

# Asking for a raise

Students engage in a scenario where they use the strategies of persuasive writing to write a professional letter asking for a raise.

## Learning goals

### Big idea

People can increase their income by acquiring more experience and job skills, which often leads to higher compensation.

### Essential questions

- When is the right time to ask for a raise?
- What's an effective way to ask for a raise?

### Objectives

- Understand how to prepare to ask for a raise
- Apply effective strategies when asking for a raise

### What students will do



- Explore the concept of persuasive writing.
- Write a letter asking for a raise from an imaginary boss.

### 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:

-  Executive function
-  Financial knowledge and decision-making skills

Grade level: High school (9-12)

Age range: 13-19

Topic: Earn (Increasing earnings, Making money)

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

Teaching strategy: Project-based learning, Simulation

Bloom's Taxonomy level: Apply, Create

Activity duration: 45-60 minutes

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

Earning income: 8-1, 8-4, 12-3, 12-4, 12-5

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.

## Preparing for this activity

- While it's not necessary, completing the "Creating a poster on life after high school" 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.

### What you'll need

#### THIS TEACHER GUIDE

- Asking for a raise (guide)  
[cfpb\\_building\\_block\\_activities\\_asking-raise\\_guide.pdf](#)

#### STUDENT MATERIALS

- Asking for a raise (worksheet)  
[cfpb\\_building\\_block\\_activities\\_asking-raise\\_worksheet.pdf](#)

## Exploring key financial concepts

When you're an employee, it's important to understand what's a fair amount of pay for the work you're doing. The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes information on workers' pay and benefits. Generally, this information is categorized by geographic area (such as national, regional, state, metropolitan area, or county), occupation (such as teacher), and industry (such as manufacturing). Additional categories may also be used in some cases. Using these resources can give you information on what different occupations pay and help you compare your pay with other similar occupations.

While it's helpful to become familiar with the typical pay for the type of work you're doing in your geographical area, it's also important to keep in mind that everyone brings unique skills and abilities to a job, and no two jobs are exactly alike. A worker's experience, skills, performance, successes, and location can cause variations in how much people receive for similar jobs.

No matter what your pay may be, there may come a time when you feel you should get a raise. Perhaps you've just won the company a new client, you've taken on added responsibilities, or

#### **TIP**

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

you've learned you're earning far less than the going rate. When this time comes, you'll want to prepare before you approach your employer with a request for a raise. No matter how much you feel that you should get a raise, you'll want to make your case and prepare for the conversation.

## Teaching this activity

### Whole-class introduction

- Ask students to share situations where they think a worker could seek a pay increase.
  - Answers may include when the worker does an exceptional job, has been on the job for a long time, brings in business, or takes a new position within the business.
- Read the “Exploring key financial concepts” section to students.
- Be sure students understand key vocabulary:
  - **Raise:** An increase in the amount of wages or salary.
  - **Salary:** Compensation received by an employee for services performed. A salary is a fixed sum paid for a specific period of time worked, such as weekly or monthly.
  - **Wage:** Compensation received by employees for services performed. Usually, wages are computed by multiplying an hourly pay rate by the number of hours worked.
- Tell students they'll write a letter asking an imaginary boss for a raise.
- Introduce students to the concept of persuasive writing. Explain that:
  - Persuasion is when you're able to convince someone to agree with your point of view.
  - Persuasive writing is a form of nonfiction writing with the aim of convincing readers to believe in an idea or to do an action.
  - To do it well, persuasive writing requires careful word choice, the development of logical arguments, and a compelling summary that drives home the key points.

#### TIP

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

## Individual work

- Distribute the “Asking for a raise” worksheet.
- Students will review the worksheet’s “Employee scenario” and the tips for asking for a raise and for persuasive writing.
- Using the worksheet information, students will write a letter asking for a raise.
- Students will then answer the reflection questions.

## Wrap-up

- Bring students back together to discuss what was challenging and what was fun about the task of asking for a raise.
- Ask them to share some things they learned about when and how to ask for a raise.
- Ask them to share their answers to the reflection questions.

## Suggested next steps

Consider searching for other [CFPB activities](#) that address the topics of earning, including increasing earnings and making money. Suggested activities include [“Picturing your future self”](#) and [“Calculating the numbers in your paycheck”](#).

## Measuring student learning

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

If you choose to use the scoring rubric on the next page to grade this activity, be sure to share it with all students so they know what criteria matter most and they can plan accordingly.

## SCORING RUBRIC

Criteria	Possible points	Points earned
<b>Introduction:</b> The introduction is respectful and engaging. It clearly states the request for a raise and provides an overview of why the writer should get one.	20	
<b>Organization:</b> The letter presents the information and arguments in a logical way that builds a strong case.	20	
<b>Justification and evidence:</b> The letter includes at least three examples of evidence that support the request for a raise.	20	
<b>Audience:</b> The letter gives careful consideration to the audience (the boss or manager) and is respectful and professional.	10	
<b>Writing mechanics and word choice:</b> There are no spelling or grammar errors, and the choice of words and phrases supports the argument.	10	
<b>Conclusion:</b> The conclusion provides a strong summary and leaves the audience feeling compelled to agree with the argument.	20	
<b>Total points</b>	<b>100</b>	