Personal Finance and Career Planning: Taking a Reality Check for students in grades 11 & 12

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| **Introduction**  Many Americans have recently taken a hard look at personal finances to determine what is essential and what is superfluous. Personal finances or household budgeting follow two lines of thought – *what do I need* and *what do I want*? The cost of living varies by region, state, city or even neighborhood. Do you know where you want to live, how you want to live, and what it takes to meet those goals? |
| **Materials**  Pay stubs  Household bills  Calculator  Access to internet |
| 1. As an adult, you will need an income to take care of yourself. Personal satisfaction in how you earn this income is a key consideration in an overall sense of well-being. Give some thought to your areas of interest. Are there problems you would like to solve (or help to solve)? What areas of learning come easy for you? What areas, tasks, or topics do you willingly devote your time to now? What would you like your future workplace to look like? What tasks would you like to be able to do? Answering these questions will help you understand what matters to you and give you important information to consider as you explore and compare different occupations and the jobs within those occupations.   **Activities**  Develop a personal budget   1. Make a list of the things you use and do each day, weekly, and monthly.    1. Is there a cost for these items or activities? Who pays? How much? How often?    2. Consider the cost of maintaining your home. How much is the mortgage or rent? What is the cost of the utilities in your home?    3. Determine the cost of maintaining your lifestyle – weekly or monthly.   Determine earning goals   1. Examine a pay stub and determine ways that payroll deductions impact your income. What is withheld? How much? Why? What do these deductions provide you? 2. Based on your weekly or monthly earning goals, explore careers with the necessary earning potential.   Develop a plan   1. List your strengths and interests. Match these to the careers that are most likely to provide you the income you need to match your lifestyle goals.    1. <https://www.onetcenter.org/tools.html> (determine interests, what matters, and aptitudes)    2. <https://fame.claimyourfuture.com/>    3. <https://www.myplan.com/careers/> 2. What interests you? What could you see yourself doing in the future? Focus on two or three possible careers. 3. Choose one of the career pathways and write a personal reflection. Why are you interested in this career? What strengths do you bring to the study and/or work in that field?   Extend the exploration   1. Describe a problem you would like to solve and why you want to be part of the solution. Learn about why this is a problem, what is the impact, and what has been done already to address this situation. Try searching in these places:   <https://www.facinghistory.org/>  <https://www.tweentribune.com/> from Smithsonian  <https://www.loc.gov/> The Library of Congress  <https://www.splcenter.org/> Southern Poverty Law Center  Create your resume   1. Based on your interests, aspirations, and research, create a resume and cover letter or application essay to describe yourself and why you should enter the field. Provide evidence of your knowledge of what is required in the field and specific examples of your own skills or experience as well as your aspirations.  * [Job application tips for teenagers](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/job-application-tips-for-teenagers-2061581) from The Balance Careers * [Tips for writing your first resume](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/tips-for-writing-your-first-resume-2058744) * [Tips for completing a job application and getting an interview](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/completing-job-application-to-get-an-interview) from Indeed.com |
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