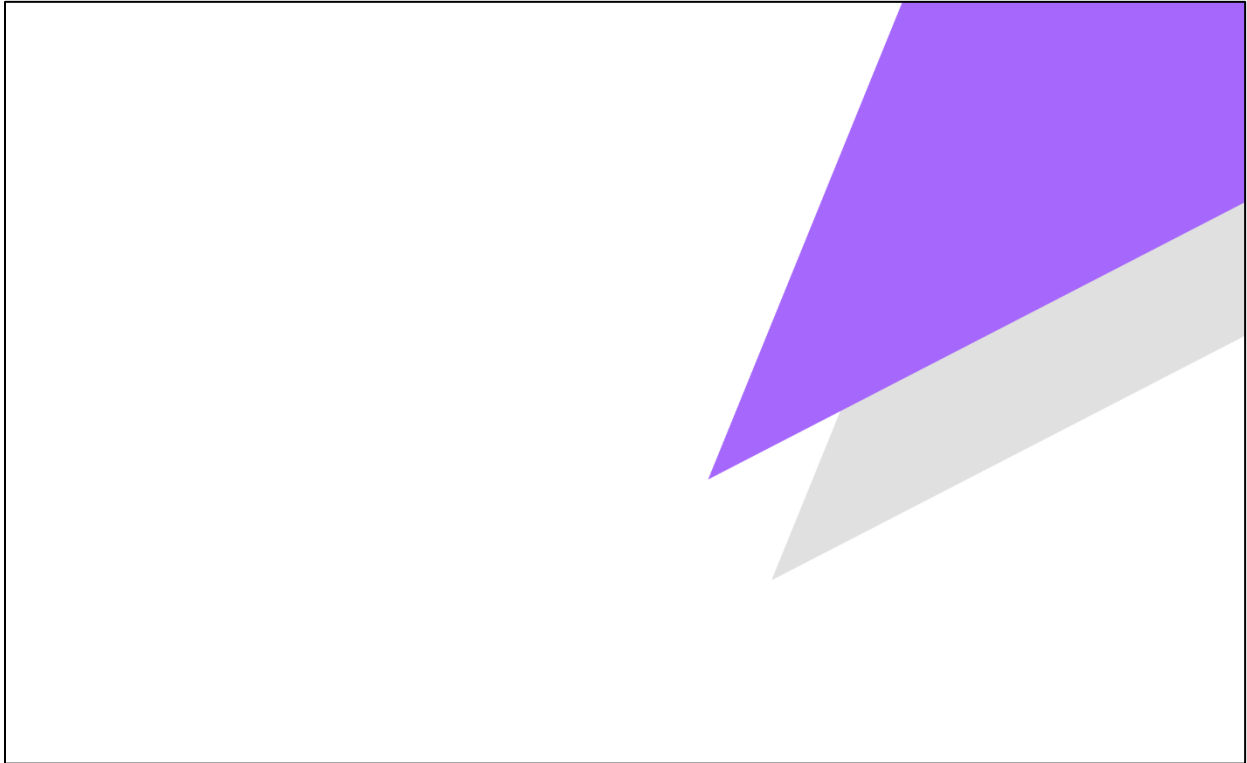
Question: What's one thing you can do to get ready for filing taxes?

Question: What are some things you can consider to make sure your bank account is working well for you?

- *Example: Fees, interest rates, online banking options.*

Question: Have you ever come across something that seemed like it could be a scam?

Question: How will you use what you learned about avoiding scams to help keep your money safe?



Module: Setting a Financial Foundation

This module explores strategies to set a financial basis, including reflecting on personal views and behaviours around money, identifying strengths and opportunities for growth with financial well-being, and reviewing current income and cost of living.

Introduction

This module has three sections to help you start exploring your relationship with money. You'll explore:

- Assessing your current money knowledge and identifying areas for growth.
- Exploring your mindset around money and recognizing how beliefs and habits influence financial decisions.
- Evaluating your earnings and expenses to get a clearer picture of where you're at financially.

Each section will take around 15-30 minutes to complete, and you're welcome to take breaks in between.

Each section has activities that connect money management to your own life to make sure this is useful for you. Be prepared to think about and record your answers in whatever way works best. That could be writing your answers in this workbook or using a different format that works for you like voice recording or typing in a notes app.

At the end of the module, you'll have the chance to put what you've learned into practice with reflection questions. Let's get started!

Section 1: Assessing Money Knowledge

Managing the money you earn can seem confusing and sometimes it can be tough to know where to start. This section has you covered. We will simplify things by seeing where you're at with the different parts that make up your finances as a whole.

Understanding where you're currently at is the first step in your financial journey and it's necessary for making a plan for where you want to go!

In this section, we'll cover:

- Understanding where you are at financially.
- Identifying what you're already good at and where you could grow in relation to your finances.

By the end of this section, you'll have a better understanding of what you're already good at and where you can grow to guide your money journey. Let's get started!

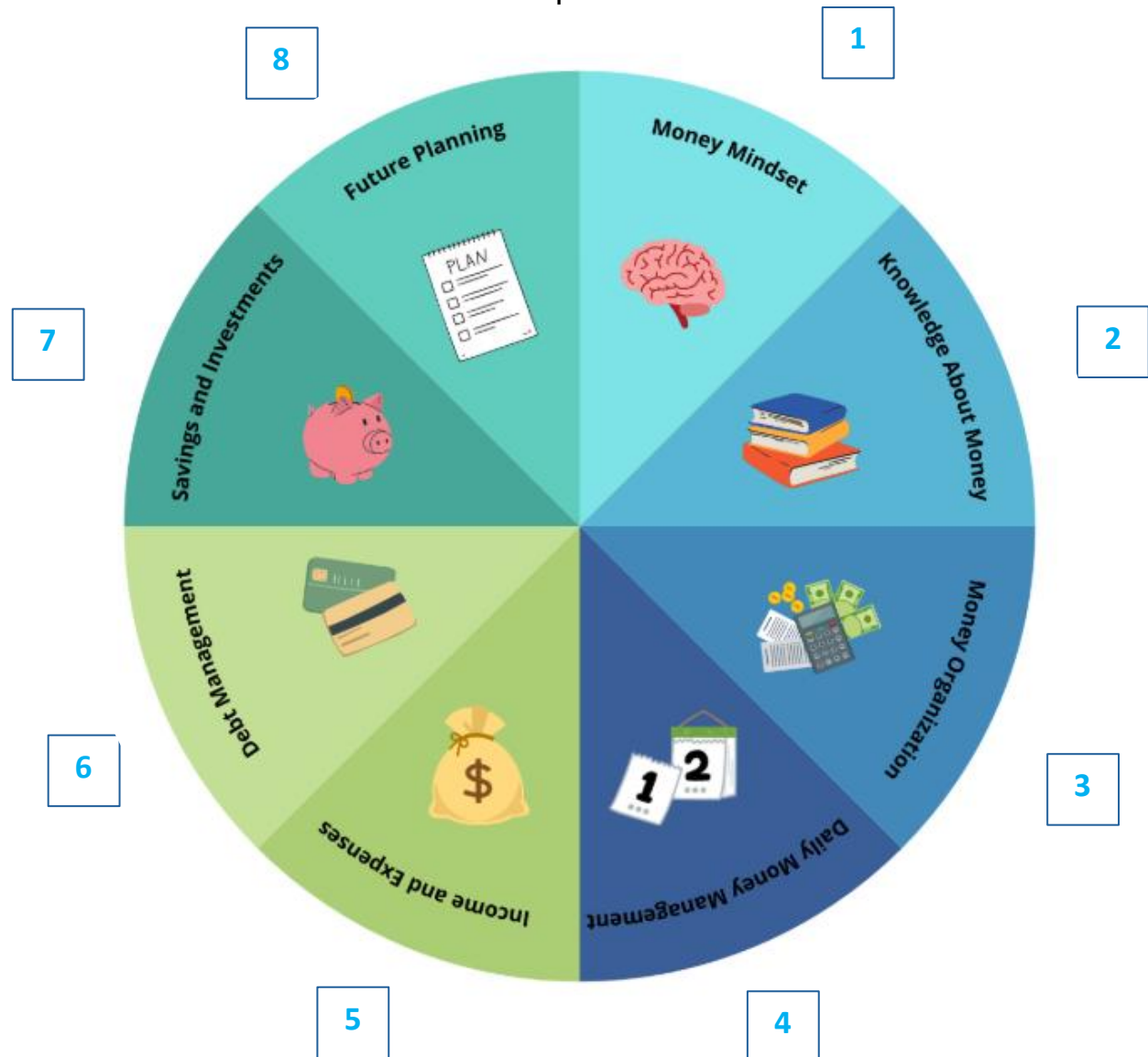
Engage and Explore

Exploring the Wheel of Money

We're going to start by simplifying things using the wheel of money.

What is the wheel of money?

The wheel of money is a tool to help you break down the different parts that make up your finances and assess where you're currently at. Look at the wheel of money below and read the descriptions that follow to learn more about each part.



The Wheel of Money is largely inspired by Ellyce Fulmore of Queerd Co's, 2023, "Wheel of Finance". You can check out more resources at:

<https://queerdco.com/#/>

1. Money mindset

How you feel about money, the emotions that come up when you think about it, and overall attitude towards managing finances.

- *Example: You feel stressed every time you think about money or proud when you think about money.*

2. Knowledge about money

Your understanding of finances overall, including financial terms, skills, and concepts, and your ability to apply this knowledge to manage your money.

- *Example: You can describe what a budget is and know what terms like “interest” or “credit score” mean.*

3. Money organization

How you organize your money, including your accounts, and your budgeting strategies.

- *Example: You use an app to help you organize your money and know where it goes.*

4. Daily money management

Your day-to-day spending habits, ability to stick to your financial goals, and sense of control over your daily finances.

- *Example: You think about the purchases you make each day and how they affect your savings goals.*

5. Income and expenses

The money you bring in, whether you feel fairly compensated, and how your income compares to your cost of living and overall spending.

- *Example: You make enough to cover basic expenses such as rent or food.*

6. Debt management

Your feelings about debt, whether you have a repayment plan, and how well you manage and keep track of any debt.

- *Example: You know how much you owe on your student loans and make the payment each month.*

7. Savings and investments

Your ability to save money for the future, current savings status, and investments you have or plan to make.

- *Example: You have an automatic deposit set up to put a little bit of money from your paycheck into savings.*

8. Future planning

How comfortable you feel making financial plans, setting goals, and making investments for your future.

- *Example: You made a goal to save an emergency fund in case something comes up in the future and are actively putting money toward that.*

Make it Personal

Exploring Your Wheel of Money

Now that you've checked out the wheel of money, let's use it to explore where you're currently at. Use the activity below to rate yourself in each area. This will help you see where you're feeling confident and where you might want to focus some attention to strengthen your financial foundation.

How to do the activity:

- Read the prompts for each part of the wheel of money below and reflect on where you currently stand.
- Record your ratings in the wheel of money below in the blank spaces provided or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

Tip

Be honest with yourself. There's no right or wrong place to be! This is just about understanding where you're at.

Rate How You're Doing in Each Area (Scale of 1-5)

- **Money mindset**
 - 1: I feel overwhelmed and anxious about money.
 - 2: I sometimes worry about money but can manage my feelings.

- 3: I feel neutral and don't really feel emotions about money.
- 4: I feel confident and have a positive attitude toward money.
- 5: I feel very confident and have a healthy relationship with money.

- **Income and expenses**

- 1: My income doesn't cover my expenses, and I feel stressed.
- 2: I struggle to balance my income and expenses.
- 3: My income covers my basic needs, but I don't have much left over.
- 4: My income comfortably covers my expenses, and I can save.
- 5: My income more than covers my expenses, and I can save regularly.

- **Debt management**

- 1: I have significant debt and no repayment plan.
- 2: I have significant debt but a loose plan to manage it.
- 3: I have manageable debt and a clear repayment plan.
- 4: I am actively making payments on any debt and feel in control.
- 5: I am debt-free or nearly debt-free and feel comfortable approaching the topic of debt.

- **Financial organization**

- 1: I don't have a system for organizing my finances.
- 2: I know the basics for organizing finances, but don't really track mine.
- 3: I have a system to organize my money I use most of the time.

4: I have a reliable system and feel on top of my finances.

5: I feel very organized and know where my money is and what I'm doing with it.

- **Financial knowledge**

1: I don't know too much about financial terms and concepts.

2: I know some stuff about finances, but don't really use it.

3: I think I have a good understanding of financial concepts and can use them fairly well.

4: I feel like I know a good amount about finances and manage my money well.

5: I feel very confident in my knowledge about money and confident using what I know.

- **Savings and investments**

1: I don't have any savings or investments and no plan to save.

2: I have minimal savings or investments but a loose plan to save.

3: I have some savings or investing and a general system to keep saving.

4: I regularly save or have started investing and have a plan for my savings.

5: I have substantial savings and investments and a system for saving that I stick to.

- **Future planning**

1: I don't consider my finances and plans for the future.

2: If I think about it, I could have some ideas for future money plans, but nothing concrete.

3: I have some basic financial goals and a rough plan.

4: I have a couple of clear financial goals and am taking steps to achieve them.

5: I have detailed long-term financial plans and am actively working towards them.

- **Daily money management**

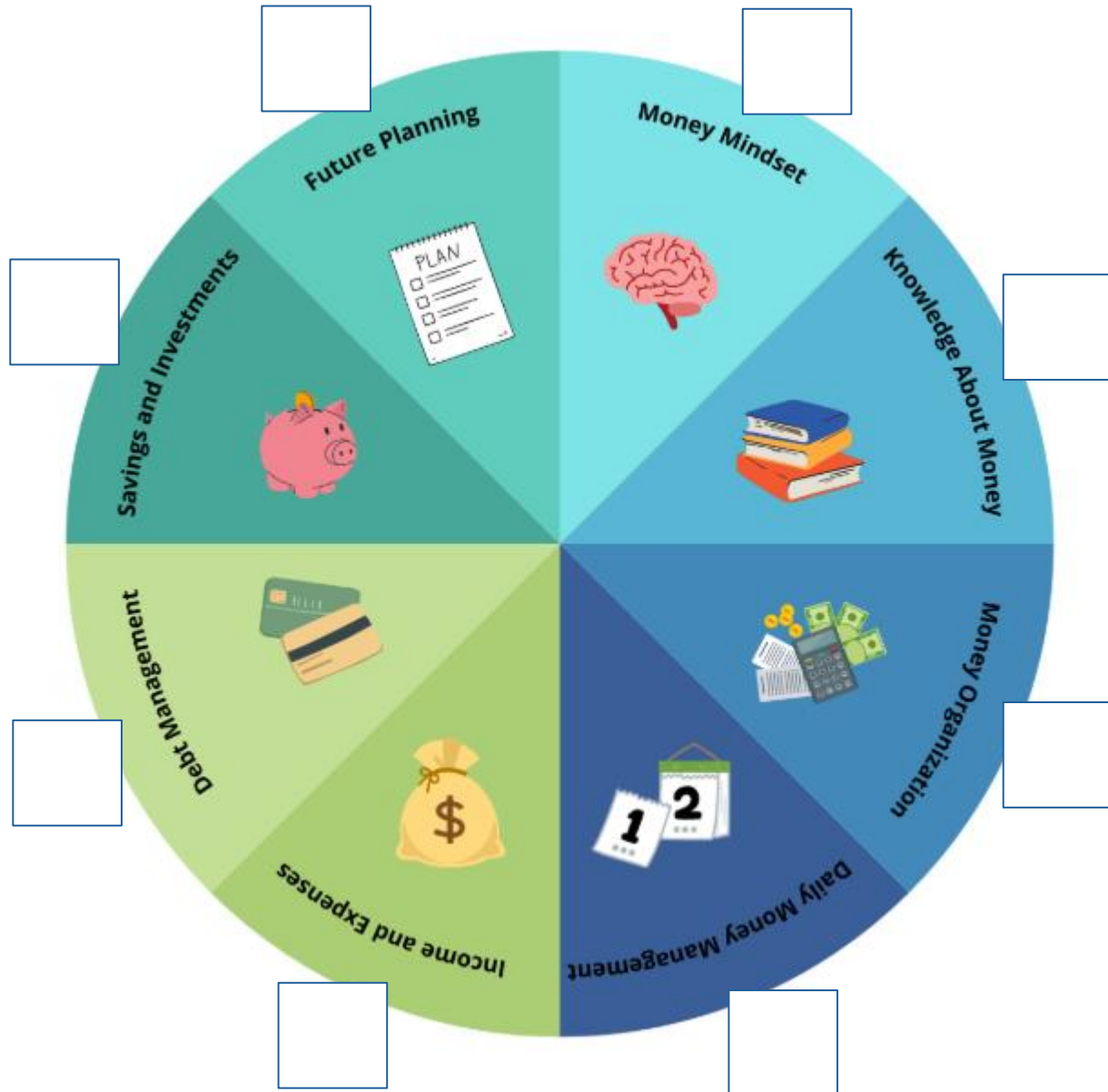
1: I don't think about or manage my day-to-day spending.

2: I make efforts to manage my money day to day but often lose track.

3: I feel on top of my money most days but some days I don't.

4: I feel like I consistently manage my daily finances pretty well.

5: I feel very in control of my daily spending and habits with money.



Great work! Now that you've checked in with yourself take some time to think about the questions below. Write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

Question: Think about the parts you rated yourself the highest in. How do these areas impact you?

- *Example: "I rated myself highest in income and cost of living. I feel confident I have enough money to cover my basic needs. It's nice not being stressed about money like I used to be, and I've actually been able to start saving up for a trip."*

Question: Think about the parts you rate yourself the lowest in. How do these areas impact you?

- *Example: "I rated myself the lowest on daily management and savings. I have a hard time keeping track of what I spend each day. I find it hard to save up money because I usually end up spending it on unexpected things."*

Question: Think about the parts you rated yourself the lowest in. Can you think of any actions you would want to take to grow in this area?

- *Example: "To improve my money management each day, I could start using a budgeting app to automatically track my spending so I can see where my money is going and be more aware of it."*

Great work exploring where you're currently at with your finances. You should have a clearer understanding of your strengths and areas you'd like to grow in. Understanding where you're at is important for your employment journey because it helps you develop the skills you need to manage the money you earn. Take what you learned today and use it as a foundation to keep building.

Section 2: Exploring the Money Mindset

We make a lot of choices without really thinking about why we make them, and our choices with money are no different! That's why it's important to take a look at how our thoughts and feelings impact the choices we make with money. When we understand **why** we spend, save, or manage our money the way we do, we can start making more intentional choices. Understanding and having the skills to manage your money choices is key when it comes to managing income you might make from a job.

In this section we'll cover:

- Understanding how you think and feel about money.
- Identifying how these thoughts and feelings affect the choices you make with money.
- Using this understanding to make more informed decisions with money.

By the end of this section, you'll have a better understanding of decision making about money. Let's get started!

Engage and Explore

Understanding the Money Mindset

Check out the stories below to explore how thoughts and feelings can influence the way we handle our money. Start thinking about how your thoughts and feelings impact your choices with money.

Story 1: A guilt-driven decision

I'm in the store, staring at a pair of shoes I really like. They're on sale! I feel a rush of excitement – I deserve a treat. But then, I hear that voice in my head, "Do you *really* need those?" I stand there, feeling excited and now also guilty.

Ugh, why do I feel like this? I guess when I was growing up, money was always tight. I remember being told, "Well, you don't *really* need it" whenever there was something I wanted.

I put the shoes back, telling myself I don't really need them. As I leave the store, I realize that even now, those early experiences have shaped how I feel about money. Whenever I spend on myself, I feel guilty, like I'm doing something wrong.

I honestly avoid thinking about money altogether because it's overwhelming. Or, when I do spend, I go overboard and regret it later. This cycle of guilt makes managing my money really stressful and confusing.

Tip: Feelings about money, like guilt, can come from early experiences and influence how we handle money today.

Story 2: Embracing freedom

I'm at the store with my friend, and I notice a pair of shoes I like. They're even on sale! I feel excited. I think about how hard I've worked recently – I deserve a little treat!

I grab the shoes and head to the checkout. My friend asks, "Are you really going to buy those? You haven't even thought about it." I think about it for a second. "Yeah," I say. I feel good about my decision because I know I've wanted them for a long time and have been responsible with my spending.

I know my friend doesn't really buy things – it stresses them out. I wonder why it doesn't stress me out. Growing up, my parents had a more relaxed approach to money. They taught me that it's important to save, but also to enjoy life. They always emphasized balance: work hard and save but also treat yourself.

I guess this mindset helps me feel okay with making decisions about money. I don't feel bad about enjoying small treats because I've worked hard and managed my money well. I feel proud when I think about how I handle my money, which makes me more motivated to stay on top of my finances.

Tip: Our feelings about money often come from what we were taught as children. A non-judgmental view, like the balanced view in this story, can help make money less stressful.

Story 3: Cautious Spending

I'm at the store, and I spot a pair of shoes I like. They're on sale – why are they on sale? I've been trying to save money, and I have some bills I'm behind on.

I'm so torn! Growing up, everyone around me was so impulsive with money. We were always living paycheck to paycheck and sometimes didn't have enough. I didn't want to keep living like that, so I've been trying to spend only when it's absolutely necessary.

I want the shoes so badly, but I walk away from them. I feel like I'm making a smart decision. I've already budgeted for the things I need this month, and buying something I don't need would throw off my plan.

Being cautious is hard, but it's helping me feel secure. I know that being more careful with my money is going to pay off in the future – at least, I hope.

Tip: How we feel about choices we make with money, like spending, is often shaped by the way we were taught to think about money.

Make it Personal

Your Money Story

Now that we have looked at some examples of how our thoughts and feelings about money impact the choices we make, it's time to write our own money story.

Step 1: Identify your feelings

Look at the different words below related to money. Read each word and take a moment to think about how it makes you feel. Does it bring up positive, negative, or neutral feelings? Why do you think that is? Notice if there are any experiences, memories, or thoughts that pop-up.

Use these steps to complete the activity:

- 1: Read each word below.
- 2: Reflect on how the word makes you feel.
- 3: Think about or write down your feelings in one sentence.
 - *Example: I feel stressed when I think about saving, I think it's because I was always told I was bad at it when I was growing up.*
- Step 4: Repeat these steps for each word you see.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Spending | Saving | Debt | Budget | Rich |
| Work | Invest | Credit | Bills | Financial Freedom |

Step 2: Identify your thoughts

Now that you've reflected on how each word made you feel let's explore some of the thoughts or beliefs you have about money. Below, are the same money-related words - each has a common belief about money beside it. Take a moment to reflect on your own thoughts or beliefs related to that word. Write your answers in the space provided below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

| Term | Example Belief | Your Thoughts or Beliefs |
|-----------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Spending | It's okay to spend money as long as things are on sale. | |

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| Saving | I can't save money because I never have enough. | |
| Debt | Having some debt is okay, as long as it's for things that helped me. | |
| Budget | A budget is for people with a lot of money to organize. | |
| Rich | Money can buy happiness and will solve my problems. | |
| Work | I have to work all the time to make a lot of | |

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| | money and be successful. | |
| Investing | You can lose everything investing, so I think it's better to avoid it. | |
| Credit | Using a credit card is the same as borrowing money, which is bad. | |
| Bills | Bills are stressful and overwhelming, so I try not to think about them. | |
| Financial Freedom | Financial freedom means being | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | able to spend however I want, with no limits. | |
|--|--|--|

Step 3: Explore your choices with money

Now that you've explored how you feel and think about money, let's take a deeper look at where those feelings and thoughts come from and how they affect your actions with money. Think about the questions below and write your answers in the space provided or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

Question: Choose a word from the cards above that stood out to you. Maybe it brought up a strong thought or feeling. It can be either positive or negative.

- *Example: Spending, it makes me feel stressed.*

Question: Where do you think this thought or feeling came from?

- *Example: Growing up, I always saw people with really nice, new things on social media and it made me feel like I had to have the same.*

Question: Did anyone in your life, like family, teachers, or friends, influence your feelings or beliefs about money?

- *Example: My friends would always talk about the new things they bought, and I felt left out if I didn't have the same.*

Question: Do you remember any specific experiences, times, or conversations that made you feel this way?

- *Example: I remember seeing one of my friends post pictures of all the new clothes and shoes they got, and I felt really jealous.*

Question: How long have you felt this way about money? Can you remember when this belief started?

- *Example: I guess I've felt this way since middle school, probably when I started using social media.*

Question: How do your feelings and thoughts about money affect the decisions you make?

- *Example: I think I feel like I need to keep up with what others have, so I end up spending money on things I don't really need just to look good. I'll buy clothes that I see others posting about, even if I can't really afford them.*

Question: How do you feel when you have to make a decision about money?

- *Example: I feel stressed and anxious when I have to decide whether to buy something. I want new stuff so bad, but I'm also always scared that I'm spending money I shouldn't be.*

Question: Are these patterns affecting your financial well-being right now? Are they helping or hurting at all?

- *Example: It's definitely hurting my bank account. I spend too much on things I don't need. I feel stressed about money because I'm not saving enough, and I'm probably not making the best choices.*

Step 4: Write your money story

Great work! Let's use everything you've reflected on to write your own money story. This will be a short story that connects your feelings, where they came from, your thoughts, and how they impact your choices – just like the stories you read at the start of the section.

- Think about a brief story (about three to five sentences) that describes how you relate to money. Write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.
- Start with a sentence like: "Money makes me feel _____ because _____."
- Continue thinking about how these feelings shape your actions, and how you want to feel about money in the future.

- *Example: “Money makes me feel anxious. I think it’s because growing up people around me were always stressed about bills. I usually avoid thinking about my money, which sometimes leads me to spending money without planning. In the future I want to feel more in control of my money.”*



When you’re done writing, read your story and congratulate yourself for all you’ve reflected on and learned. It’s not always easy and you’ve done a great job!

Section 3: Evaluating Earnings and Expenses

Understanding where you're at financially is the first step in taking control of your money and setting yourself up for success. Let's keep working on this by identifying your current earnings and expenses to understand your financial starting point.

Having the skills to identify your earnings and expenses is important for your employment journey. It allows you to manage the money you earn and make informed decisions with it. Whether you're starting a new job, starting to budget your current earnings, or simply assessing where you're at, this process will give you valuable insights into your money.

In this section, we'll cover:

- Tracking and evaluating your earnings.
- Understanding your expenses.
- Exploring strategies to adjust your financial habits when needed.

By the end of this section, you'll have a better understanding of the money you make, what you spend, and your overall financial situation.

Engage and Explore

Understanding Income and Expenses

Let's start by looking at the concept of income and expenses and why they matter.

- **Income** refers to any money you receive. It could come from a job, a business, freelance work, or other sources such as government benefits, gifts, or investments.
- **Expenses** are the money that you spend. This can include everything from rent and groceries to entertainment or items for yourself.

Knowing how much money comes in (your income) and how much money goes out (your expenses), you gain a clearer picture of your current financial situation. This is an important step for managing your money effectively! Now that we've covered income and expenses, let's take a closer look at tracking your own. Start by completing the activity below. Write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

Step 1: Determine your income

To start, determine if you have a fixed or fluctuating income.

1. **Fixed income** is a steady income that does not change from month to month, such as money you make from working a full-time job with set hours and payment schedule or consistent government payment you receive.

2. Fluctuating income changes monthly, which could come from jobs with varying hours, part-time jobs, or a business with inconsistent revenue.

If you have a **consistent income** use the table below to record:

- The days you get paid on.
- The amount of each paycheck.
- The total amount you are paid monthly.

| Days I Get Paid Each Month | Amount of Each Paycheque | Total I Make Per Month |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Example: 15th, 30th</i> | <i>Example: \$2,000</i> | <i>Example: \$4,000</i> |
| | | |

If you have **fluctuating income** use the table below to record your total income for the past six months...

Example:

| Month | Amount of Income |
|-------|------------------|
| March | \$1,200 |

| | |
|--------|---------|
| April | \$600 |
| May | \$3,500 |
| June | \$2,350 |
| July | \$1,700 |
| August | \$750 |

| Month | Amount of Income |
|-------|------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

| | |
|--------|--|
| August | |
|--------|--|

Follow the instructions below and use your table above to find the following:

Your lowest monthly income: Record the smallest number from the past six months.

Example: \$600

Your average monthly income: Add up the total amount of money you've made in the past six months and divide it by six – sorry math!)

Example: \$1,558.33 (\$1,200 + \$600 + \$3,500 + \$2,350 + \$1,700 + 750 = \$10,100 / 6 = \$1,683.33)

Your highest monthly income: Record the largest number from the past six months.

Example: \$3,500

Step 2: Determine your expenses

It's important to know there are also fixed and fluctuating expenses.

- **Fixed expenses**

Fixed expenses remain the same each month and are usually paid on a set schedule. These include things such as rent, car payments, insurance, phone bills or subscriptions. They are “must-pays” and are less flexible.

- **Fluctuating expenses**

Fluctuating expenses change from month to month. These include things such as groceries, eating out at restaurants, or entertainment. You have more control over these expenses by adjusting your choices or habits.

We will start by looking at fixed expenses because you have less control over them in the short term. It's important to know what these expenses are and when they need to be paid. Having these clearly laid out is an important part of determining your financial starting point because it helps you plan around the non-negotiable parts of your budget. Once you have these clearly laid out you can easily see how much is left for fluctuating expenses.

Tip

You can learn more about fluctuating expenses and explore spending in more detail in the “Building Money Management Skills” module.

Determine your fixed expenses by recording them in the table below or recording them in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

Example:

| Expense | Cost Per Month | Due On |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Rent</i> | <i>\$1,700</i> | <i>1st of each month</i> |

| | | |
|----------------------------|------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Phone Bill</i> | \$70 | <i>30th of each month</i> |
| <i>Subscription</i> | \$20 | <i>15th of each month</i> |

Your Expenses:

| Expense | Cost Per Month | Due On |
|----------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Step 3: Think on it!

Question: Was there anything that surprised you about your income or expenses when you filled out these tables?

Question: How does the total amount you make each month compare to your monthly expenses?

Make it Personal

Tracking Income and Expenses

Now that you've clearly listed out your income and expenses, it's time to evaluate what you've written down and decide what actions you want to take next. This will help you think through:

- Whether your income meets your needs.
- Whether your expenses are too high.

- How you can make changes to feel more in control of your money.

Follow the steps below to make your personal plan. You can think about your answers in your head or record them somewhere using a phone, computer, or paper if you find it helpful.

Why This Helps

When you write down a plan, it becomes real and easier to follow. You can see your goals right in front of you, and you'll be more likely to keep an eye on your income and expenses.

Tip

If you need more support, consider talking to a trusted adult or mentor in your life who can help. Sometimes others can offer advice, help you brainstorm ideas, and keep you on track with your goals.

1. Think about your income

Is your income enough to cover your expenses?

- If yes, that's a good sign. You might still look for ways to increase your income to save more or reach bigger goals.
- If no, consider ways to bring in more money. This could mean looking for a better-paying job or doing side work (such as babysitting, dog walking, or tutoring).

Question: Think, what's a strategy you could use to potentially increase your income?

- *Example: I can look for a part-time job on weekends or I can sell my crafts or artwork online.*

2. Think about your expenses

Are your expenses too high?

- **Look at where you spend the most.** Can you reduce those costs by changing brands, using discounts, or sharing expenses with someone else (like carpooling)?
- **Check for unnecessary expenses.**
If you have expenses that aren't absolutely needed, think about lowering them or cutting them out completely, at least for a while.
- **Consider the timing of your expenses.**
Can you set up automatic payments on dates that align with your income? For example, if you get paid on the first of the month, you might schedule your phone bill or subscriptions to

be charged a few days after payday (and before they are due). This helps you avoid late fees and surprises but keep an eye on your account balance – especially if your income changes from month to month.

- **Recognize that living costs can be very high.**

Sometimes, no matter how much you cut back, extra help is still needed. You can learn more about financial support options in the Exploring Effective Budgeting module.

Question: Think, what's a strategy you could use to manage your expenses?

- *Example: I can cancel one of my streaming subscriptions, I don't use them all or I'm going to change my insurance payment, so it comes out mid-month right after I get paid. Right now, all my payments come out on the first of the month^t and it doesn't leave me very much income until my next paycheck.*

Step 3: Aim to keep tracking them consistently

Use a calendar, table, or phone app to make tracking your income and expenses easier. Or make it part of your weekly routine. Try to

pick a day you know you'll usually have time and commit to checking your finances then.

Question: Think, what's a strategy you will use to track your money?

- *Example: I will use a spreadsheet, a notebook, or an app on my phone.*

Tip

Set a reminder

- Use your phone or a calendar to remind yourself to track your income and expenses and make any adjustments using the skills you've just learned.
- Make sure to celebrate and reward yourself when you do check-in!

Great job! You've taken your financial information from just a list of numbers and turned it into a plan. With these skills, you can start taking real steps to improve your money situation.

Reflect and Connect

We've covered a lot in this module, including:

- How to determine areas of strengths and potential growth with finances.
- How your views and feelings about money influence your financial decisions.
- How to assess your current earnings and expenses to determine where you're at financially.

Take a moment to think about the questions below and how they relate to your experiences. Think of this as a reflective journal for yourself, which you can refer to later.

Happy reflecting!

What's one thing you've learned about your financial habits or knowledge that surprised you?

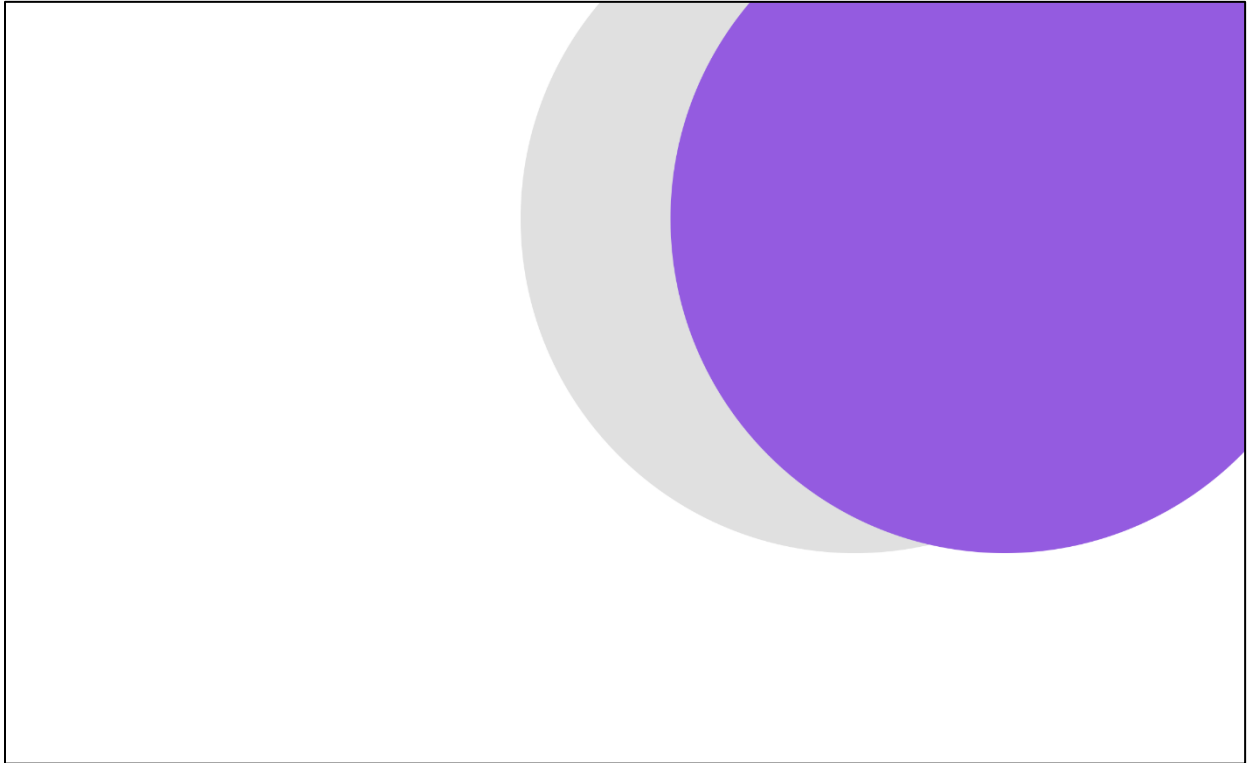
Think about how money was talked about when you were growing up or an early memory you have about money. How do you think this shapes your view of money today?

How does your view of money affect how you spend or save?

What's one small step you can take this week to apply what you learned about your financial starting point?

- *Example: Track your spending for a day or reviewing your income sources.*

How can tracking your income and expenses help you make financial decisions?



Module: Building Money Management Skills

This module covers strategies for managing money, including approaches to spending, saving, credit, and debt management. It includes evaluating habits in each area to set informed and realistic financial goals.

Introduction

This module has three sections to help you build your skills for managing money. You'll explore:

- Identifying your spending habits and learning how to manage them effectively.
- Recognizing ways to build savings with clear goals and practical strategies.
- Understanding how credit and debt work and learning strategies to manage them effectively.

Each section will take around 15-30 minutes to complete, and you're welcome to take breaks in between.

Each section has activities that connect money management to your own life to make sure this is useful for you. Be prepared to think about and record your answers in whatever way works best. That could be writing your answers in this workbook or using a different format that works for you like voice recording or typing in a notes app.

At the end of the module, you'll have the chance to put what you've learned into practice with reflection questions. Let's get started!

Section 1: Managing Spending

One big reason many of us try to manage our money is to make sure we're thoughtful about how we spend it. Understanding your spending habits can help you make daily choices that support your financial goals. Managing your spending is important to staying on track and reaching those goals.

In this section, we'll cover:

- Understanding needs, wants, and priorities.
- Finding ways to make more balanced financial decisions.
- Learning tips for avoiding unnecessary purchases.

By the end of this section, you will have a better understanding of managing your spending and making thoughtful choices with your money. Let's get started!

Engage and Explore

Understand Needs, Wants, and Priorities

Before you can control your spending, it's important to understand the difference between needs, wants, and priorities. By focusing on your **needs** and **priorities** first, you can make better decisions and spend your money where it truly matters.

| Category | Description |
|-------------------|---|
| Needs | Needs are things you must have to live, like food, housing, transportation, and healthcare. These are essential for your well-being and basic survival. |
| Wants | Wants are the things you'd like to have but don't really need, like the latest phone, a new outfit, or eating out at a restaurant. While these can add enjoyment to life, they're not essential. |
| Priorities | Priorities are the things that matter most to you, based on your goals and values. For example, if you're working to pay off debt, that would be a priority. You might decide to hold off on other purchases to focus on paying down your debt. |

Intentional vs. Impulsive Spending

Knowing the difference between intentional and impulsive purchases helps you make smarter decisions about your money.

| Intentional Spending | Impulsive Spending |
|---|---|
| <p>Intentional spending is when you make thoughtful decisions about how and when to spend your money. This involves planning for purchases, such as buying groceries, paying bills, or covering any regular expenses.</p> | <p>Impulsive spending is when you buy something on the spot, without thinking it through, like grabbing an extra item at the checkout or purchasing an item you don't need simply because it's on sale.</p> |

When you feel tempted to buy something you don't need, take a moment to stop. Ask yourself: "Do I really need this right now, or is it just a sudden urge?" This helps you make smarter decisions with your money.

Ways to Reduce Unnecessary Spending

There are different ways to reduce unnecessary purchases. Let's explore a few simple strategies that can help you manage your spending better:

Strategy: Set a limit

Decide how much you can afford to spend on non-essentials each week and stick to it. Once you've reached your limit, wait until the next week before spending more.

Strategy: Make a list

Before shopping, create a list of things you actually need. Whether you're shopping in-store or online, avoid buying anything not on your list to help prevent impulse purchases.

Strategy: Avoid Temptations

The more you shop, the more likely you are to make unnecessary purchases. If you don't need anything, it's better to stay away from places you might be tempted like shopping malls and online stores.

Strategy: Leave your credit card at home

When you go out, leave your credit card behind, and only take cash or a debit card. This will make you more aware of your spending limits and help prevent overspending.

Strategy: Reduce your credit card limit

If overspending is a habit, try lowering your credit card limit. It can help you keep your spending under control, especially when a high limit makes spending more than you planned easier.

Strategy: Sleep on it

Give yourself time before buying something you don't need right away. Wait 24 hours and often, the urge to buy will fade away.

Tip

It's important to cut back on unnecessary spending, but it's also okay to enjoy small treats now and then. Set aside a certain amount of money for these treats, so you can enjoy them without feeling guilty.

Make it Personal

Explore Your Spending Habits

Understanding your spending habits is important for managing your money better. Let's explore a few simple steps to help you get familiar with where your money is going. Follow the steps below, and don't forget to check out the helpful tips at the end!

Step 1: Track your spending for one week

Starting from the beginning of the next month, track everything you spend money on for one month. This includes items like snacks, coffee, transportation, and anything else. You can use the chart below or a notes app to write down each expense as it happens. Tracking for one month will give you a full picture of your spending habits. Use the following table as an example to guide your tracking.

Example:

| Purchase | Cost | Date | Category | Notes |
|-------------------------|----------|-------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Rent | \$990.00 | Feb 1 | Personal Spending | Monthly rent payment |
| Bus fare | \$2.00 | Feb 1 | Transportation | Commute to work |
| Grocery shopping | \$35.00 | Feb 1 | Groceries | Weekly groceries |
| Movies | \$12.00 | Feb 2 | Recreation | Weekend movie |
| Coffee | \$3.50 | Feb 4 | Monthly bills | Morning coffee |

My purchases for the month of:

| Purchase | Cost | Date | Category | Notes |
|----------|------|------|----------|-------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Step 2: Categorize your expenses

At the end of each day, organize your expenses into categories such as “Groceries,” “Transportation,” “Entertainment,” and so on. This will help you see where most of your money is going. Check out the example below of how to categorize your spending.

Example:

| Spending Categories | Total Spent |
|---|-------------|
| Groceries <i>Examples: Grocery stores, meal kits, or pet food.</i> | |
| Transportation <i>Examples: Fuel, parking, bus cost, or taxis.</i> | |
| Personal spending <i>Examples: Clothing, personal care, or cosmetics.</i> | |
| Recreation and Entertainment <i>Example: Eating out, events, or travel.</i> | |
| Monthly bills <i>Examples: Rent, insurance, or phone bills.</i> | |
| Savings and debt repayment <i>Examples: Investment contribution or car payment.</i> | |
| Other (any other expenses) | |

Step 3: Review and reflect

Review your list of expenses at the end of the month using the questions that follow. Write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

Question: Were there any purchases you didn't expect?

Question: Did you notice any trends in your spending habits?

Question: What three areas do you spend the most in? Does this align with your values and goals?

Question: What would you like to change about your spending?
What would you like to maintain?

Spend Tracking Tips

Let's explore some tips that can make tracking your spending easier and more effective.

| Tip | Description |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Make it a habit | The more you track your spending, the easier it becomes! Whether you write things down in a notebook or use a phone app, find a method that works for you. |
| Review bank statements | Review your bank statements regularly to track spending and catch any extra charges. You can also use apps or software to track expenses automatically. |
| Keep receipts | Save your receipts and compare them with your bank statements to catch any unexpected spending. |

Section 2: Building Savings

Managing your money isn't just about paying bills. It's also about planning for the future and building savings. Understanding how to save money can help you reach your goals, whether it's buying something important, going on a trip, or preparing for unexpected situations.

In this section, we'll cover:

- Different types of savings.
- How to set realistic savings goals that fit your life.
- Assessing your current savings and habits to make better decisions.

By the end of this section, you will have a better understanding of how to build savings and create a plan to achieve your financial goals. Let's get started!

Engage and Explore

Types of Savings

Savings are a portion of your income that you set aside for future use or any emergencies. Saving money helps you prepare for the future and handle unexpected costs. Whether you're planning for emergencies, a big purchase, or even education, there are different

types of savings accounts to suit your needs. Let's take a look at the most common savings accounts and how to open each one:

| Account | Description | How to open |
|--|--|--|
| High-Interest Savings Accounts (HISA) | A High-Interest Savings Account (HISA) is perfect for short-term savings, such as an emergency fund. It offers a higher interest rate than regular savings accounts, allowing your money to grow faster while still being easily accessible. | You can open a HISA at most banks or credit unions, either online or in person. There are generally no fees, but interest rates can vary, so it's worth comparing rates. |
| Regular savings accounts | Regular savings accounts are the simplest and most common type. They're ideal for every day or short-term savings. It | These accounts are available at most banks or credit unions, and you can usually open one online or in person. Most regular savings |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | offers easy access to your money, but typically with lower interest rates than a HISA. | accounts are free, but some banks may charge a small fee if you don't meet a minimum balance or make a certain number of transactions within a specified timeframe. |
| Guaranteed Investment Certificates (GICs) | A Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC) is a low-risk savings option in which your money is locked in for a set period and earns a guaranteed interest rate. It's great for growing savings you won't need access to for a certain period. | GICs are available at banks and credit unions, either online or in person. They usually don't have fees, but withdrawing early may result in penalties. |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) | <p>If you're saving for education, a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) helps by offering government grants in addition to your contributions, growing your savings faster.</p> | <p>You can open a RESP at a bank, credit union, or investment firm. It's free to open, but you'll need to provide details about the person the account is for.</p> |
|---|---|--|

What to Do If You're Under 18?

If you're under 18, you'll need a parent or guardian to open most savings accounts for you. They'll need to provide their information, and you'll likely need to show ID. Check with your bank or credit union for details.

Savings Strategies

Saving money regularly can be challenging, but having a strategy makes it easier. Here are a few simple ways to help you save more consistently:

| Strategy | Description |
|------------------------------|---|
| Automate your savings | Set up automatic transfers from your checking account to your savings account. This way, you save consistently without thinking about it. For example, if you get paid every two weeks, you can set up an automatic transfer of \$50 from your checking account to your emergency fund right after payday. |
| Sinking fund | A sinking fund is money set aside for specific planned expenses, such as holiday shopping or a vacation. It's different from a security fund because it's for known future costs. For example, saving \$25 a month for holiday gifts will give you a nice budget by the end of the year. |
| Security fund | A security fund is a special savings account for unexpected expenses, such as car repairs or medical bills. It's good to have three to six months of living expenses saved in this fund. By saving a small amount regularly, you'll be ready when the unexpected happens without having to rely on credit or loans. Learn more about setting up your security fund from the Government of Canada: canada.ca/en/financial-consumer- |

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| | agency/services/savings-investments/setting-up-emergency-funds.html |
| Organize your savings | To stay organized, consider using different savings accounts or categories for your goals, such as travel, home repairs, or new phone. This way, you can keep your emergency fund separate from your other savings and avoid using it for non-emergencies. Many banks offer no-fee savings accounts, making it easy to track your progress and see how your savings grow for each goal. |

Setting Realistic Savings Goals

It's important to set goals that are both achievable and suited to your financial situation. Here are some steps to help you set and achieve your savings goals:

| Step | Description |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Check your current savings | Look at how much you're saving now. Are you saving regularly or only when you have extra money? Find areas to cut back and put that money toward savings. For example, making your coffee at home instead of buying it could save you \$50 or more a month. |

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Set specific goals | Having clear, specific savings goals helps keep you focused. Break down large goals into smaller, achievable steps and set deadlines for when you want to achieve them. For example, instead of saying, “I want to save for a vacation,” set a goal like “I will save \$1,200 for my vacation by December 31.” |
| Start small | If saving feels overwhelming, start small. Even a small amount, saved regularly, adds up over time and help you get into the habit of saving. For example, saving \$10 a week for a year will give you \$520 by the end of the year. |
| Make it a habit | Make saving part of your daily routine. Use a jar for spare change, set phone reminders, or place sticky notes to remind you to save. For example, set a reminder to transfer money into your savings account right after payday. |
| Review your goals regularly | As your life changes, so might your savings goals. Review them regularly and adjust as needed. For example, if you get a raise, you could increase your savings or start a new goal. |

Building savings is about knowing what you need and setting goals that match your money priorities. The key is to start **small**, stay **consistent**, and make saving a **regular habit** in your financial routine.

Make it Personal

Set Your Savings Goals and Plan

Let's create a savings plan! Whether you're already saving or just starting, this activity will guide you through the steps to set savings goals and make a plan that works for you. By the end, you'll have a clearer understanding of where you stand and how to build your savings habit.

Write your answers to any questions below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

1. Get a clear picture of your savings

Take a moment to think about your savings. Whether you have any right now or are planning to start, this step will help you figure out where you are and where you want to be.

Think! Do you have savings?

- **Yes:** Awesome! Let's figure out where your money is and how much you have in each place.
- **No:** That's perfectly fine! We'll help you think about where to keep your savings and how to start saving.

If you have savings think about the following...

Question: Where are you keeping your savings?

- *Example: Bank account, envelope, jar.*

Question: How much do you have in each place?

If you don't have savings yet think about the following...

Question: Where do you want to keep your savings?

- *Example: A savings account, separate envelope.*

Question: How much do you want to save each month?

2. Identify your savings goals

Now let's get clear on what you're saving for. Knowing your goals and setting a timeline for each goal helps you stay focused. Your goals may be short-term (two years or less), medium-term (three to five years) or long-term (six years or more).

Here are some common goals to help you think:

- **Emergency fund:** how much do you need to cover unexpected costs, such as car repairs or medical bills? This will give you peace of mind in case of emergencies.
- **Sinking funds:** Think about any expenses you expect over the next year, such as holidays, vacations, or new phones.

- **Large savings goals:** Do you have big purchases in mind, such as a new car, home appliances, or a phone? Let's define these goals.

Question: What is a savings goal you could work toward?

3. Create your savings plan

Now that you know your savings goals, let's figure out how to reach them.

For each goal, ask yourself...

Question: How much money do I need to save?

Question: When do I want to reach this goal?

Tip

Break your larger goals into smaller steps. For example, if you need \$1,200 for a vacation in 12 months, save \$100 each month. Start small and gradually increase the amount when you are able. Setting up automatic transfers can make saving easy and consistent.

4. Reflect and adjust

After setting up your savings goals and plan, it's important to check in regularly to track your progress.

Complete a monthly check-in by answering the following at the end of each month...

Question: Are you hitting your savings targets?

Question: Do you need to save more or adjust your plan?

Tip

Adjust as needed – life changes and so might your savings goals. It's okay to change the amounts you save, the timeline for your goals, or even your savings strategy if needed. The key is to keep moving forward.

Section 3: Understanding Credit and Debt

Managing your credit and debt isn't just about paying off what you owe. It's also about knowing how debt works and making good decisions for your future. Whether you're trying to pay off debt, use credit smartly, or manage both, understanding these basics will help you stay on track.

In this section, we'll cover:

- Understanding what credit and debt are.
- Ways to manage and pay off debt more easily.
- Clearing up common myths about debt.

By the end of this section, you will have a better understanding of how to manage credit and debt and make more informed financial decisions. Let's get started!

Engage and Explore

What are Credit and Debt?

Credit and debt are fundamental parts of managing your finances. Whether you're borrowing for a big purchase like a home, using a credit card, or paying off student loans, it's important to understand how credit works and how debt can impact your financial health. Let's explore what each of these concepts means.

| Credit | Debt |
|---|--|
| <p>Credit is money that you borrow from a lender with the agreement to pay it back later, often with interest. Lenders may include banks or credit unions, credit card companies, or other financial institutions. Your ability to get credit depends on your credit history and credit score, which show lenders how reliable you are in paying back borrowed money.</p> | <p>Debt is what you owe when you borrow money. It comes in different forms, from loans to credit card balances, and it can have different terms, such as interest rates and payment schedules. Debt isn't always bad, but managing it wisely is key to maintaining financial well-being.</p> |

Types of Debt

There are different types of debt, each with conditions. Let's take a look at some of these common types:

| Type of Debt | Description |
|---------------------------|--|
| <p>Credit card</p> | <p>This is money you owe on credit cards. It often comes with high interest rates if not paid off in full every month. Credit card debt can grow</p> |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| | quickly if you only make minimum payments, so paying more than the minimum is a smart move. |
| Loans | Loans can be for things like a home (mortgage), education (student loans), or a car (auto loans). Loans can have either fixed interest rates (which stay the same) or variable interest rates (which can change over time). Knowing the difference helps you plan your payments more effectively. |
| Low versus high interest | Loans or credit with low interest are typically easier to manage because less interest is added to your monthly balance. High-interest debt, like credit cards or payday loans, can grow fast, making it harder to pay off. |
| Fixed vs. variable interest | With fixed interest, your payments stay consistent over time, making it easier to budget. Variable interest means your payments can change based on market conditions, which can make debt management more unpredictable. |

Here's an example to help:







If you borrow \$1,000 on a credit card with high interest and only

make the minimum payment, it will cost you hundreds of extra dollars due to interest. On the other hand, a fixed-rate student loan with low interest will generally cost you less overall if you make regular payments.

Understanding your loan conditions and having a regular payment plan is the best way to ensure you don't pay more than you need to.

Busting Common Debt Myths

Misunderstandings about debt can make it seem scarier than it is. Let's clear up a few common myths.

|  Myth |  Truth |
|---|---|
|  All debt is bad |  Some debt, like a mortgage or student loan, can help you build a future, whether by providing a home or an education. What matters is how you manage your debt. |
|  Debt is a sign of financial irresponsibility |  Most people will have debt at some point, whether it's a loan or credit card balance. |

| | |
|---|--|
| | The key is understanding your debt and having a plan to pay it off. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If someone has a lot of debt, it means they're a bad person | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Debt does not define your character! It's a financial tool that, when managed well, can help you reach your goals. |

Managing Debt

Once you understand debt and the types you might have, it's important to develop strategies to manage it effectively. Check out these strategies below:

| Strategy | Description |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Review your current debt | Start by reviewing all your current debt. Make a list of each debt, its interest rate, and the minimum monthly payment. Then, set a timeline for paying off your debts. This helps you stay focused and motivated as you work toward becoming debt-free. |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Prioritize debt payments</p> | <p>Pay off high-interest debt first, as it costs you the most over time. For example, if you have credit card debt and a student loan, focus on paying down the credit card balance first since it likely has a higher interest rate. Set specific goals for how much you aim to pay off each month and by when so you can track your progress.</p> |
| <p>Make more than the minimum payment</p> | <p>Paying just the minimum can keep you in debt for a long time, especially with high-interest credit cards. Pay more than the minimum whenever possible to reduce your debt faster and save money on interest.</p> |
| <p>File your taxes</p> | <p>Filing your taxes each year can help you access benefits and credits that may assist in repaying your debt. Even with little or no income, filing your tax return is important. If your tax situation is simple and you have a modest income, free tax clinics can assist in filing your return.</p> |
| <p>Avoid taking on more debt</p> | <p>Start saving a little every day by cutting small expenses. This could mean making coffee at home or bringing lunch to work rather than eating out. Avoid "buy now, pay later" plans as they can lead to high fees and more debt if not paid on time. Use your credit card responsibly by sticking to your</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | budget and using cash or debit to avoid spending money you don't have. Reduce banking fees by using ATMs from your bank or credit union and reviewing your bank account package to avoid extra charges. |
|--|---|

Finding Debt Support

If you're struggling with debt, there are trustworthy resources that can help you get back on track.

| Type | Description |
|--|--|
| Accredited non-profit credit counselors | These counselors provide free or low-cost advice to help you evaluate your debt, create a budget, and find ways to pay off your loans. To learn more, check out this Government of Canada resource on getting help from a credit counselor: canada.ca/en/financial-consumer-agency/services/debt/debt-help.html |
| Licensed insolvency trustees (LITs) | If your debt situation is serious, LITs are authorized to help you with debt restructuring or bankruptcy if necessary. They'll help you navigate complex debt situations. To learn more, check out this Government of Canada resource on finding an active licensed |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| | <p>insolvency trustee:</p> <p>ic.gc.ca/app/scr/tds/web/?lang=eng</p> |
| Financial advisors | <p>A financial advisor can help you plan for long-term financial health, ensuring that you manage your debt responsibly and help you make better financial decisions in the future.</p> |

Make it Personal

Debt Payoff Plan

Let's get started on creating a simple plan to pay off your debt. Follow the steps below to list your debts. Write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you. This will help you see what you owe and start planning to pay it off. By the end, you'll have a better understanding of your debt so you can begin to take action.

1. Make a list of all your debts

Start by listing everything you owe. Include the amount, interest rate, minimum payment, due date, and whether the payment is automated.

Example:

| Debt Type | Amount Owed | Interest Rate | Min. Payment | Payment Due Date | Automated (Yes/No) |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Credit card | \$500 | 18% | \$25 | 15 th of month | Yes |
| Car loan | \$5,000 | 5% | \$150 | 1 st of month | No |
| Student loan | \$10,000 | 3% | \$50 | 25 th of month | Yes |

Your debts:

| Debt Type | Amount Owed | Interest Rate | Min. Payment | Payment Due Date | Automated (Yes/No) |
|-----------|-------------|---------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

2. Set your goal

Now, think about your debt repayment goal by answering the following... how much extra money you can put toward your debts.

Question: Which debt will you focus on and how much extra money can you put toward it?

- Example: I will aim to pay off the high-interest credit card debt first or I will work toward the balance on a smallest loan first and I can pay an extra \$50 a month.*

3. Make your payment plan

- **High-interest debts first:** If you're focusing on high-interest debt (like credit cards), make the minimum payments on all other debts and put extra money toward the high-interest debt.
- **Small balance first:** If paying off a small debt first motivates you, go for it! The goal is to keep up the momentum and reduce the number of debts.

Question: What are the details of my debt repayment plan?

Tip

Take a look at your budget and see if there are any areas where you can cut back, like eating out or shopping for non-essentials. Use that extra money to pay down your debt faster!

Reflect and Connect

We've covered a lot in this module, including:

- Exploring strategies to track and manage your day-to-day spending.
- Identifying different types of savings accounts.
- Understanding how credit and debt work.

Take a moment to think about the questions below and how they relate to your experiences. Think of this as a reflective journal for yourself, which you can refer to later.

Happy reflecting!

What's one spending habit you feel good about? How does it help you financially? What's one small change you want to make to manage your spending? Try it this week and see how it goes!



What's a small savings goal you can start with this week?

- *Example: Save \$5 or try a savings strategy, like hiding your savings account balance from your main banking view.*

What's a saving or debt repayment strategy you learned that you'd like to try? Why does it feel like a good fit for you?

What challenges do you think you might face when trying to save or pay off debt? What's one way you can work through those challenges?



Module: Exploring Effective Budgeting

This module covers how to create a personal budget that fits one's financial starting point and goals. It includes exploring budgeting methods and strategies, learning to track income and expenses, and adjusting a budget to stay on track.

Introduction

This module has three sections to help you build skills to create and stick to a budget. You'll explore:

- Creating a budget that works for you.
- Building skills to stick to a budget.
- Identifying financial support options if you're having trouble budgeting your finances.

Each section will take around 15-30 minutes to complete, and you're welcome to take breaks in between.

Each section has activities that connect money management to your own life to make sure this is useful for you. Be prepared to think about and record your answers in whatever way works best. That could be writing your answers in this workbook or using a different format that works for you like voice recording or typing in a notes app.

At the end of the module, you'll have the chance to put what you've learned into practice with reflection questions. Let's get started!

Section 1: Creating a Budget

A budget is a system that helps you manage your money by planning where your money goes and keeping track of your income and expenses. It allows you to make informed decisions about your spending and save for important goals. Creating a budget is an important part of your employment journey because it gives you control over your finances, helps you handle changes in your income, and prepares you for what's coming up.

In this section, we'll cover:

- Identifying your financial priorities to create a budget.
- Building strategies to use your budget.
- Exploring financial support options for when they are needed.

By the end of this section, you will have a better understanding of how to create a budget that works for you. Let's get started!

Engage and Explore

What is a Budget?

A budget is a plan for your money. It helps you keep track of what you earn, spend, and save. Think of it as a tool to guide your financial decisions so you can reach your goals.

Budgeting is important because it helps you:

- Know where your money is going.
- Save for things that matter to you.

- Avoid spending more than you earn.

It gives you control and confidence over your finances!

Ways to Budget

There are different ways to budget. This includes types of budgets and approaches to budgeting. Different things work for different people and figuring out what works well for you is important.

Use the flip cards below to explore common types of budgets. Read the type of budget on the front and click on the card to reveal what it is.

| Approach | Description |
|------------------------|---|
| Fixed budget | Focuses on steady, predictable income and expenses. |
| Flexible budget | Adapts as your income or spending changes. |
| Digital budget | Use apps or spreadsheets to track everything automatically. |

Great! Now that you've looked at different types of budgets let's explore different ways to allocate your money to them. Use the flip

cards below to explore common approaches to budgeting. Read the approach on the front and click on the card to reveal more about it.

| Type | Description |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 50/30/20 | Spend 50% on needs, 30% on wants, and save 20%. |
| Envelope method | Use envelopes of cash for specific categories such as groceries, rent, or entertainment. Once the envelope is empty, you stop spending in that category. |
| Zero-based budgeting | Every dollar of income is assigned a purpose. Your income minus your expenses, savings, and investments will equal zero at the end of the month. This means you plan for every dollar. If there's extra money, you allocate it to savings, debt repayment, or other priorities. |

Now that you've explored some different ways of budgeting let's take some time to reflect on them.

Make it Personal

Setting Financial Priorities

Now that you've explored what a budget is and why it's important, it's time to make it personal. Follow these steps to create a budget that works for you.

Let's start by considering your financial priorities. This means thinking about what's most important to you when it comes to money.

Tip

Remember, priorities aren't the only thing you should be using your money for. They just mean that's where you should consider budgeting a bit more or where you should direct extra money if you have any.

Use the question and instructions below to identify your financial priorities.

| Question 1: Are your bills covered, yes or no? | |
|--|---|
| Yes: Continue to the next question. | No: Covering your essential expenses is your suggested financial priority. |

Tips for covering essential expenses:

- Try focusing on lowering your expenses where possible and increasing your income.
- Try tracking your spending to see if there are any areas where you can cut back.
- Look at different budgeting methods to help you manage your income and expenses.

Question 2: Do you have a three to six month security fund, yes or no?

Yes: Continue to the next question.

No: Building a security fund is your suggested financial priority.

Tips for building a security fund:

- Aim to save three to six months' worth of essential expenses in a separate, easily accessible account.
- Start small. Setting aside even a small amount regularly can help build your fund over time.
- Consider automating your savings so a portion of your income goes directly into your security fund.

Question 3: Do you have any high-interest debt, yes or no?

Yes: Paying off any debt with an interest rate of 10% or higher is your suggested financial priority.

No: Continue to the next question.

Tips for paying off high-interest debt:

- Focus on paying off debts with the highest interest rates first (like credit cards or payday loans).
- Consider the snowball method (paying off the smallest debts first for motivation) or the avalanche method (paying off the highest interest debts first to save money).
- If possible, look into consolidating or refinancing your debt to lower your interest rates.

Question 4: Is there anything you're saving up for in the coming years, yes or no?

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Yes: Prioritizing savings for short- and long-term goals is your suggested financial priority.</p> | <p>No: Your other financial priorities are covered! Your suggested priority is investing your money.</p> |
|--|---|

Tips for prioritizing short- and long-term savings:

- Determine your savings priorities, whether it's education, travel, a car, or a down payment on a home.
- Use separate savings accounts or categories for different goals to stay organized.

Tips for investing your money:

- Consider investing in a TFSA or RRSP for long-term savings growth.

This financial priorities activity is largely based on Ellyce Fulmore's, 2022, Financial Priorities Flowchart available through queerdco.com.

Creating a Budget

Now that you have a clearer idea of where to focus your money. Use the steps below to help you create a budget. Follow the steps below and write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

1. Calculate your monthly income

The next step is to figure out how much money you have coming in. Include any sources of income, like paycheques, allowances, side hustles, or government benefits.

Tip

If you need help calculating your income visit *Section 3* on income and expenses in the *Setting a Financial Foundation* module.

Think: The amount of money I have coming in is...

2. Track your spending

Look at how much you spend in a typical month to allocate your money to the things you need.

Tip

If you need help looking at how much you spend in a month visit *Section 1* on Spending in the *Building Money Management Skills* module.

Think: The amount of money I spend in a typical month is...

3. Set Your budget categories

Using what you learned, set your budgeting categories and list your expenses under each one to decide how much to allocate to each one. Write your answers in the table below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

Tip

Remember, it's okay to adjust as you go. Make sure your expenses don't exceed your income!

Example:

| Category 1: Groceries |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular Grocery Shops• Costco• Pet Food |

Your Categories

| Category 1: Groceries |
|-----------------------|
| |

| Category 2: Transportation |
|----------------------------|
| |

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Category 3: Personal spending

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Category 4: Recreation and entertainment

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Category 5: Monthly bills

Category 6: Savings and debt repayment

Category 7: Other

4. Track your progress

Create a system to track your spending and savings. Use the chart below or a different method that works for you. Consider a budgeting app or reminders to help.

| Purchase | Cost | Date | Category | Notes |
|----------|------|------|----------|-------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

| Spending Categories | | | | Total Spent |
|---|--|--|--|-------------|
| Groceries <i>Examples: Grocery stores, meal kits, or pet food.</i> | | | | |
| Transportation <i>Examples: Fuel, parking, bus cost, or taxis.</i> | | | | |
| Personal spending <i>Examples: Clothing, personal care, or cosmetics.</i> | | | | |
| Recreation and Entertainment <i>Example: Eating out, events, or travel.</i> | | | | |
| Monthly bills <i>Examples: Rent, insurance, or phone bills.</i> | | | | |
| Savings and debt repayment <i>Examples: Investment contribution or car payment.</i> | | | | |
| Other (any other expenses) | | | | |

Great work making a budget! It can seem daunting at first, but consistency is key. The more you do it the easier it gets.

Section 2: Developing a Budgeting Strategy

Now that you've created your budget, it's time to focus on sticking to it! The key to making a budget work is consistently following it and adjusting when needed. Sticking to your budget can help you stay on track with your financial goals and avoid overspending. It's not just about the numbers. It's about building habits and setting up systems that make it easier to manage your money day-to-day.

In this section, we'll cover:

- Strategies for keeping on top of tracking your money and sticking to your budget.
- Strategies for handling changes like unexpected expenses.
- Strategies for reflecting on your approach and adjusting as needed.

By the end of this section, you will have a better understanding of practical strategies to help you stick to your budget and feel more confident. Let's get started!

Engage and Explore

Committing to Your Budget

Creating a budget is a great start, but keeping up with it is the important part. Building habits and strategies to stay on track with your spending and saving will help you achieve your financial goals.

Let's explore some practical tips to help you stick to the budget you've created.

Why Do People Struggle to Stick to a Budget?

Before we explore strategies, let's look at some common challenges that cause people to not keep up with their budget. These can include:

- Unexpected expenses that throw off your plan.
- Impulse purchases that lead to overspending.
- Not having a budgeting system that works and stopping tracking income and expenses.

Don't worry – these challenges are normal. Sometimes, expenses will come up or you will spend a little more than planned. It's important to be kind to yourself during these times and use your budget as a tool to help! The strategies below can help you do this and stick to your budget.

Strategies for Sticking to Your Budget

Check-out the strategies below to learn helpful tips for keeping up with a budget.

| Strategy | Description |
|------------------------|--|
| Set clear goals | Define what you're working toward with your budget. Are you saving for a |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| | vacation, paying off debt, or building an emergency fund? Clear goals keep you motivated! |
| Track your spending | Monitor your spending regularly using an app, spreadsheet, or notebook. Tracking helps you stay aware of where your money is going. |
| Plan for the unexpected | Build a small emergency fund into your budget to cover unexpected expenses, like car repairs or medical bills. |
| Review and adjust regularly | Life changes, and so can your budget! Review your budget monthly and adjust it to fit your current needs and goals. |
| Reward yourself | Celebrate your progress! Set small rewards for meeting budget goals to stay motivated and enjoy the process. |

Now that you've explored some strategies, take a moment to think...

Question: Which of these strategies do you think would work best for you?

Question: What are some challenges you've faced with sticking to a budget in the past?

Question: How could you use one of these tips to handle unexpected expenses in the future?

Make it Personal

Your Budgeting Strategies

Now it's time to put what you've learned into action. This activity will help you identify strategies you'll use to stick to your budget and prepare for challenges that could come up. Follow the steps and write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

1. Choose your strategies

Start by selecting the strategies you think will work best for you.

Here are some examples to get you started:

- **Set clear goals:** *Write down one or two financial goals your budget will help you achieve.*
- **Track your spending:** *Decide how you'll monitor your spending (e.g., app, spreadsheet, notebook).*
- **Plan for emergencies:** *Set aside a small amount each month for unexpected expenses.*

- **Reward yourself:** *Think about a small, affordable way to celebrate when you stick to your budget.*

Question: What are one or two strategies you'll commit to using?

Question: How could you use each strategy in your life?

2. Anticipate challenges

Think about a scenario that might make it hard to stick to your budget. For example:

- *An unexpected expense, like car repairs or a last-minute trip.*
- *Impulse buying, like shopping for things you don't really need.*
- *Forgetting to track your spending regularly.*

Question: What's a scenario that will likely come up that will make it challenging for you to stick to a budget?

Question: What will you do to overcome this challenge?

Tip

Think, which strategy could help you in this situation?

3. Create your action plan

Put it all together! Summarize the strategies you'll use and how you'll handle challenges. Write your answers in the table below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

Example:

| My Budget Strategy | Challenge It Will Help Me Overcome | How I'll Use It |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Tracking spending | Forgetting where my money is going. | Use a budgeting app to automatically track and organize my spending. |
| Setting clear goals | Prioritizing spending over saving. | Set up an automatic deposit of \$25 a month into my savings account to build a security fund. |

My Strategies:

| My Budget Strategy | Challenge It Will Help Me Overcome | How I'll Use It |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Section 3: Identifying Financial Support Options

Sometimes despite our best efforts to stick to a budget, we face challenges, and it might feel tough or even impossible to do. Whether it's high cost of living, job loss, or unexpected expenses that come up, it can be overwhelming when the funds we have don't cover our expenses. It's important to remember that it's okay to need help, and there are support options you can try and reach out to when you need them.

In this section, we'll cover:

- Understanding the different types of financial support available.
- Exploring various reputable support options for when you need them.
- Strategies for accessing support.

By the end of this section, you will have a better understanding of where to turn for help when you need it and feel more confident reaching out to that support. Let's get started!

Engage and Explore

Seeking Financial Support

Sometimes, life throws challenges your way that make it difficult to manage a budget. Whether it's high costs, job loss, or an

unexpected expense, it's okay to ask for help. Knowing where to turn and how to access support can make all the difference. Let's explore the resources and strategies you can use to get the financial help you need.

Types of Financial Support

There are different types of financial support available depending on your situation. Learn more about them below:

| Type | Description |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Government programs | These include benefits like unemployment insurance, housing assistance, and income support programs designed to help when times are tough. |
| Community resources | Nonprofits and local organizations often offer help, like food banks, utility assistance, or financial counseling services. |
| Credit and debt support | Many organizations can help with debt consolidation, credit |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| | counseling, or negotiating lower payments with creditors. |
| Family and friends | Sometimes, reaching out to loved ones can provide temporary help or emotional support when facing financial difficulties. |

Strategies for Accessing Financial Support

When you need help, knowing how to access support is key and these strategies are here to help with that process. Check-out each one to learn more:

| Strategy | Description |
|-------------------------|--|
| Do your research | Look up local and online resources to find programs or organizations that align with your needs. |
| Ask questions | Contact support organizations and ask about eligibility, how to apply, and what documentation you'll need. |

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Start small | If asking for help feels overwhelming, start with one resource or a trusted individual to begin the process. |
| Stay organized | Keep track of your applications, follow-ups, and deadlines to make sure you don't miss out on opportunities. |

Looking for Safe Support Options

It's important to make sure that the help you're seeking is safe and trustworthy. Here's some strategies to do that:

| Strategy | Description |
|---------------------------|--|
| Look for reviews | Search online reviews or testimonials from others who've used the service. |
| Verify credentials | Ensure the organization is officially registered and credible. |

Avoid scams

Be cautious of any service that requires upfront payment or asks for sensitive personal information unnecessarily.

Make it Personal

Identifying Financial Support Options

Now it's time to take what you've learned about financial support and connect it to your own life. This activity will help you identify the resources and strategies that fit your needs and prepare you to seek help if you ever need it. Follow the steps below and write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

1. Identify potential resources

Think about the financial challenges you might face and the support options that could help. Consider:

- Government programs
- Community resources
- Trusted family or friends

Record your resources in the table below or another way that works for you. List at least two potential resources you could turn to and how they might help:

Example:

| Resource Name | Type of Support | How it Can Help |
|---|--------------------|--|
| University Food Bank | Community resource | Can provide groceries if tough times come up while I am in school. |
| BC Access Grant for Students with Disabilities | Government support | Provides additional financial support while I am in university. |

Your resources:

| Resource Name | Type of Support | How it Can Help |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
| | | |

2. Plan your next step

Think about the steps you would take to access support if needed using the questions below.

Question: What is the first step you would take to reach out to support?

- *Example: Looking up a program or resource online, contacting an organization to ask questions, or talking to someone you trust for advice or guidance.*

Question: What would your next step to reach out for support be?

- *Example: Call the local community center to ask about financial counseling services.*

3. Overcome challenges

Sometimes it can be hard to ask for help. Identify a challenge you might face when seeking support and how you'll address it by thinking about the questions below.

Question: What might stop you from reaching out for help?

- *Example: feeling embarrassed, not knowing where to start.*

Question: How will you work past this challenge?

- *Example: remind yourself that asking for help is a strength or ask a trusted person for advice.*



Reflect and Connect

We've covered a lot in this module, including:

- How to create a budget and set financial priorities.
- Strategies to stick to your budget and manage challenges.
- How to seek out financial support when needed.

Take a moment to think about the questions below and how they relate to your experiences. Think of this as a reflective journal for yourself, which you can refer to later.

Happy reflecting!

How do you think having a budget can help you reach your financial goals?

Which budgeting approach or type sounds most useful to you, and why?

What is one small action you could take this week to help you create or stick to a budget?

Which strategy will you try to help you stay on budget? How confident do you feel about using this strategy?

How does knowing about financial support options help you feel more prepared for unexpected challenges?

What resources or support systems can you turn to if you need financial help?



Module: Fostering Financial Futures

This module covers planning for the future, including building a plan for long-term savings, understanding safe investing options, and seeking trustworthy financial advice.

Introduction

This module has three sections to help you build skills to manage your financial future. You'll explore:

- The importance of good credit and how it impacts your financial life.
- An introduction to safe investing and different types of investment accounts.
- When and how to seek professional financial advice.

Each section will take around 15-30 minutes to complete, and you're welcome to take breaks in between.

Each section has activities that connect money management to your own life to make sure this is useful for you. Be prepared to think about and record your answers in whatever way works best. That could be writing your answers in this workbook or using a different format that works for you like voice recording or typing in a notes app.

At the end of the module, you'll have the chance to put what you've learned into practice with reflection questions. Let's get started!

Section 1: Building Credit

Building good credit is an important part of managing your finances. Credit affects your ability to borrow money, rent a home, and even get certain jobs. Understanding how credit works and knowing your credit score can help you make smarter financial decisions.

In this section, we'll cover:

- Building credit and understanding the importance of having good credit.
- Where to check your credit score and what it means.
- Simple ways to improve and maintain a good credit score.

By the end of this section, you will have a better understanding of credit and practical steps you can take to build and maintain it. Are you ready to learn more about how credit affects your financial future?

Let's get started!

Engage and Explore

Credit Card Statement

A credit card statement is a detailed summary of how you've used your credit card over a specific billing period. It shows important details like how much you owe and when your payment is due. Your credit card company or bank will usually send this statement

monthly, either by mail or online. You can check it through your bank or credit union's website or app or request a paper copy.

It's a good idea to check your statement regularly so you know how much you need to pay and when. While the format and terms may vary depending on your bank, here are common terms you'll find on a credit card statement:

Credit Card Statement

Your name
Address

Account number
Date

1

Account Summary:

- Total Credit Limit: \$5,000
- Available Credit: \$3,250
- Previous Balance: \$800
- New Balance: \$1,750

2

Payment Information:

- Payment Due Date: February 10, 2025
- Total Payment Due: \$1,750
- Minimum Payment Due: \$50

3

Interest and Fees:

- Interest Charged: \$25
- Late Fee (if applicable): N/A

- 1. Account summary:** This section shows your total credit limit, how much credit you have left to use, and how much you owe (new balance).
 - **Total credit limit:** The maximum credit amount available on your account.
 - **Available credit:** The remaining credit that you can still use.
 - **Previous balance:** The balance carried over from the previous statement.
 - **New balance:** The total amount owed, including new purchases, fees, and interest.

- 2. Payment information:** This is the amount you need to pay by the due date to avoid extra charges. If you can't pay everything, make sure you at least pay the minimum amount.
 - **Payment due date:** The date by which your payment must be made.
 - **Total payment due:** The total balance you need to pay, including all transactions, interest, and fees.
 - **Minimum payment due:** The minimum amount you must pay by the due date to avoid late fees and penalties.

- 3. Interest and fees:** These are extra charges if you don't pay your bill on time or spend more than your credit limit. Interest is charged on what you still owe, and fees can be added for late payments or going over your credit limit.

Credit Score

Your credit score is a three-digit number that shows how well you manage credit. You earn points for using credit responsibly and lose points if you have trouble managing it. Your score changes over time as your credit report updates.

Lenders don't share the exact formulas they use to calculate credit scores. However, factors such as your credit history, missed payments, debts, credit card balances, and any record of bankruptcy may affect your credit score. Lenders use your score to decide if they'll lend you money and set their own minimum score requirements. If your score is good, you might be able to negotiate lower interest rates.

How to Check Your Credit Score

There are a few ways you can check your credit score and it's important to know that checking your own score through any of these methods does **not** affect your credit score. These are called **soft inquiries** and are different from hard inquiries, which can temporarily lower your score. Check out some way for checking your credit score below:

| Way to Check | Description |
|---|--|
| Through your bank or credit card provider | Many banks and credit card companies offer free credit score checks as part of their |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| | online banking, mobile apps, or in-person at their branches. |
| Credit monitoring services | There are several free or paid services that give you access to your credit score. These services can also alert you to any big changes in your score. |
| Directly from credit agencies | You can get your credit score from companies that track credit information, though they may charge a small fee. |

Tip

A hard inquiry happens when a lender checks your credit report to decide whether to approve new credit. This can happen when you apply for a new credit card, a mortgage, a loan, or ask for a higher credit limit on an existing card. Hard inquiries can lower your credit score a little, so it's a good idea not to apply for too many credit accounts in a short period.

Improving Your Credit Score

Having a good credit score is important for many financial situations, from getting approved for loans to receiving better interest rates. If your credit score isn't where you want it to be, there are some simple strategies you can use to improve and maintain it. Here are some strategies:

| Strategy | Description |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Keep your credit usage low | One of the key factors in your credit score is how much of your available credit you're using. Try to keep your credit usage below 30% of your total limit. For example, if your credit limit is \$1,000, aim to carry a balance of no more than \$300. This shows lenders that you're using credit responsibly and not overspending. |
| Pay your bills | Paying your bills on time is one of the most important things you can do to improve your credit score. Set reminders to ensure you pay your credit cards, loans, and utility bills by their due dates. You could set up an automatic payment from your chequing account for fixed bills that don't change each month. If possible, pay more than the |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>minimum payment on your credit cards to reduce your balance faster and save on interest.</p> |
| <p>Don't apply for too much credit</p> | <p>Applying for a new credit card or loan can lower your credit score a little. If you apply for too many in a short time, it can hurt your score even more. Having different types of credit helps but avoid applying for too much. Only apply when you really need it.</p> |
| <p>Keep old credit cards open</p> | <p>The length of your credit history impacts your score, so if you have older credit cards or loans that you've managed well, keep them open even if you don't use them much. Closing old accounts can shorten your credit history, which may lower your score.</p> |
| <p>Pay off debts</p> | <p>Reducing the amount you owe can positively impact your credit score. If you can, focus on paying off any outstanding balances, especially high-interest debts. This not only improves your credit but also helps you save on interest.</p> |

Have different types of credit

Having different types of credit, such as credit cards, loans, lines of credit, or a mortgage, can benefit your score. It shows lenders you can handle a variety of credit accounts responsibly. However, this does not mean you should take on more credit just to diversify. Only take on new credit if it fits your financial needs and you can manage it well.

Make it Personal

Credit Builder Maze

Building your credit is one of the most powerful steps toward financial freedom. It might feel like a big task, but don't worry. Starting small is the key.

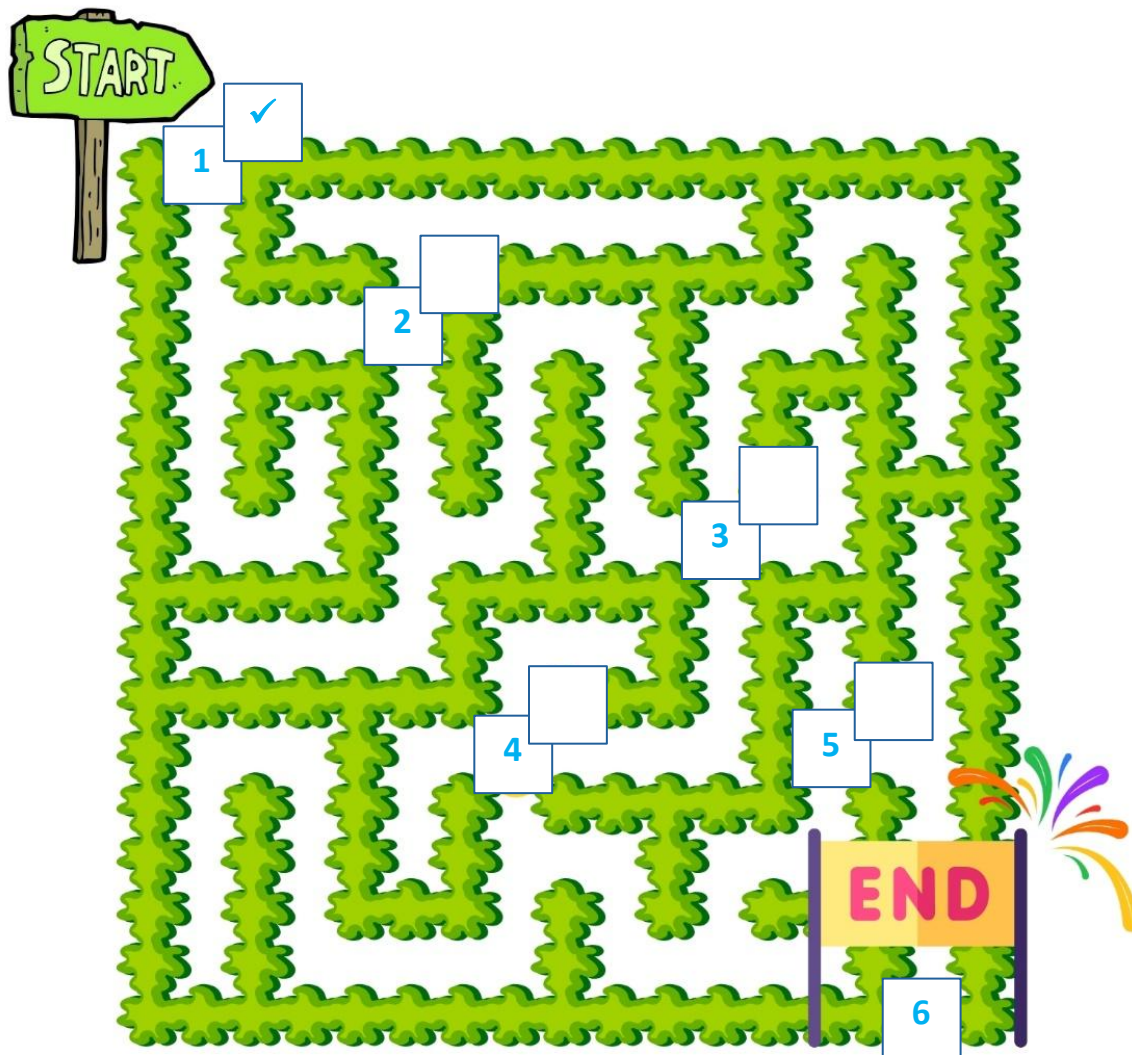
In the maze below, you'll move through different actions that help improve your credit score. Each step brings you closer to your goal of a stronger financial future.

How to play:

- Start at the beginning of the maze.
- For each numbered step, complete the credit-building action.
- Once you complete an action, mark it with a checkmark and move to the next step.
- Keep going until you reach the end of the maze!

Remember, building and improving your credit score takes time, so keep at it! Every small step counts, and over time, you'll see positive results. Ready to get started?

Don't have a credit card yet? Check below for options that can help you start building your credit.



1. Action: Get familiar with the credit builder maze

What you'll do: Read the instructions and get familiar with how to complete the maze.

Tip

You've already completed this step by reading the instructions above. Great work – we've filled in the check mark for you! Keep it going to step two.

2. Action: Review your credit card statement

What you'll do: Check your most recent credit card statement for key details such as your balance, payment due date, and interest fees.

3. Action: Pay off your debt

What you'll do: Look at any outstanding debt and focus on paying it off, starting with the one with the highest interest rate. If you can't pay it off right now, pay as much as you can.

4. Action: Keep your credit usage low

What you'll do: Check how much of your credit limit you're using. Keep your balance under 30% of your total credit limit. If you're close to your limit, try to reduce your balance or request a higher credit limit.

5. Action: Make your payments on time

What you'll do: Set a reminder for your next payment due date and aim to pay more than the minimum if possible. On-time payments help boost your credit score over time.

6. Action: Congratulate yourself

What you'll do: Be proud of your great work! Remember these actions and try to keep them going.

Build Credit Without a Credit Card

If you don't have a credit card yet, there are other ways to start building your credit. Check them out below:

| Way to Start | Description |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Become an authorized user | You can ask someone you trust, like a parent or caregiver, to add you as an authorized user on their credit card. This can help you build credit by using their positive payment history. |
| Try a secured credit card | A secured credit card needs a deposit to set your credit limit. For example, if you deposit \$200, your credit limit will be \$200. This is a good way to start building your credit if you're new to credit or trying to improve your score. |

Section 2: Navigating Investments

Managing investments is an important part of building your financial future. By learning to invest wisely, you can grow your money over time and achieve your financial goals, such as saving for retirement, buying a home, or funding education.

In this section, we'll cover:

- The basics of safe investing, including different types of investment accounts.
- The importance of diversifying your investments to reduce risk.
- Understanding the balance between risk and potential return.

By the end of this section, you will have a better understanding of how to approach investing and make smart decisions for your future. Let's get started!

Engage and Explore

Types of Investment Accounts

Investing can seem overwhelming, but understanding the basics helps you make smarter choices. Unlike saving, which keeps your money in safe secure accounts that grow slowly, investing involves risk but can help your money and assets grow faster. The key is finding the right balance that works for you.

There are several ways to invest your money, and choosing the right account is important. You can explore a full list of investment accounts on the BC Securities Commission Website:

- investright.org/understand-investing/investment-accounts

Here are two of the most popular options:

| Option 1: Tax-free Savings Account (TFSA) | |
|--|--|
| What it is | A TFSA allows you to save or invest money without paying taxes on any earnings you make from your investments. |
| Why it's good | You don't pay tax when you take the money out, and you can invest in a variety of things such as stocks, bonds, or mutual funds. |
| Who it's for | This is great for anyone looking to save for medium- or long-term goals while enjoying tax-free growth. |
| Contribution limits | The contribution limit can change each year. If you don't contribute the maximum one year, you can add the difference to your limit in |

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| | future years. Keep in mind that over-contributing will result in penalties. |
| How to open it | You can open a TFSA through most banks, credit unions, or investment companies. |

| Option 2: Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) | |
|--|---|
| What it is | An RRSP helps Canadians save for retirement. The money you put in can reduce the amount of taxes you pay that year. |
| Why it's good | Contributions are tax-deductible, which means you get a tax break now, but you'll pay taxes when you withdraw the money later (ideally during retirement when you might be in a lower tax bracket). |
| Who it's for | If you're saving for retirement, this is a great way to grow your savings while reducing your taxes in the short term. |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Contribution limits | The contribution limit is based on a percentage of your earned income, up to a maximum limit that can change annually. Unused contribution is carried forward to future years. |
| How to open it | Opening an RRSP is similar to a TFSA and can be done through banks, credit unions, or investment companies. |

Tips

- You can find the most recent contribution limits for TFSAs and RRSPs by visiting the Canada Revenue Agency Website: canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/registered-plans-administrators/pspa/mp-rrsp-dpsp-tfsa-limits-ympe.html
- It's a good idea to open a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA) or a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) early, even if you don't have money to contribute right away. By opening these accounts, you can start to increase your yearly maximum limits so you can contribute more in the future.

Types of Investments

Investments come in many forms, and the best one for you depends on your goals and how comfortable you are with risk. Here are a few common types of investments you might consider:

| Stocks (equities or shares) | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| What it is | Buying shares of a company gives you partial ownership in that company. People talk about “buying two or three shares of a company” or “having stock in a company.” |
| Potential | Stocks can offer high returns but come with higher risk. If the company does well, your investment may grow, but your stock’s value may drop if the company struggles. |
| Example | You buy shares of a technology company. The company grows and your stock increases in value, so you sell some of your shares to make a profit. Later, the market changes and your stock loses value, so your remaining shares are worth less than you bought them for. |

| Bonds | |
|-------------------|--|
| What it is | A bond is like a loan you give to a government or company. In return, they promise to pay you back with interest over time. |
| Potential | Bonds are generally considered safer than stocks but offer lower returns. They're a good way to earn steady income. |
| Example | You invest in a Government of Canada bond, which can have terms like five years, 10 years, or other lengths. You receive interest every year, and when the bond ends, you get your original investment back. |

| Mutual Funds | |
|---------------------|---|
| What it is | Mutual funds pool money from many investors to buy a mix of stocks, bonds, or other assets. A professional manager handles the investments. |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Potential | This can be a good option if you want a diversified portfolio without having to manage the investments yourself. |
| Example | You invest \$5,000 in a mutual fund that holds stocks from Canadian companies. If the companies do well, your investment might grow; if they don't, it could decrease. |

| Guaranteed Investment Certificates (GICs) | |
|--|---|
| What it is | GICs are low-risk investments where you lend money to a bank for a fixed period and earn interest. |
| Potential | You're guaranteed to get your initial investment back, plus interest. However, the returns are typically lower than stocks or mutual funds. |
| Example | You invest \$5,000 in a two-year GIC at a fixed interest rate of 2%, and at the end of the term, you'll get \$5,100. |

Diversifying Investments

Diversifying means lowering your risk by spreading your money across different types of investments. If one investment doesn't do well, others might balance it out. This can help reduce the chance of losing money and gives you a better chance for steady returns. For example, if you invest 50% in stocks, 30% in bonds, and 20% in GICs, even if the stock market drops, your bonds and GICs can still give you steady returns, reducing the impact of stock losses.

Risk Versus Return

When investing, it's important to understand that **higher returns** often come with **higher risks**. Before making any decisions, consider how comfortable you are with taking risks. This is known as your risk tolerance. You can take a risk tolerance quiz on the Government of Canada website to better understand your comfort with risk: <https://itools-ioutils.fcac-acfc.gc.ca/yft-vof/eng/invest-1-8.aspx>

There are several types of risk to be aware of. Check them out below:

| Type | Description |
|--------------------|---|
| Market risk | The risk that your investment could lose value if the market goes down. |

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Inflation risk | The risk that your investment won't grow enough to keep up with the rising cost of living. |
| Liquidity risk | The risk that you can't sell your investment quickly if you need the money. |

Tips

- Investing doesn't have to be done alone. Many people work with a financial advisor or investment professional to help them understand their options and make informed choices.
- Remember, investing involves costs such as buying and selling fees (which you pay when you trade investments) and management fees (which you pay to professionals or companies to manage your investments). You can use this investment fee calculator to understand how fees affect your returns:
investright.org/tools-resources/calculators/investment-fee-calculator
- For more guidance, you can check out these video playlists on topics like being a passive or active investor, choosing investments, and more: investright.org/tools-resources/elearning/get-started-with-investing/get-started-with-investing-the-basics/have-you-considered-investing/

Make it Personal

Create Your Safe Investment Checklist

Investing can be tricky but understanding what to look for can help you make smart choices. This activity will help you figure out what to avoid in risky investments and guide you in choosing safer options. By making your own checklist, you'll know exactly what to look for and to avoid. It's important to keep this list updated so you stay on track and make the best decisions for your financial future.

Follow each step below to create your personal investment checklist. This will help you choose safer investment options that fit your financial goals. Write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

1. Create your red flags list

Red flags are things that warn you an investment might not be safe. Write down at least five red flags you should avoid when choosing investments. Here are a few examples to get you started:

- *Promises of quick and high returns with little to no risk.*
- *Investments that you don't fully understand.*
- *Lack of transparency or clear information.*
- *High fees for buying, selling, or managing the investment.*
- *Feeling pressured to make quick decisions without enough time to research.*

Question: What are your investment red flags?

2. Pick investments options

Now that you know what to look for and what to avoid, consider exploring investment accounts like a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA) to hold your investments and earn money tax-free. After that, choose one or two safe investment options to explore based on what you're comfortable with regarding risk and return. These might include:

- **Bonds:** When you lend money to a government or company for a set period, and they pay you interest over time. Bonds are usually safer than stocks. You can buy bonds through banks or investment firms.
- **Mutual funds:** A collection of different investments (stocks, bonds, etc.) managed by a professional. This can be a good option if you want to invest in a variety of things without having to manage each one yourself.
- **Guaranteed Investment Certificates (GICs):** A low-risk investment where you lend money to a bank, and they pay you interest. You'll get your money back at the end of the term (like one year, two years, etc.).

Question: What are one or two safe investment options you would like to explore?

3. Do your research

For each investment you've listed, think about some things you should research before deciding. This step is important to make sure you're choosing the right investment for your situation. Use the example chart below to help you. Write your answers in the blank chart provided or in a notes app or another digital platform that works for you.

| Investment Option: Bonds | |
|---|--|
| The return <i>How much money you could make from this investment over time.</i> | Research: How much the bond will pay you. |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>The fees <i>What fees you have to pay to buy, sell, or manage the investment.</i></p> | <p>Research: Is the government or company that is issuing the bond reliable?</p> |
| <p>The risks <i>What could go wrong with the investment? Is there a chance you could lose money?</i></p> | <p>Research: This is when the bond will be paid back. For example, a five-year bond means you will get your money back after five years.</p> |
| <p>The time commitment <i>How long you need to hold the investment. Some investments may require you to lock in your money for a set period, which could impact your financial flexibility.</i></p> | <p>Research: How the issuer has performed in the past, particularly in terms of paying back debts. While past performance doesn't guarantee future results, it can offer insight into the issuer's reliability.</p> |

Research your own:

| Investment Option 1: | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| The return | |
| The fees | |
| The risks | |
| The time commitment | |

| <i>(Optional)</i> Investment Option 2: | |
|---|--|
| The return | |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| The fees | |
| The risks | |
| The time commitment | |

Section 3: Seeking Financial Advice

Managing your finances can feel overwhelming, and sometimes it's helpful to seek advice from someone who understands money better. Knowing when and where to look for financial advice is important for making informed decisions about your financial future.

In this section, we'll cover:

- When and where to seek reliable financial advice.
- Tips for evaluating advice to make sure it's right for you.
- How to avoid common mistakes when looking for financial help.

By the end of this section, you'll have a better understanding of how to seek financial advice that suits your needs and helps you make smart financial choices. Let's explore how the right advice can lead to a better financial future! Let's get started!

Engage and Explore

What is Financial Advice?

Financial advice refers to guidance and recommendations about managing your money, investments, and financial goals. It can help you make informed decisions about planning for the future, paying off debt, investing, and preparing for retirement.

Let's explore when to ask for financial advice and how to get it.

When to ask for financial advice

| Event | Description |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Starting to save or invest | When you're thinking about saving for retirement, buying a house, or starting an investment, professional guidance can make the process easier and more effective. |
| Dealing with debt | If you have a lot of debt and are unsure how to manage it, a financial advisor can help you create a plan to pay it off in a way that works for you. |
| Life changes | Big life events like getting married, caring for a child, or retiring all impact your finances. Financial advice can help you prepare and adjust for these changes. |
| Handling taxes | If taxes confuse you, or you think you could be saving more money, a financial advisor can simplify the process and potentially help you reduce your tax payments. |

How to get financial advice

| Way | Description |
|---|---|
| Banks and credit unions | <p>These places often have staff who can help you understand and buy basic financial products, like savings accounts, Guaranteed Investment Certificates (GICs), and mutual funds.</p> <p>They can also help with savings plans like Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) or Tax-Free Savings Accounts (TFSAs).</p> |
| Stockbrokers and mutual fund dealers | <p>These professionals help with buying and selling investments like stocks (ownership shares in companies), bonds (loans you give to companies or governments, which they pay back with interest), and mutual funds (where money from many people is combined and invested in stocks and bonds).</p> <p>They can also help with registered savings plans like Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs).</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| Insurance companies | <p>Insurance companies have advisors who can help with investment options like mutual funds, segregated funds (similar to mutual funds but with some insurance protection), and annuities (which provide regular payments, often for retirement). They also offer life and health insurance.</p> |
| Independent financial planning companies or consultants | <p>These advisors provide detailed financial advice and personalized planning. Some are registered to sell financial products, while others charge a fee for advice.</p> <p>They're helpful for long-term financial goals and customized guidance.</p> |

Evaluating Financial Advice

Not everyone who calls themselves a financial advisor or planner has the right training or qualifications. In some areas, anyone can use these titles, even without special certifications.

That's why it's important to check their background and understand how they're paid. Keep reading to find out how to make sure you're getting advice from someone who is qualified and has your best interests in mind:

| Step | Description |
|---|---|
| Check credentials and registration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the National Registration Search to check if the advisor is registered: info.securities-administrators.ca/nrsmobile/nrssearch.aspx • Check if they are registered with regulatory organizations like the Canadian Investment Regulatory Organization (CIRO): ciro.ca/ • Make sure they have the right qualifications. For financial planners, there are three common designations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Certified Financial Planner ○ Personal Financial Planner ○ Registered Financial Planner. • Ask about their education and experience to make sure they specialize in the area you need help with. |
| Understand fees and compensation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisors may charge an hourly fee, earn a commission, or take a percentage of your assets under management. Ask how they are compensated. • Advisors who earn a commission may be biased toward products that benefit them |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| | financially. Be aware of potential conflicts of interest. |
| Ask for references | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for references from previous clients to ensure the advisor has a good track record. |

Avoiding Common Mistakes

There are a few common mistakes people make when looking for financial advice. Here are some of them to watch out for:

| Common Mistake | Description |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Not asking enough questions | Ask lots of questions. The more you know about your advisor's qualifications, fees, and methods, the better decisions you can make. |
| Relying on one source | It's important to cross-check advice and get opinions from multiple sources to ensure you're on the right path. |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Not understanding fees | Make sure you know exactly how your advisor is compensated and what you'll be charged for their services. |
| Ignoring conflicts of interest | Remember that some advisors may have financial reasons that could affect their advice. It's important to ask if they are connected to any of the products they recommend. |

Make it Personal

Meeting with Your Financial Advisor

Asking the right questions is important when meeting with a financial advisor. It helps you make informed decisions and ensures the advice fits your financial goals. This guide offers you key questions to consider. Pick the ones that are most important to you (you don't need to ask all of them).

Advisors will also ask questions about your financial situation to customize their advice. The more details you provide, the better guidance you'll receive. Let's look at some questions you may ask and what the advisor might want to know from you. Also, be sure to check out the helpful tips to get prepared and review the next steps at the end of the guide.

Tips

- **Know your financial goals:** Know what you want to achieve financially, like saving for retirement, paying off debt, or investing.
- **Be honest about your finances:** Share accurate information about your income, expenses, debts, and assets. Let your advisor know about any big life changes such as a new job, marriage, or big purchases.
- **Take notes during meetings:** Write down the advice you get to make sure it fits your goals. This helps you review it later and make better choices.
- **Set realistic expectations:** Understand that financial growth takes time, and no advisor can promise quick results.
- **Talk to different advisors:** Meet with a few advisors to compare their services before making a decision.

Questions to ask a financial advisor

| Topic | Sample Questions |
|----------------|--|
| Qualifications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your education and experience? • Are you certified and with which designations? |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you registered with a securities regulator? • Have you ever been disciplined or had restrictions on your registration? |
| Firm and services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long has your firm been in business? • How long have you worked here? • What services and products do you offer? • How do you choose investments for your clients? • How will you help me achieve my financial goals? |
| Working relationship and compensation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you paid a salary, commission, or through fees? • How often will we meet? • How will you keep me updated? • Can you provide references from past clients? |

What your financial advisor might ask

| Topic | Sample Questions |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Personal information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your age? • What is your total annual income? • What is your estimated net worth? • Do you have any dependents? • What are your monthly expenses? • What is the amount of income tax you paid for the year? |
| Investor profile | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your investment knowledge and experience? • What are your investment goals? • When will you need access to money you've invested? • What is your risk tolerance? |

Next Steps

Use this guide for your next meeting with a financial advisor. Decide on the questions that matter most to you, and make sure you're prepared to answer their questions as well. This will help you get the best advice for your financial future.

Reflect and Connect

We've covered a lot in this module, including:

- The importance of maintaining good credit.
- The basics of investing and how to make informed decisions.
- When and how to look for financial advice.

Take a moment to think about the questions below and how they relate to your experiences. Think of this as a reflective journal for yourself, which you can refer to later.

Happy reflecting!

What does financial security mean to you, and what's one step you can take toward building it?

What's a strategy you can use to improve your credit score?

- *Example: Pay off a small balance or review your credit card statement regularly.*

What's one thing you learned about how to invest safely that you can keep in mind for the future?

If you met with a financial advisor, what are questions or main concerns that you would want to discuss to make sure they understand your situation?

What is one resource or strategy you can explore this week to feel more confident about your financial future?

Keep Going

There is so much more to learn! Access the full CanWork BC content and learn more about the program at **canworkbc.ca**.

Canada



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

This program is funded by the Government of Canada
and the Province of British Columbia.