Earn Your Future® Digital Classroom Level 1 Educator Guide
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Site overview

Welcome to the **Earn Your Future Digital Classroom**, a collection of online learning modules that teach essential foundational concepts of financial education for students in grades 3-12. This guide will help you navigate the digital classroom, guide you in planning to use the modules with students in a variety of ways, and provide an overview of the standards-based content covered in the modules.

Introduction

The financial decisions people make throughout their lives—such as buying a home, investing and saving, managing risk, and using credit—can affect them for the rest of their lives. One bad decision can damage credit and even lead to a major financial loss. Learning how to manage money and make wise financial choices is an essential life skill, yet many students enter adulthood without learning the basics of personal finance. In fact, 46 percent of teens do not know how to create a budget¹, and nearly 50 percent are unsure of how to use a credit card effectively². In addition, 80 percent of teachers do not feel competent to teach personal finance topics³.

The goals of the **Earn Your Future Digital Classroom** are simple: help students learn about essential personal finance topics and give educators tools to help them confidently teach these topics. We aim to empower young people to make sound financial decisions in a wide range of situations, including buying a home, building and using credit responsibly, budgeting and managing money, choosing a career, saving and investing for the future, selecting insurance products and managing risk, and overall financial responsibility.

To engage the interest of students in these important financial literacy topics, we created interactive modules that bring personal finance to life using real-world scenarios. Throughout the modules, students follow characters' financial journeys, are introduced to authentic situations, and consider their own attitudes and behaviors as they solve problems, overcome challenges, and make choices. The modules are rigorous and aligned to the Council for Economic Education’s National Standards for Financial Literacy. After each module, students are assessed to track usage and understanding of skills. The program also offers flexibility to teachers and volunteers who can use the modules in any order and at any time.

The modules are designed for students to complete in about 30 minutes, however the actual time may vary based on students’ individual reading levels and the format in which the modules are delivered. The Module Resource Guides include discussion questions and extension activities that instructors may choose to implement in their classrooms to further engage students in the topics presented in the modules.

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³ Source: [https://www.fdic.gov/about/comein/Mar3.pdf](https://www.fdic.gov/about/comein/Mar3.pdf)
Getting Started

To create an account, visit http://www.pwcfdnearyourfuture.org/.

Once you enter your information to register as a teacher, follow the instructions found on the Teacher Dashboard to set up your class and add your students.

Visit the modules via the navigation on the left of the Teacher Dashboard. Click on “Launch Earn Your Future Digital Classroom,” and you will see the levels page, where you can select the level where you would like to start: Beginner, tailored for grades 3-5; Intermediate, tailored for grades 6-8; and Advanced, tailored for grades 9-12.
Module Resource Guides

Click “Get Started” on the level you have selected, and you will see the Choose a Module page. Each module is accompanied by a Module Resource Guide designed to provide the tools needed to effectively teach the content in a variety of teaching scenarios. Also included in the Module Resource Guides is a Background Information section, which highlights key ideas related to each topic covered in the module. The Module Resource Guides can be found on the Materials page, which is accessed via the navigation at the top of the Choose a Module page.
Student tools

Students will have access to three tools throughout all of the modules: a basic calculator, a mortgage calculator, and a glossary. In specific modules, students will be encouraged to use the calculator; they are encouraged to use the glossary for all modules. The tools dropdown menu can be found at the top right of the screen.

The glossary is designed to help students define key vocabulary words. As seen on the screen below, students are introduced to a key vocabulary word (identification) in the module “The Mystery of the High-Priced Heels.” After selecting the glossary under the tools menu, students can search for key vocabulary words and read the definitions. There are three versions of the glossary—each correlated to the specific grade level.
**Earn Your Future Digital Classroom module overviews**

**Module Title: Mystery of the High-Priced Heels**  
**Topic: Financial Responsibility & Decision Making**  
This module focuses on financial responsibility and decision-making. Students meet Alice and her mother, Grace, and discover that Grace has been charged for a purchase she did not make. With the help of Kreditt, a robot designed to help people solve problems having to do with money, students join Alice and Grace in a quest to find out how the charge wound up on Grace’s account. To finish the quest, students must complete five investigations into the topics of identification and identity theft. As they discover the answer to the mystery of the high-priced heels, students learn about the consequences of identity theft, how to reduce their risk of being victimized, and what do if it happens to them.

**Module Title: The Case of the Frazzled Friends**  
**Topic: Credit & Debt**  
In this module, students meet two friends named Jamal and Noah. They discover that Jamal is reluctant to lend Noah his new video game. With Kreditt’s help, Noah and the student set out to solve the mystery of why Noah has apparently lost Jamal’s trust. As students complete the module’s five investigations, they learn about the risk that a lender takes when borrowing money or other items of value. They find out what kinds of behaviors borrowers must exhibit to be deemed responsible and the steps those who extend credit take to protect themselves from risk. Through the investigations, students discover how Noah’s past behavior affected his opportunity to borrow from Jamal. Then, they identify ways Noah can help Jamal feel ready to take the risk of making a loan to Noah again.

**Module Title: What’s the Risk?**  
**Topic: Risk & Insurance**  
In this module, Kreditt helps students understand the presence of risk—the possibility of harm or loss—that exists in their day-to-day lives. These risks, students discover, can lead to unpleasant and costly outcomes. Students explore the ways in which they can respond to risk, including accepting it, avoiding it, and reducing it. Kreditt also explains the option of transferring risk to a third party through the purchase of insurance.

**Module Title: Robot Games**  
**Topic: Saving & Investing**  
The challenge for students in this module is to help Kreditt prepare for an upcoming robot competition by saving money to pay for some key robot upgrades. Kreditt guides students through a series of challenges involving setting savings goals, making savings plans, and formulating a budget that will enable realization of the plans.
**Module Title: Learn to Earn**
**Topic: Income & Careers**
In this module, students begin to explore what it means to earn income and build a career. Kreditt defines what a career is and explains the benefits of building one: satisfying the need for purpose, providing a sense of accomplishment, and earning income. The difference between wages, salary, and commission are described. Kreditt then discusses the way that careers can spring from a person’s interests and how “career clusters” help people match skills and interests with a variety of careers. Students also learn about entrepreneurship and the risks and rewards that come along with that type of career. Students also explore some of the other ways they can generate income, including earning interest through investments, renting out property, and receiving gifts.

**Module Title: Save, Spend, or Share**
**Topic: Planning & Money Management**
Students in this age group typically do not have a great deal of money under their control, yet they still need information about how they can manage the money they do receive. Kreditt helps students understand their three basic options—saving, spending, and sharing money. Students learn to be aware of the factors that can influence their decisions about money, such as the opinions of friends or the effects of advertising. They explore the concepts of benefits, trade-offs, and opportunity costs and learn how to use knowledge of these concepts to make wise decisions. Finally, students examine the option of sharing their money with others, including how to identify options for their giving.

**Module Title: Homeward Bound**
**Topic: Home Buying**
Students explore the complex process of identifying and purchasing a home. Kreditt walks students through a discussion of the many factors home buyers must consider and the likelihood of making compromises and evaluating opportunity costs during that process. The need to keep in mind budgets while making housing decisions is also discussed, and students learn that as a rule of thumb, housing should make up one-third or less of a person’s expenses. To conclude, students learn about mortgages and the factors that affect the size of a monthly mortgage bill.
**Recommended pathways**

The modules are designed to be used independently and in any order. However, depending on your goals and the time you have available, you may choose to cluster the modules or present them in a particular order. Below are some suggestions for grouping the modules, which may provide opportunities to leverage knowledge and skills for maximum educational impact.

1) **Module clusters**

The modules can be organized in clusters. The first module explicates a major concept, and the second module provides an application or extension of that concept.

2) **If you’re short on time...**

No time to explore all the modules? You may choose to use these five modules, which focus on broad principles of personal finance:
3) Standards-based pathway

This pathway lists the modules based on the order of the Council for Economic Education benchmarks that each module addresses.

- Learn to Earn
- Save, Spend, or Share
- Homeward Bound
- The Case of the Frazzled Friends
- What's the Risk?
- The Mystery of the High-Priced Heels
- Robot Games
National standards for financial literacy

The modules are designed to meet the National standards for financial literacy from the Council for Economic Education.

The table below illustrates how the modules align to the national standards. The complete standards and benchmark correlations for each module can be found in the corresponding Module Resource Guide.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Save, Spend, or Share</th>
<th>Learn to Earn</th>
<th>The Case of the Frazzled Friends</th>
<th>Homeward Bound</th>
<th>Robot Games</th>
<th>The Mystery of the High-Priced Heels</th>
<th>What’s the Risk?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Protecting &amp; Insuring</td>
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Additional financial literacy resources

Source: Council for Economic Education
Description: Offers Internet-based lesson plans, activities, and interactive tools about earning, spending, saving, borrowing, investing, and managing money based on real-life applications
Link: http://www.councilforeconed.org/

Source: Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and Consumer Finance Protection Bureau
Description: Offers financial education resources for students and teachers, including videos and lesson plans
Link: https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/education/torc/

Source: Federal Reserve
Description: Offers classroom resources, games, and simulators
Link: https://www.federalreserveeducation.org/

Source: Financial Literacy and Education Commission
Description: Offers financial tools for teachers, educators, and students about saving and investing, earning, protecting, spending, and borrowing
Link: http://www.mymoney.gov/

Source: Internal Revenue Service
Description: Offers lessons, interactives, and simulations for teachers and students
Link: https://apps.irs.gov/app/understandingTaxes/

Source: National Education Association
Description: Offers lessons plans, background resources, and games
Link: http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/resources-for-teaching-financial-literacy.html

Source: United States Mint
Description: Offers lesson plans and activities for students
Link: http://www.usmint.gov/kids/teachers/financialLiteracy/

Source: Utah Department of Education
Description: Offers lessons and activities for grades K–12
Link: http://financeintheclassroom.org/passport/