

Choosing how to get paid

Students explore and compare common payment methods and pay periods that employers use. They apply their learning by voting on their preferred methods in a class poll.

Learning goals

Big idea

Employers can pay employees in different ways.

Essential questions

- What are the different methods for paying employees?
- How often do employees get paid?

Objectives

- Describe various methods and schedules employers use to pay their employees
- Compare and contrast common methods and schedules for getting paid

NOTE

Please remember to consider your students' accommodations and special needs to ensure that all students are able to participate in a meaningful way.

KEY INFORMATION

Building block:

-  Financial habits and norms
-  Financial knowledge and decision-making skills

Grade level: High school (9-12)

Age range: 13-19

Topic: Earn (Getting paid), Save and invest (Banking options), Spend (Paying bills)

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

Teaching strategy: Cooperative learning, Gamification

Bloom's Taxonomy level: Understand, Evaluate

Activity duration: 45-60 minutes

National Standards for Personal Financial Education, 2021

Earning income: 12-7

Saving: 12-1

These standards are cumulative, and topics are not repeated in each grade level. This activity may include information students need to understand before exploring this topic in more detail.

What students will do

- Use the “Choosing how to get paid” worksheet to compare and contrast different methods and schedules for getting paid.
- Write questions or thoughts about each one.
- Vote in a poll about the payment methods and schedules, and discuss the poll results.

Preparing for this activity

- Print copies of all student materials for each student, or prepare for students to access them electronically.
- Prepare to give students a survey at the end of the activity. If desired, create a digital version of a poll. Use the following questions for the poll:
 - Which payment method do I prefer for work I might do right now?
 - Which pay period type do I prefer for work I might do right now?
 - Which payment method might I prefer in the future?
 - Which pay period type might I prefer in the future?

What you'll need

THIS TEACHER GUIDE

- **Choosing how to get paid (guide)**
[cfpb_building_block_activities_choosing-how-to-get-paid_guide.pdf](#)

STUDENT MATERIALS

- **Choosing how to get paid (worksheet)**
[cfpb_building_block_activities_choosing-how-to-get-paid_worksheet.pdf](#)

Exploring key financial concepts

For many teens, their first paid work is through an informal arrangement such as babysitting or helping a neighbor, where they're often paid in cash. More structured jobs often come with more formal payment arrangements.

It's helpful to understand there are two basic variables in getting paid: the method of payments (how) and schedule of payments (when). The schedule of payments is also called a pay period—the amount of time an employee works before being paid, for example, a week or a month. When you understand the details of getting paid, you can establish habits for managing your money.

TIP

Because financial products, terms, and laws change, students should be encouraged to always look for the most up-to-date information.

Teaching this activity

Whole-class introduction

- Ask students to share methods for getting paid at a job.
 - Answers may include paper check, direct deposit, a payroll card, or cash.
- Ask students to share examples of how often employees are paid.
 - Answers may include daily, weekly, every two weeks, or monthly.
- Read the “Exploring key financial concepts” section to students.
- Be sure students understand key vocabulary:
 - **Cash:** Paper or coin money.
 - **Direct deposit:** Money electronically sent to your bank account, credit union account, or prepaid card.
 - **Paper check:** A paper order to a bank or credit union to pay someone from a checking account.
 - **Payroll card:** A type of prepaid card you get from your employer that you receive your paycheck on.

TIP

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

Individual or group work

- Distribute the “Choosing how to get paid” worksheet, or have students access the worksheet electronically.
- Explain that students will review the methods and pay periods on the worksheet and write questions or comments they have about each method in the far-right column.
- Have students work individually, in pairs, or in groups to review the various payment options, and write down questions or thoughts they have about each option.
- Have students complete the reflection questions.

Wrap-up

- Have a few students share their questions or thoughts about the different options.
- Invite students who have had a job to share their experiences with payment methods and pay periods.
- Ask students to vote in a class poll that poses four questions:
 - Which payment method do I prefer for work I might do right now?
 - Which pay period type do I prefer for work I might do right now?
 - Which payment method might I prefer in the future?
 - Which pay period type might I prefer in the future?
- Tally students' responses and report back on the most popular methods and pay periods, both now and in the future.
- If time allows, ask students to share their answers to the reflection questions.

Suggested next steps

Consider searching for other [CFPB activities](#) that address the topics of earning (including getting paid or making money), saving and investing (including banking options), and spending (including paying bills). Suggested activities include ["Playing a banking fact and fiction game"](#) and ["Understanding taxes and your paycheck"](#).

Measuring student learning

Students' answers on their worksheets and during discussion can give you a sense of their understanding. **Keep in mind that students' answers may vary, as there may not be only one right answer.** The important thing is for students to have reasonable justification for their answers.