

Debating ways to pay bills

Students have a debate to explore options for paying bills and consider which methods might work for them now or in the future.

Learning goals

Big idea

Understanding ways to pay bills can help you manage your money.

Essential questions

- What are some ways to pay bills?
- What options for paying bills would you consider now or in the future?

Objectives

- Explore methods for paying bills
- Consider what methods might work for you now or in the future

What students will do




- Debate methods for paying bills.
- Reflect on what methods might work for them now or in the future.

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 habits and norms
-  Financial knowledge and decision-making skills

Grade level: High school (9-12)

Age range: 13-19

Topic: Save and invest (Banking options), Spend (Buying things, Paying bills)

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

Teaching strategy: Cooperative learning

Bloom's Taxonomy level: Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate

Activity duration: 45-60 minutes

National Standards for Personal Financial Education, 2021

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

Saving: 8-3, 8-6, 12-1, 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 "[Banking basics card game](#)," "[Getting banked](#)," or "[Checking account basics](#)" activities before this one may make it more meaningful.
- Print copies of all student materials for each student, or prepare for students to access them electronically.
- Become familiar with the "[Exploring different ways to pay your bills](#)" handout.
- Print the list of bill-paying methods at the end of this guide and cut each method into a single slip of paper.
 - Fold the slips of paper in half and put them in a bowl or another container.

What you'll need

THIS TEACHER GUIDE

- [Debating ways to pay bills \(guide\)](#)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_debating-ways-pay-bills_guide.pdf](#)
- [Slips of paper listing bill-paying methods](#)
- [Bowl or another container](#)

STUDENT MATERIALS

- [Exploring different ways to pay your bills \(handout\)](#)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_exploring-different-ways-pay-your-bills_handout.pdf](#)

Exploring key financial concepts

Bills are a fact of life. Some are due monthly, like rent, utilities, and credit card bills. Other bills may be one-time payments, like a security deposit when you rent an apartment. There are many ways to pay your bills. Understanding the pros and cons of these methods can help you choose the ones that work for you.

TIP

Because information related to bill paying changes, students should be encouraged to always look for the most up-to-date information.

Teaching this activity

Whole-class introduction

- Consider reading the “Exploring key financial concepts” section to the class.
- Ask students to share some ways people pay their bills.
- Tell students that they’ll review a handout about ways to pay bills and then break into teams to debate about the methods.
- Distribute the “Exploring different ways to pay your bills” handout and give students a few minutes to review it.

Group work

- Divide students into six teams and assign each team a number.
- Explain that:
 - Team one will debate team two.
 - Team three will debate team four.
 - Team five will debate team six.
- Tell students that after each debate, they’ll vote for the winner.
 - You may consider asking students to use the criteria below as they decide which team to vote for.
 - Write or project the following criteria on the board so students can see them:
 - The team’s argument is clear and organized.
 - The team uses facts and examples to support their argument.
 - Team members speak clearly and are easily heard by the class.
 - The team’s argument is convincing.
- Ask one person from each team to pick a slip of paper from the bowl or container and announce which bill-paying method they chose.
- Tell each team to use the information on their handouts to prepare a two-minute speech about the benefits of their bill-paying method and the drawbacks of the opposing team’s method.
 - Tell each team that they can choose one speaker or take turns presenting.
- Give the teams a few minutes to prepare their speeches.
- Ask team one to present, followed by team two.
 - After each debate, ask the class to vote for the winner by a show of hands.
 - Continue until all teams have presented.

TIP

Visit [CFPB’s financial education glossary](#) for terms and definitions you may find useful.

Wrap-up

- Bring students together.
- Start a discussion with the following reflection questions:
 - What method(s) do you think you'll use now or in the future? Why?
 - What method(s) do you think you're least likely to use now or in the future? Why?

Suggested next steps

Consider searching for other [CFPB activities](#) that address the topic of saving, including banking options, and spending, including buying things and paying bills. Suggested activities include ["Getting banked"](#) and ["Checking account basics."](#)

Measuring student learning

Students' speeches and responses to the reflection questions can give you a sense of their understanding. **Keep in mind that students' responses may vary.** The important thing is for students to have reasonable justification for their responses.

If you choose to use the scoring rubric below 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

You can use the ["Exploring different ways to pay your bills"](#) [handout](#) to identify some of the facts and examples teams should use in the debate.

Criteria	Possible points	Points earned
The team's argument is clear and organized.	25	
The team uses facts and examples to support their argument.	25	
The team members speak clearly and are easily heard by the class.	25	
The team's argument is convincing.	25	
Total points	100	

Bill-payment methods

Print the bill-payment methods single-sided. Cut them apart and place them in a bowl or other container.



Automatic or direct debit

Cash

Checks

Credit card

Money order

Online bill payment