

Conducting spending interviews

Students interview an adult about how they make financial decisions and analyze their findings to come up with their own rules to live by.

Learning goals

Big idea

Understanding the difference between needs and wants can help you be strategic about your spending.

Essential questions

- How do needs and wants factor into an adult's financial decision-making process?
- How do needs and wants change over time?

Objectives

- Learn about and analyze different ways adults make spending decisions based on an understanding of their needs and wants
- Discover how adults develop rules to live by about spending to fit their own financial life

What students will do

- Interview a parent or another adult in their life to discover how they manage needs and wants.
- Analyze interview notes to improve their own knowledge and decision-making skills.

KEY INFORMATION

Building block:

 Executive function

 Financial habits and norms

Grade level: High school (9-12)

Age range: 13-19

Topic: Spend (Budgeting)

School subject: CTE (Career and technical education), English or language arts, Social studies or history

Teaching strategy: Personalized instruction, Cooperative learning

Bloom's Taxonomy level: Understand, Apply

Activity duration: 15-20 minutes

STANDARDS

Council for Economic Education
Standard II. Buying goods and services

Jump\$tart Coalition
Spending and saving - Standard 4

Preparing for this activity

- Print copies of all student materials for each student, or prepare for students to access them electronically.
- While it's not essential, it may be helpful to have students complete the "Reflecting on needs versus wants" activity before doing this one.

What you'll need

THIS TEACHER GUIDE

- Conducting spending interviews (guide)
cfpb_building_block_activities_conducting-spending-interviews_guide.pdf

STUDENT MATERIALS

- Conducting spending interviews (worksheet)
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Exploring key financial concepts

Understanding the differences between needs and wants helps you make a budget to manage your spending and informs your daily spending choices. Covering all your needs before you spend money on your wants is a wise financial habit.

To tell the difference between a need and a want, ask yourself, "Do I need that _____ (new jacket, video game, specialty coffee), or do I just really want it?"

Teaching this activity

Whole-class introduction

- Distribute the "Conducting spending interviews" worksheet, or have students access it electronically.

- Be sure students understand key vocabulary:
 - **Needs:** Basic things people must have to survive (such as food, clothing, and shelter), resources they need to do their jobs (such as reliable transportation and the tools of the trade), and resources to help build and protect their assets so they can meet future needs (such as emergency savings and insurance).
 - **Wants:** Upgrades and other things that would be nice to have but aren't necessary for living, earning, or protecting what you have.
- Guide students through the instructions for conducting an interview with an adult using the worksheet.

TIP

Visit CFPB's financial education glossary at consumerfinance.gov/financial-education-glossary/.

Individual or group work

- Ask students to review the sample script and questions in the "Conducting spending interviews" worksheet and consider how the script can help them manage the interview.
- Students should practice reading the script and the questions aloud.
- Have them role play and work together to think of what to say and do if the adult they are interviewing is not sure how to answer.
- Keep in mind that the preparation for the interview should take about 15-20 minutes.

Wrap-up

- Give students a clear time frame for completing their interviews.
- Explain to students that they are expected to work independently to review their interview notes and answer the three analysis questions in the "Conducting spending interviews" worksheet.
 - Much of the work will be done outside of school.
 - You may choose to provide time in class to support students' post-interview analysis and synthesis, or this may be assigned as homework.
 - Let students know what the expectations are for completing this activity.
- They should understand that their finished product will be a paragraph (at least five sentences) describing what they learned during this interview about how people balance needs and wants to manage their spending.

Suggested next steps

Consider searching for other CFPB activities that address the topic of spending such as budgeting, buying things, or paying bills.

Measuring student learning

If you choose to use this scoring rubric to grade this activity, be sure to share it with all students so they know what criteria matter most and they can plan accordingly.

INTERVIEW SCORING RUBRIC

Performance descriptions	Possible point values	Score
Listed name and relationship of person interviewed	5 points	
Took notes on all four interview questions	10 points per question (up to 40 points)	
Answered all three analysis questions	10 points per question (up to 30 points)	
Submitted a summary paragraph	25 points	
Total points earned	Out of 100	

Keep in mind that students' answers for the reflection question may vary, as there may not be only one right answer. The important thing is for students to have reasonable justification for their answers.