



School Phone: 713-688-1361

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Personal Financial Literacy 2022-2023

Instructor: Mr. Gray

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Room: 1135

Tutorials: After school by appointment

Conference: 6th period, by appointment

Course Content

Personal Financial Literacy is a relatively new elective in Texas high schools. It was created in 2016 with the objective of helping students to make good, informed financial decisions throughout their lives. Decisions about career paths, saving and investing their money, how to start and run a business, establish and use credit, stay out of debt, or get out of debt are all topics in the course.

We will do some traditional things like multiple choice exit tickets, quizzes, and tests, but we'll also keep spending diaries, interview trusted adults about how they've handled money at different times in their lives, and build budgets based on your career interests and other preferences.

There are concepts and skills that will overlap with other courses in the school, especially Economics. We will use these ideas, though, to focus on what they mean for our individual lives, and how we can use them to make better decisions that we might have otherwise.

Text

Sources are Online, or teacher provided, but will include:

APEX Learning
Khan Academy
Everfi.com
Newsela (via Canvas assignments)

About Mr. Gray

I was born in Ohio, but I've lived in Washington D.C., Atlanta, Las Vegas, New York City, and HTX! After having a "C" average in most of high school, I tested in the 99th percentile on those college application exams and wondered why I hadn't done better in my high school classes if I could do so well on those tests. I figured out that I was capable of more than I realized. And now you know why I became a teacher. **I** know you are capable of more than you realize. I'm here to help you believe that, and to figure out what to do with it going forward.

Ongoing Objectives

The most important goal of this course is for students to be more knowledgeable and skilled at making financial decisions involving saving, investing, renting, owning, working, employing others, keeping credit cards, and a bunch of other financial things!

Assignments

Assignments will vary. Some are participatory (grades = you are doing something) and others are assessed (grades = how well you answered some questions or made a product). It is expected and wise for students to complete all assignments, as assignments prepare you for tests and quizzes and zeros are notorious for bringing a grade average down. Be sure to complete any missing work.

Grading Scale

Tests/Projects:	40%
Quizzes:	35%
Classwork/Homework:	25%

LATE WORK:

Assignments are considered late if submitted after the due date/time. If that happens, here is what happens next:

Late Work with an excused absence:

3 days to complete and turn in the assignment no points deducted full credit available

Late Work with no absence, or an unexcused absence: Number of School Days

1 day late	-10 points	max 90
2 days late	-20 points	max 80
3 days late	-30 points	max 70
4 days late	-40 points	max 60
5 days or later	zero assigned to the grade book	

Strange situations happen in this pandemic modern world, though, so if you have something that prevents you or seriously makes it difficult for you to complete assignments on time, talk to me. You will find I am a good listener and a reasonable person. And I might be able to help.

Daily Required Materials

Laptop / Charger

Something to write with

Notebook of your preference (we will be doing some very real diary style and interview assignments/projects, be sure to have a reliable place to make those happen)

Expectations

The classroom is a sacred space. Learning and education are among the best ways we can improve ourselves. Therefore, I expect anyone who enters it to treat the place and the people with the same respect and courtesy they would for any other place that is special in their lives. This means:

1. Language in the room avoids profanity and swear words. We're better than that.
2. If you are bored or we have a "down" moment, you are encouraged to read your choice book for ELA, review our own work, make up something that is late or missing, and not distract or disrupt anyone trying to use their time productively.
3. One bathroom/hall pass at a time. This does not mean there will be a line at the door once someone asks for a pass. If you have a reputation for, or have established yourself, as a Waltrip Tourist don't expect a pass even if you really need one. Your reputation matters. Protect it with your behavior.
4. The school handbook is in effect at all times. Plagiarism and dress code, I am looking at you.
5. If we treat our classroom as a special place, then it is a special place. Keep it special, people.
6. Thank you in advance, for all of the above.

Unit Overviews

Unit One

The first unit introduces basic concepts including wants and needs, opportunity costs, and externalities. We will also give some attention to expenses we become responsible for after high school graduation including college tuition, room, and board, utilities, entertainment, insurance, and rent/mortgage among others.

Unit Two

We'll dive deeper into the finances of paying for college including the differences between scholarships, grants, and loans, how loans are structured, and how to look out for and even negotiate the best combination of these for yourself.

Unit Three

Here we get into basic costs of living, reasons for having and how to build a budget, the differences between wages, salaries, gross and net income, W-4s, W-2s, and income and happiness.

Unit Four

This unit will help students understand checking accounts, saving accounts, balancing a checkbook and interest, while also comparing types of checking and savings accounts.

Unit Five

In unit five students will gain knowledge about purchasing power and the nature of credit, including credit cards, credit ratings/scores, and calculating credit card interest and tracking payments and purchases.

Unit Six

This unit gets into some details about what happens when people mismanage their credit. How to get back in good standing, or maybe bankruptcy and what responsibilities people and businesses have when someone declares bankruptcy.

Unit Seven

Unit seven will teach students about loans and loan payments as well as types of loans, layaway, payday loans, installment plans, paying off loans, and why it might even cost you more to pay a loan off early (and why that might still be a good thing to do).

Unit Eight

Here we learn the differences between owning a home and renting a spot. This unit is all about mortgages, interest rates, fees, and other costs; and when it might be better to rent a place to live than to buy one.

Unit Nine

Here we get into automobiles. How to get the best deal (whether new or used), car loans, additional fees, what you are likely to be asked at the closing (be prepared to either pay more than you anticipated, or to say "no" to a lot of options they will want you to say "yes" to!). We'll also fill in any other types of insurance we haven't talked about yet, especially different forms of life insurance.

Unit Ten

We close the semester with investing, bonds, stocks, CDs, IRAs, Roth or not-Roth, retirement, and net worth. We'll also bring the whole course together with a project detailing how much money you can expect to need based on your anticipated career/salary, wants, needs, geographic location, and other variables.

If you ever have any questions for me, I do check email. I may set up a Remind system and be available by text once that's working, as well. Until then, a few closing thoughts to ponder:

“Knowledge is power: you hear it all the time, but knowledge is not power. It’s only potential power. It only becomes power when we apply it and use it. Somebody who reads a book and doesn’t apply it, they’re at no advantage over someone who’s illiterate. None of it works unless you work. We have to do our part. If knowing is half the battle, action is the second half of the battle.” — Jim Kwik

“Everything is negotiable. Whether or not the negotiation is easy is another thing.”

— Carrie Fisher

“Don’t wait to buy real estate. Buy real estate and wait.” — Will Rogers