

LIFESTYLES/CAREERS/EDUCATION



Time Required: 30-45 minutes

Content Standards: Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community. Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.

Indicators (Students will...): Understand how school success and academic achievement enhance future and vocational opportunities, and understand how values and personal needs affect career choice.

GOAL: Students will understand how academic choices drive career choices and impacts lifestyle and earning potential.

Activity Statements: Students will play the budget game to learn what income and career is needed to meet their lifestyle desires.

Students will explore and list probable expenses they may incur living on their own and be able to:

- + estimate the monthly expenses
- + differentiate between wants and needs
- + understand the need for planning for the future and preparing for emergencies

Materials:

Handout 1 **Budgeting Game Sheets**

Pencils or Baggies with 20 flat marker objects (i.e. beans, M&M's, pebbles)

Procedures:

1. Divide class into families of 3 or 4 per group. Have each student select a role they will play: Mom, Dad, Child, aging grandparent, etc.
2. Give each student/"family" a game sheet. If the game sheets are to be:
 - a. **reused**, then give each student/family a bag of 20 marker objects;
 - b. **consumed**, then allow each student/family to use a pencil to mark their selections, but they must keep count of Xs being made and be able to erase the marks as they change their minds.
3. Review the **Budgeting TIPS** (on the game sheet) and explain that:
 - a. They are living on their own and must pay their own bills with a **20-square** salary.
 - b. There are differences between **wants vs. needs**: What do we absolutely need to survive? Basic needs categories (food, clothing, shelter, and transportation—besides gas and oil, cars must have insurance and the newer the car, the more insurance is needed) are marked with **gold stars** and must be chosen;
 - c. Expenses are either **fixed or variable**; give examples (rent vs. groceries);
 - d. They should set **goals**; explain short vs. long range goals.

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4. Have each student/family mark 20 squares, first picking ones in the basic needs categories with **gold stars**. If any marks are left over, then they may mark other wants.
5. After discussing how “families” decided to spend their 20-square salaries, announce that monthly income has been **reduced to 13** squares. (Something happened so they can’t work full time and if they had disability insurance, it doesn’t cover everything, etc.),
6. To represent the **loss of income**, have students remove and/or adjust selections so seven (7) marks are taken off the sheets (by erasing, putting back in the bag, or eating the M&M’s). Instruct “families” that they must make do with the remaining 13 squares. Each family member will argue for their particular want or need to be met. Discuss what was given up to **reduce expenses**. What did they have to give up and how did that feel?
7. Explore how to:
 - a. **make extra money** (future career plans, babysitting, yard work, selling items);
 - b. **save** on clothing (consignment stores), furnishings (flea markets) and groceries (co-ops/ stretching recipes) and other expenses.
8. Stress preparing for the **unexpected** -- never over extend, always Pay Yourself First (save), invest in disability insurance, have an emergency fund, etc.
9. Ask students to think about their particular career plan, will it give them the lifestyle they need? Are they prepared academically for future career success?

Discussion:

1. What did you learn about the difference between needs and wants?
2. Will your career plan meet your needs and wants? What changes might you need to make?
3. Are you pursuing high school with academic rigor needed for future career success?
4. What did you learn that surprised you?

Additional Resources: have students see what games they can find online to help with managing a budget.....

Extension Activities: Go online at home and play the budget game with your friends and family. Set goals that will lead you to your desired lifestyle. Research post-secondary education and training programs that will give you the required preparation for your desired career.

Activity:

Resources:

Roads to Success, and/or <http://www.nvcis.intocareers.com/>