



MONEY SMART 2.0 LESSON GUIDE

for Grades 9-12



The National Theatre for Children

NTC Financial Literacy
K-12 Curriculum

LESSON 1 *Working Hard for the Money*

LESSON OVERVIEW

As teens and young adults begin working for the first time, questions about job choices and what to do after high school are on the forefront of their minds. With some teens planning on attending college and others unsure of their direction after graduation, this lesson explores the many different options young adults and teens have at their disposal in finding a career track that works for them. Exploring jobs that combine passion and profit, students examine different career and educational tracks, assess where they fit within the spectrum of choices and recognize how taxes relate to income earned.

TOPIC: Career Options

SUBJECT CONNECTIONS:

Science, Social Studies, Math, English
Language Arts, Technology

CLASS TIME: 55 minutes (excluding
Expanded Information to Share activities)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

- Identify career options and education or training required for different careers
- Name sources of income
- Explain the relationship between income and taxes
- Demonstrate how to research and analyze different careers

MATERIALS:

- Projector (for teacher presentation slides)
- Access to the internet (optional)

PROCEDURE:

- Make copies of student handouts
- Set up projector with presentation slides

STUDENT HANDOUTS:

- Exploring Careers
- Career Research
- Making Choices

TEACHER PRESENTATION SLIDES:

- Dream Job
- Possible Employer Benefits
- Paycheck
- Choices

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS:

- *How do I earn money now?*
- *How can I earn money later in my life?*
- *What career or job is right for me?*
- *What kind of education or training will I need?*

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:

PRE-ASSESSMENT:

- Dream Job slide
- Exploring Careers activity

POST-ASSESSMENT:

- Career Research handout
- Making Choices handout

LESSON 1 *Working Hard for the Money*

INSTRUCTION STEPS

WARM UP

EXPLORING CAREERS [10 MINUTES]

Open the lesson by displaying the **Dream Job** slide. The question prompts may be used for small-group discussions, a whole-class discussion or an individual reflective writing exercise.

Distribute the **Exploring Careers** handout and review together as a class. Using student responses from the **Dream Job** slide and information on the **Exploring Careers** handout, engage the class in a brief discussion about how different career tracks require different preparation, such as formal education, training, skills and experience. Ask students: *What is the difference between a job, career and profession? Why do different jobs require different education and training?* Invite students to share examples of each to test their understanding.

GUIDED EXPLORATION

INCOME, BENEFITS AND TAXES [15 MINUTES]

Next, guide the discussion to the different income levels for the jobs highlighted on the **Exploring Careers** handout. Explain that, even though a job may pay a certain amount of money per hour or year, there are other factors that contribute to earned incomes, such as benefits provided by an employer and taxes deducted from a paycheck.

Display the **Possible Employer Benefits** slide and review each of the benefits together as a class. Help students understand that, in addition to researching and exploring salary incomes, it is also important to investigate benefits provided by an employer. For instance, if a job doesn't offer health insurance, explain that this is an out-of-pocket expense that must be considered in a personal budget, thus reducing available income to satisfy other needs.

MONEY SMART TIP

While many people connect employer benefits first to health care and retirement, show students that there are also other benefits and perks that employers may offer.

These could include items such as a wellness program covering gym membership costs, child care and tuition reimbursements, discounts on products and services, unlimited vacation days or flexible work hours. Ask students to consider their values by having them define which benefits would be most important to them and why. Encourage students to also ask their parents and family members what type of benefits they have at their jobs and which ones they value the most.

LESSON 1 *Working Hard for the Money*

INSTRUCTION STEPS

INCOME, BENEFITS AND TAXES (Continued)

Grade Level Modifications:

Beginner: Engage students in considering what a “benefit” means and why benefits are used to attract and retain employees.

Advanced: Challenge students to research and discuss real job listings, noting the types of benefits offered. They can use job-listing sites or newspaper listings, or visit the websites of companies they are interested in working for.

Explain that another factor in understanding earned income is calculating the amount of taxes deducted from a paycheck. Display the **Paycheck** slide and review the sample paycheck with the class. Walk students through each part of the paycheck and explain that, even though our **gross income** (earned money before taxes) is one number, our **net income** (take-home pay) can be quite different. (See Lesson 6 for more information on taxes.)



MONEY SMART TIP

Expand the discussion of paychecks by connecting this lesson with Lesson 6, *Bread and Butter*, which details information on paychecks and taxes.

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INDEPENDENT EXPLORATION

NOTE: These activities are more independent than the Guided Exploration activities and may be used as homework assignments, collaborative group work or independent study.

EDUCATION AND CAREER CHOICES [20 MINUTES]

Display the **Choices** slide and engage the class in a brief discussion about the many different opportunities and choices available in selecting a career path. Ask students: *Why are there so many different career options? How do you determine which option is right for you?* Explain that directions after high school may include going straight into the workforce, two- or four-year colleges, an apprenticeship, joining a branch of the military or becoming an entrepreneur. Emphasize that there is no one “right” path and that everyone has unique values, goals, passions, dreams and skills.

Distribute the **Career Research** handout and explain that students will now have the opportunity to explore different career options by researching job functions, training and income levels. Allow students time to complete the handout and invite volunteers to share their responses.



MONEY SMART TIP

The *Career Research* handout may also be assigned as homework to provide students additional research time, or used as a writing extension by having students write a brief essay responding to the interest and skills reflection questions.

WRAP UP

MAKING CHOICES [10 MINUTES]

Close the lesson by giving students time to reflect on their different career choices by completing the **Making Choices** handout.

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EXPANDED INFORMATION TO SHARE

NOTE: Use the following ideas to extend financial literacy concepts throughout the school year within core content areas through English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies and Economics, and Technology activities, projects and discussions. Duration of activities will vary.

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

- **Writing Prompts**

- How does technology influence the global job market? For example: In what ways do advancements in automation and robotics impact available work?
- How does technology change the way we search for jobs and perform jobs? (online job applications, remote working opportunities)
- What does the American Dream mean to you? How does a job or career fit into your idea of the American Dream?
- Create an argument for and against the following statement: Not everyone needs a four-year degree.

- **Suggested Readings**

- *Top 25 Young Entrepreneur Success Stories* by Junior Biz: Entrepreneurial stories from young people who started their own businesses.
- *Why It's Important to Think About Your Career in High School* by U.S. News: Explore reasons why it is never too early to start thinking about your career.
- *Colleges Ramp Up Career Guidance for Students* by USA Today: Learn about how colleges are helping students find the greatest return on their college investment through career planning.

MATH

- **Activity/Project Ideas**

- Review and discuss job requirements, education and annual incomes for different applied math-based careers, such as actuaries, statisticians, financial analysts and computer scientists.
- Challenge students to calculate federal, state, Medicare and Social Security taxes on different income levels and paycheck scenarios.

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EXPANDED INFORMATION TO SHARE

SOCIAL STUDIES AND ECONOMICS

- **Discussion Topics**

- Explore and discuss the globalization of the job market. For example: Is globalization an opportunity to strengthen the U.S. economy? Why or why not? What are the pros and cons of globalization?
- Have students analyze connections between genders and careers. What are the historical shifts in jobs held by men and women?
- Debate the domestic and international economic impact of outsourcing jobs and the supply and demand shifts of different industries.

- **Activity/Project Ideas**

- Have students conduct research about the history of jobs. For example: Students may explore historical shifts in the U.S. job market by visiting the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website. Investigate how jobs in America have evolved over time from farming to manufacturing to technological advancements. Have students create a timeline to present their research and discuss as a class how jobs will continue to evolve in the future. Invite students to consider science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers and the demand for such skilled careers in the present and future.

TECHNOLOGY

- **Online Resources**

- *Occupational Outlook Handbook* by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Explore hundreds of different careers and discover education and training needed for each career, as well as median salaries.
- *Career One Stop* by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration: A comprehensive website that showcases employment trends, occupation profiles and salary information for every type of career.
- *Youth Employment, Find Youth Info*: Explore resources ranging from job search assistance to internships.

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ANSWER KEY FOR STUDENT HANDOUTS

Student Handout: Career Research

Answers will vary. Use handout to assess student ability to evaluate research and compare the purpose of each job, education required and projected income.

Student Handout: Making Choices

Answers will vary. Use handout to assess student ability to understand that different training and education paths can lead to different career choices.

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Exploring Careers

Job: work a person performs regularly in order to earn money

Career: a job or profession that a person holds for a long period of time

Profession: a type of job that requires special education, training or skill

	Job Description	Training/Education	Average Income
Chemical Engineer	Chemical engineers combine knowledge of science and math to develop and design chemical manufacturing processes. Chemical engineers can work in a variety of areas to help facilitate manufacturing, from pharmaceuticals to food and environmental safety.	Bachelor's degree in chemical engineering	\$114,470 per year or \$55.03 per hour
Computer Support Specialist	A computer support specialist helps people and businesses successfully use computer software and hardware. Support specialists offer computer support, from installing software to training people how to use computer equipment and answering customer questions.	Educational requirements vary. Some computer support specialist positions require an associate's degree and others require a bachelor's degree in a computer or technology field, such as computer or information science.	\$57,950 per year or \$27.86 per hour
Dental Hygienist	Dental hygienists clean teeth and help patients maintain oral health. Hygienists examine patients, take dental X-rays and help to educate patients on good oral health.	Associate's degree in dental hygiene	\$75,570 per year or \$36.33 per hour
Registered Nurse	Nurses perform a variety of tasks to help care for patients. Nurses assess injuries and illnesses, create treatment plans for patients and administer medicine, among other patient-care tasks.	Registered nurses are required to hold a nursing license, which is earned by graduating from a nursing program and passing a national exam. Nursing programs are available for both associate and bachelor degrees	\$75,510 per year or \$36.30 per hour
Mason	Using bricks and stones, masons build a variety of structures, from walls, fences and floors to fireplaces and chimneys.	A high school diploma or equivalent is required and most masons complete a three- to four-year apprenticeship in order to learn the trade.	\$52,810 per year or \$25.38 per hour

Career Research

Name: _____

Select two different careers that interest you, or that you would like to learn more about, and write them in the spaces below. Using the research resources or an internet search engine, investigate the job description, training and education required, and the average income for each career.

Not sure which career to start with? Take a moment to reflect on your interests and skills.

- What do you like to do?
- What are you interested in?
- What excites you?
- What are you good at?
- What fields are you interested in learning more about?

Check out the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' A to Z Guide for more career ideas.

www.bls.gov/ooh/a-z-index.htm

CAREER			
JOB DESCRIPTION			
TRAINING/ EDUCATION			
AVERAGE INCOME			

Research Resources:

- Occupational Outlook Handbook. www.bls.gov/ooh
- Career One Stop. www.careeronestop.org/

Making Choices

Name: _____

Based on your current interests, select three different paths to employment from the following: two-year college, four-year college, apprenticeship, military, direct to workforce (job) and entrepreneur. Next, write down career opportunities that interest you that can be achieved by following each path.

