

# Sonya gives advice on large purchases

Students experience an interactive adventure and answer questions about what to consider when making a large purchase.

## Learning goals

### Big idea

It's important to research your options and have a plan when making a large purchase.

### Essential questions

- What should I consider when making a large purchase?
- How can I avoid being pressured into making buying decisions?

### Objectives

- Understand what to consider when making a large purchase
- Practice planning to make a large purchase

### What students will do


- Complete an online, interactive adventure independently or as a group.
- Practice planning to make a large purchase.

### 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 knowledge and decision-making skills

Grade level: High school (11-12)

Age range: 16-19

Topic: Spend (Budgeting, Buying things)

School subject: CTE (Career and technical education), English or language arts, JROTC/ROTC (Servicemembers), Math, Social studies or history

Teaching strategy: Cooperative learning, Direct instruction, Personalized instruction

Bloom's Taxonomy level: Remember, Understand, Apply

Activity duration: 75-90 minutes

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#### National Standards for Personal Financial Education, 2021

Spending: 8-2, 8-3, 12-1, 12-2, 12-3, 12-4, 12-5, 12-8, 12-9

Saving: 12-9

Managing credit: 8-1, 8-2, 8-3, 12-12

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.

## ABOUT

# Misadventures in MONEY MANAGEMENT

PRESENTED BY THE CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

Misadventures in Money Management (MiMM) educates, advises, and trains future and current servicemembers and their families on critical financial decisions and consumer rights. The program is available for use by all of the U.S. Armed Forces. MiMM follows the stories of seven servicemembers, each covering a different financial topic:

- Angela - Debit, credit & credit scores
- Cruz - Car buying tactics
- Dirk - Smart spending
- James - Impulse purchases
- Miya - Budgeting, saving & investing
- Sonya - Emergency relief & researching
- Xavier - Debt advice & student loans

MiMM focuses on some of the unique problems and solutions that servicemembers experience.

## Preparing for this activity

- While it's not necessary, completing the "James resists impulse spending" activity first may make this one more meaningful.
- Print copies of all student materials for each student, or prepare for students to access them electronically.
- Become familiar with the Misadventures in Money Management (MiMM) online graphic novel at <https://mimm.gov/>.
- Review Sonya's MiMM adventure, "Emergency relief & researching." If time permits, it may be helpful for you to complete her MiMM adventure on your own before class.
  - Note that while Sonya's MiMM adventure covers different scenarios, the worksheet focuses on the scenario with Sonya's brother, who is considering buying a cell phone.
- Decide if you want students to complete Sonya's MiMM adventure as a whole class, in small groups, or individually.
  - If you choose to complete the adventure as a whole class, obtain a computer with Internet access, a projector or smartboard, and speakers.

### TIP

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If your students have access to computers or tablets with Internet access, they can also complete the adventure as homework. Direct them to <https://mimm.gov/>, where they can complete the entire program, get a certificate of completion, and email their unique certificate to you or print it out. Students can only get a certificate for completing the entire program, not when they finish each character's story.

- If you choose for students to complete the adventure in small groups or individually, provide them with computers or tablets with Internet access and with headphones to manage the noise.

## What you'll need

### THIS TEACHER GUIDE

- **Sonya gives advice on large purchases** (guide)  
[cfpb\\_building\\_block\\_activities\\_MiMM\\_sonya-gives-advice\\_guide.pdf](#)
- A computer with Internet access, a projector or smartboard, and speakers (if you choose to complete the online portion as a whole class)

### STUDENT MATERIALS

- **Sonya gives advice on large purchases** (worksheet)  
[cfpb\\_building\\_block\\_activities\\_MiMM\\_sonya-gives-advice\\_worksheet.pdf](#)
- Computers or tablets with Internet access and headphones (if you choose for students to complete the online portion in small groups or individually)

## Exploring key financial concepts

When you make a large or important purchase, it's helpful to understand how to prepare and do research. Researching what's available and comparing features, benefits, and costs can help you better understand your options. Comparison shopping – the practice of comparing prices, features, benefits, risks, and other characteristics of two or more similar products or services – may help you make more informed buying decisions and help you stay within your budget. Comparison shopping is a good practice when you buy anything, but it's especially useful when you buy something expensive. In addition, the more knowledge you have, the less likely you'll be swayed by sales tactics or persuaded to spend more money than you planned. The time you invest before making a large purchase could save you a lot of money.

### TIP

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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

- Introduce the Misadventures in Money Management (MiMM) program if students aren't familiar with it.

- MiMM is an online graphic novel in which students make decisions for the characters as they move through the story. CFPB created the program to educate, advise, and train current and future servicemembers on critical financial decisions.
- The program focuses on some of the unique problems and solutions that servicemembers experience.
- Explain to students that they'll explore the MiMM character of Sonya.
  - Sonya is back in her hometown to visit friends and family. Unfortunately, each person she visits is having a financial problem.
  - Sonya provides resources and advice to her friends and family members who need help resolving their financial issues. In one case, she offers advice to her brother before he makes a major purchase.
- Ask students to share any major purchases they or someone they know has made recently.
- Read the "Exploring key financial concepts" section to students.
- Be sure students understand key vocabulary:
  - **Budget:** A plan that outlines what money you expect to earn or receive (your income) and how you will save it or spend it (your expenses) for a given period of time; also called a spending plan.
  - **Buying plan:** A plan people use to identify and consider factors like cost, features, and choices as they prepare to make a purchase.
  - **Comparison shopping:** The practice of comparing prices, features, benefits, risks, and other characteristics of two or more similar products or services.

#### TIP

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Visit CFPB's financial education glossary at [consumerfinance.gov/financial-education-glossary/](https://consumerfinance.gov/financial-education-glossary/).

## Individual or group work

### Completing the online, interactive adventure at <https://mimm.gov/>

- Click "Explore a topic" and then "Emergency relief & researching" to access Sonya's adventure.
- Tell students that while Sonya interacts with several people in the adventure, the worksheet they will complete focuses on how Sonya helps her brother.
- Students can complete Sonya's adventure as a whole class, in small groups, or individually.

- If you choose to complete it as a whole class:
  - Use the decision points in Sonya’s story to spark discussions and decide as a class what choice to make.
  - Help students build their understanding by reviewing the additional information that comes up throughout the adventure.
- If students work in small groups or individually:
  - Move among the students to check on the decisions they’re making and what they’re learning from their choices.
  - Encourage students to pause at each decision point and reflect on what happened to Sonya’s brother as a result of that choice.
  - Help students build their understanding by encouraging them to click on the suggested resources and additional information that come up throughout the adventure.

### **Completing the worksheet**

- Distribute the “Sonya gives advice on large purchases” worksheet.
- Students can work independently, in pairs, or in groups of three or four to complete the “Learning from Sonya’s experience” section of the worksheet.
- Students will complete the buying plan and reflection questions on their own.

### **Wrap-up**

- Bring the class back together.
- Ask volunteers to share their answers to the “Learning from Sonya’s experiences” section of the worksheet.
- Ask volunteers to share what they decided to buy and their answers to the reflection questions.

### **Suggested next steps**

Consider searching for other CFPB activities that address the topic of spending, including budgeting and buying things. Suggested activities include “Creating a buying plan,” “Choosing the best cell phone plan for you,” and “Cruz buys a car.”

# Measuring student learning

Students' answers on their worksheets and during discussion can give you a sense of their understanding.

This answer guide provides possible answers for the "Sonya gives advice on large purchases" worksheet. **Keep in mind that students' answers may vary.** The important thing is for students to have reasonable justification for their answers.

## Answer guide

### Learning from Sonya's experiences

1. What was one of the sales tactics used to pressure Sonya's brother to make a large purchase?

**Possible answers include:**

- He was offered a deal that was only good for one day.
- He was offered a rebate.
- He was offered low monthly payments.

2. What is one strategy he could use to make sure he got the best deal on his cell phone?

**Possible answers include:**

- Make a plan before he makes a purchase.
- Research his options before he goes shopping.
- Focus on the total cost instead of monthly payments.
- Make sure he understands all terms and conditions before signing a financing contract.
- Know that it's okay to walk away and gather more information if he's not sure about an offer.

### Reflection questions

Answers may vary.