

Comparing public transportation options

Students research the features and costs of transportation methods for getting to work and use a decision matrix to compare options and determine the best choice for their needs, wants, and budget.

Learning goals

Big idea

Research and comparison shopping help you weigh options and make informed financial choices.

Essential questions

- How do research and comparison shopping help you make more informed spending decisions?
- What features might you compare to make spending choices that are best for you?

Objectives

- Research and compare features of different methods of transportation
- Analyze data collected to make an informed spending decision

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 (9-12)

Age range: 13-19

Topic: Spend (Budgeting, Buying things)

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

Teaching strategy: Blended learning, Personalized instruction

Bloom's Taxonomy level: Analyze, Evaluate

Activity duration: 75-90 minutes

National Standards for Personal Financial Education, 2021

Spending: 12-2, 12-3, 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.

What students will do

- Conduct research to identify features and costs of two methods of transportation.
- Analyze and compare data gathered on different features to consider pros and cons.
- Decide on a transportation method that fits their needs, wants, and budget.

Preparing for this activity

- While it's not necessary, completing the "[Making spending decisions](#)" 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.
- Secure a computer or tablet with Internet access for each student or pair of students to research transportation methods. If that's not possible, you can do the research yourself and print out a few transportation information sheets for students to use.

What you'll need

THIS TEACHER GUIDE

- [Comparing public transportation options \(guide\)](#)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_comparing-public-transportation-options_guide.pdf](#)

STUDENT MATERIALS

- [Comparing public transportation options \(worksheet\)](#)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_comparing-public-transportation-options_worksheet.pdf](#)
- [Comparison shopping tool \(handout\)](#)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_comparison-shopping-tool_handout.pdf](#)
- Computers or tablets with Internet access or transportation information sheets

Exploring key financial concepts

Comparison shopping means comparing prices, features, benefits, risks, and other characteristics of two or more similar products or services. When making a purchase, researching more than one product or brand and comparing features, benefits, and costs can help you better understand your options. Comparison shopping may help you make more informed buying decisions.

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 examples of times they or someone they know had to choose between brands or versions when shopping.
 - Examples may include shoes, clothing, food, cell phones, or cars.
- Read the “Exploring key financial concepts” section to explain comparison shopping.
- Ask students to share why they think comparison shopping can be helpful when preparing to make spending decisions.
- 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.
 - **Comparison shopping:** The practice of comparing prices, features, benefits, risks, and other characteristics of two or more similar products or services.

TIP

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

Individual or group work

- Distribute the “Comparing public transportation options” worksheet and the “Comparison shopping tool” handout, or have students access these documents electronically.
- Distribute computers or tablets or give students information on transportation methods.
- Ask students to imagine that they’re living in a city and they need to determine the best way to get to work (e.g., by bus, train/light rail, metro/subway, ride-share programs, taxi).

- Explain that they'll compare two methods of transportation to find the one that fits their needs, wants, and budget.
- Working either individually or with a partner, students will complete the features table on the "Comparing public transportation options" worksheet first and then complete the first two pages of the "Comparison shopping tool" handout.
- As they're ready, ask students to complete the analysis section of the "Comparison shopping tool" handout.
- When they've finished this comparative analysis, they should return to the "Comparing public transportation options" worksheet to document the method that works best for them.
- Students will then answer the reflection questions on their own.

Wrap-up

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 topic of spending, including budgeting and buying things. Suggested activities include "[Creating a buying plan](#)" and "[Budgeting for fun in a city](#)".

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.