

## Planning Routes for Life Events

Each phase of life brings its own unique adventures requiring complex decision-making. This 45-minute module helps build your financial awareness and skills so you can navigate the challenges and opportunities life presents.

**Getting Game-Ready:** In a rush of action on the field, players have to rely on their personal skills and training from their coaches to make on-the-spot decisions. In the process of even the simplest play, unexpected events can completely change the game. A blitz, an audible, or a fumble can easily shift the outcome.

Just like players on the field, we can't predict everything that our future will bring, but we can focus our energy and time on learning strategies and insights to make informed decisions. With each step we take to become better prepared mentally and financially, we can improve our ability to successfully manage major life events.

**Module Level:** Rookie, Ages 11-14

**Subjects:** Economics, Math, Finance, Consumer Sciences, Life Skills

**Materials:** Facilitators may print and photocopy handouts and quizzes for you, and direct you to the online resources below.

- **Pre- and Post-Test questions:** Answer these questions before completing the Life Events activities to see how much you already know about the topic. After you've finished all the activities with your teacher and classmates, try taking the quiz again to see how your understanding has grown.
- **Practical Money Skills Life Events resources:** [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff50](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff50)
- **Life Event Action Plan handout:** (One for each life event): Using the research tools, brainstorm and create action plans for life events such as buying a car and building an emergency fund.
- **Glossary of Terms:** Learn basic financial concepts with this list of terms.

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# Learning Objectives

- Identify personal financial goals
- Examine strategies for handling a variety of life events
- Make informed financial decisions by comparing options, benefits, costs, and potential risks
- Create an action plan for navigating life events in the future, such as buying a car, going to college, or choosing housing
- Discover ways to plan for unexpected financial decisions and expenses

## Key Terms and Concepts

Before you start the lesson, review the key terms and concepts below. The answers to each Life Events question will get you prepped and game-ready.

### What steps can I take to make informed financial decisions?

Each phase of life brings exciting choices and unique challenges. When it comes to managing your money, you can make better decisions when you're well informed.

### How can I prepare for unexpected expenses?

Unexpected events can take a lasting toll on your financial security. While you can't predict what experiences you will encounter in life, there are steps you can take to prepare for the unexpected. A job loss or an expensive car repair bill will be much more manageable if you've created a financial security net to fall back on. There are three key areas to consider in planning for the unexpected: emergency funds, insurance, and your overall budget.

### How can I navigate complex financial decisions for buying a car? Going to college? Seeking a job?

Life is full of exciting milestones and complex decisions. Whether you're buying your first car, heading off to college, or landing your first part-time job, it's important to understand the potential impact on your finances. By examining costs, considering options, and planning ahead, you'll be better prepared to make decisions to help you reach your goals.

- **Going to college.** Heading off to college means a lot of new experiences — taking classes, living independently for the first time, and managing expenses for tuition, housing, food, books, and more. Creating a spending plan can help things go smoothly.
- **Buying a car.** Get ready to hit the road by looking at the costs of buying and maintaining a car. Looking at the numbers will help you avoid sending your budget into overdrive.
- **Landing a job.** Whether you're looking for your first job or just searching for a new opportunity, there are some key things to consider. It's important to think about your interests, skills, and financial goals.



#### Did You Know?

A healthy diet and regular exercise could save you money on health care in the future.



#### Did You Know?

Most new cars lose around 20% of their value within the first year of ownership.<sup>1</sup>

## Learning Objectives, cont.

- **Family life.** Each stage of family life can present different challenges and rewards: heading out on vacation? Getting a new pet? Figuring out entertainment for the month? Get prepared by planning ahead.
- **Handling the unexpected.** While we can't predict what will happen in our future, we can prepare for the unexpected. Financial security is essential to successfully managing major life events, and that means planning to create an emergency fund and thinking about insurance.



### Did You Know?

You can open a bank account with a parent if you're a teenager.



### Did You Know?

The estimated cost of raising a child from birth to age 17 is over \$233,610 for a child born in 2015.<sup>3</sup>



### Did You Know?

Your parents' private health insurance can cover you until you turn 26, even if you don't live at home.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Carfax.com

<sup>2</sup>Experian

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) 2015 Expenditures on Children by Families report, also known as "The Cost of Raising a Child."

<sup>4</sup>HealthCare.gov

# Student Activities

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- > Life Events Pre- and Post-Test
- > Going to College Action Plan handout
- > Buying a Car Action Plan handout
- > Landing a Job Action Plan handout
- > Family Life Action Plan handout
- > Handling the Unexpected Action Plan handout

# Life Events Pre- and Post-Test

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Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer the questions with the most appropriate answer, noting a, b, c, d or filling in the blank.

**1. What are some common expenses for students?**

**2. You can purchase a car through:**

- a. A car dealer
- b. An auction
- c. A private seller
- d. All of the above

**3. If you break your phone, you may have to pay a deductible before insurance will cover a replacement.**

- a. True
- b. False

**4. You can earn college scholarships during middle school, high school, and college.**

- a. True
- b. False

**5. A \_\_\_\_\_ can help you find a new job.**

- a. Strong professional network
- b. Resume
- c. Professional online presence
- d. All of the above

# Action Plan: Going to College

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Heading off to college means a lot of new experiences — taking classes, living independently for the first time, and managing expenses for tuition, housing, food, books, and more. Creating a spending plan can help things go smoothly. Answer the questions below after researching the costs of going to college at the links provided.

**Directions:** Before you answer the questions in this activity, visit the Practical Money Skills website to learn more about preparing to go to college.

## Set Your Sights

**What are the three general types of post-secondary schools?**

Research college types: Going to College. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff51](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff51)

**Which appeal to you most and why?**

Consider SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Related) goals: Saving Basics. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff52](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff52)

## Prepare Financially

**How do I prepare for the college admissions process?**

Choosing the path that is the right fit for you is a process that begins your first year in high school. The U.S. Department of Education compiled a grade-level-specific checklist of recommended tasks. Review the tasks for your current grade level and, if you have time, future grade levels. As an option, add each task to a calendar, such as the calendar on your phone or school planner.

- 9th grade checklist: [studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college/checklists/9th-grade](https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college/checklists/9th-grade)
- 10th grade checklist: [studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college/checklists/10th-grade](https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college/checklists/10th-grade)
- 11th grade checklist: [studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college/checklists/11th-grade](https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college/checklists/11th-grade)
- 12th grade checklist: [studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college/checklists/12th-grade](https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college/checklists/12th-grade)

## Action Plan: Going to College, cont.

### How much will school cost and what are my aid options?

The published price for college is rarely the price you pay. Many students receive grants or scholarships; however, they won't know what the price will be until they receive financial award letters. According to the College Board, the average tuition and fees for the 2018–2019 school year were \$35,830 at private colleges, \$10,230 for state residents at public colleges, and \$26,290 for out-of-state residents attending public universities. These costs do not include room and board. Before selecting colleges you want to apply to, explore costs for a number of factors, including tuition. Use the U.S. Department of Education Search Tool to identify five affordable college options: [collegescorecard.ed.gov](https://collegescorecard.ed.gov)

In order to receive financial aid for college, students will need to apply each year online at [fafsa.ed.gov](https://fafsa.ed.gov), which provides loans for almost all two- and four-year colleges, universities, and career schools in the country. The amount of aid you receive may vary from one year to the next.

Remember that not everyone who applies receives aid. Grants and loan packages are awarded according to your income and the tuition of the school you're applying to. You can estimate how much aid you might be eligible for by using the federal government's Student Aid Eligibility calculator ([studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/estimate](https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/estimate)).

When it comes to financial aid, you have two main options:

- **Scholarships and merit-based aid.** Did you get good grades in high school? That will help when you apply for scholarships and merit-based aid. Even if the answer is no, there are still plenty of opportunities — you'd be amazed at the sheer variety of scholarships out there. Do your research — there may be money waiting for you depending on where you were born, what your career goals are, and what extracurricular activities you've been involved in.
- **Student loans and need-based aid.** If you're not eligible for scholarships or merit-based aid (or if these don't cover the whole bill), there are other options. Find out how much need-based aid you're eligible for through your school or through a lender. If that's not enough, other institutions also offer financial assistance, though they may use different formulas with different results.

Be sure you understand your loan repayment responsibilities before accepting financial aid. If it's a grant, it doesn't have to be repaid. Loans do have to be repaid with interest upon graduation. If you're going to go that route, shop around for a good interest rate — you'd be surprised how much difference a couple of percentage points make over time. To find out just how much, explore your options using the Repaying Student Loans calculator.

### Federal Financial Aid

The William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program is the sole government-backed loan program in the United States. Also known as Stafford Loans, these provide funding directly to students and their parents or guardians in two general varieties:

## Action Plan: Going to College, cont.

- **Subsidized.** Available only to undergraduate students. Eligibility is based on demonstrated financial need. The federal government pays the interest while you are in school on at least a half-time basis.
- **Unsubsidized.** Available to undergraduate and graduate students. Eligibility is not based on financial need and the borrower is responsible for paying all the interest.

### Federal Perkins Loans

The Federal Perkins loan is a campus-based loan program, awarded by the college or university's financial aid office to undergraduate and graduate students with exceptional financial need. The interest rate on the Federal Perkins loan is fixed at 5%.

### PLUS Loans

As its name suggests, federal Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS) loans are loans that parents can take out on behalf of a dependent undergraduate child who is enrolled at least half-time at an eligible school. The child must meet general eligibility requirements for federal student aid. These loans can also be taken by graduate or professional students to supplement other financial aid packages. The loan amount is the total cost of attendance minus the borrower's total financial aid package. For example, if tuition costs \$30,000 per year and the student is receiving \$25,000 from other sources, the maximum PLUS loan would be \$5,000.

### Loan Limits

Most student loans have several types of limits on the amount you can borrow:

- Annual loan limits determine the maximum amount you can borrow in a single academic year.
- Aggregate loan limits, sometimes called cumulative limits, describe the total amount you are allowed to borrow during your academic career.
- Cost of attendance (COA) limits specify that the loan amount must be less than the school's official cost of attendance minus other financial aid received.

**Imagine that your parents aren't aware of options that can help you pay for college and you have to email them information on the basics. Construct an example of an email explaining to your parents the following:**

- Why a subsidized loan is better than an unsubsidized loan, if you must borrow money.
- How grants and scholarships are similar.
- Why grants and scholarships are better than loans.

**Resources:** Prepare Financially. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff58](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff58)

Grants. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff59](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff59)

## Action Plan: Going to College, cont.

Comparing the costs of colleges can be challenging. Many experts believe you should never borrow more for college than what you can expect to earn your first year after graduation. To ensure you know before you owe, review the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s (CFPB) Compare Schools to help compare college costs and financial aid offers. This can help you and your parents make an informed financial decision.

**Resource:** [consumerfinance.gov/paying-for-college/compare-financial-aid-and-college-cost](https://consumerfinance.gov/paying-for-college/compare-financial-aid-and-college-cost)

### Budgeting in College

**Directions:** Research what your budgeting and spending might look like once you’re on campus.

**Resource:** Budgeting in College. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff61](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff61)

**Would you choose to live at home, on campus, or off campus? Why?**

**Beyond housing and tuition, what other expenses should be considered?**

**What ways could you earn money while in school? Can you invest while in school?**

### Repaying Loans

School loans are not free money. Thinking ahead for your future self, consider how much a loan will really cost.

#### How Much Will Your Loan Really Cost?

**Directions:** Assume you choose to borrow \$40,000 over four years to go to college. Respond to each of the questions using this How Much Will Your Loan Really Cost? financial calculator [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff62](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff62)

- **Loan #1:** 5% interest rate, length of loan 120 months
  - Minimum monthly payment: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Total finance charge: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Total payment amount (including interest): \_\_\_\_\_

## Action Plan: Going to College, cont.

- **Loan #2:** 8% interest rate, length of loan 120 months
  - Minimum monthly payment: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Total finance charge: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Total payment amount (including interest): \_\_\_\_\_
  
- **Loan #3:** 8% interest rate, length of loan 168 months
  - Minimum monthly payment: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Total finance charge: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Total payment amount (including interest): \_\_\_\_\_

**How does the interest rate affect the cost of borrowing?**

**How does the length of the loan affect the monthly payment?**

**How does the length of the loan affect the amount paid in interest?**

## Building a Support Team and Taking Next Steps

To whom can you talk to in order to find out more about your college options? What actions can you take now to prepare for college?

# Action Plan: Buying a Car

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Ready to hit the road? Not so fast. A car can be more than just your personal transportation. Your new set of wheels can improve your quality of life by bringing more ease and convenience, but it's also a major purchase that involves regular maintenance and additional costs such as insurance, license, and registration fees. Because of this, you'll want to choose a car that won't send your budget into overdrive. There are many routes you can take to buying a car.

**Directions:** After reading the Buying a Car content on Practical Money Skills, answer the following questions with as many details as possible.

**Resource:** Buying a Car. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff63](http://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff63)

## Set Your Sights

**What type of car are you interested in and why?**

(include estimated cost; the make, model, and year; whether it's new or used; and whether it is a hybrid, gas, or electric-powered car)

**What other costs will you need to consider in addition to the car payment?**

## Prepare Financially

**Will you buy used or new? Or will you lease your car? What are the benefits and drawbacks of each?**

Research buying used or new, or leasing using the resources below.

Buying a Used Car. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff64](http://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff64)

Leasing a Car. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff65](http://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff65)

## Action Plan: Buying a Car, cont.

### How much car can you afford?

Use this How Much Car Can You Afford calculator to consider options: [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff66](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff66)

### How will you pay for your car?

Research ways to finance a car: Auto Financing. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff67](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff67)

## Building a Support Team and Taking Next Steps

### What strategies can you use to get a good deal?

**Resource:** Getting a Good Deal. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff68](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff68)

### What actions can you take now to prepare for buying a car?

# Action Plan: Landing a Job

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Whether you're looking for your first job, searching for a new opportunity, or making plans for your future career, getting a job is a major milestone. You will want to consider not only what job is best suited to your interests and skills, but also what career choice will let you live comfortably within your means.

**Directions:** Do your homework before starting this activity by learning more about landing a job using the resource below.

**Resource:** Landing a Job. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff75](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff75)

## Set Your Sights

If you had to choose a career for your adult self, what would it be, and why?

What kind of jobs or internships can you take as a teen to help prepare you for your future career?

What skills are valued most for the career and job you listed?

## Preparing for the Job Search

Research how to prepare for a job search before answering the questions.

**Resource:** Preparing for the Search. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff76](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff76)

You are your own brand and may have a digital footprint from social media or website interactions. If an employer or college admissions officer did an online search for you, what would they see? If you're not sure, try it yourself and do what's necessary to improve your digital brand.

## Action Plan: Landing a Job, cont.

### Choose between the options below:

- **Option #1:** Write a resume and cover letter that you can add to a summer job application, to help you stand apart from other job applicants.
- **Option #2:** Imagine you are 30 years old. Based on your current aspirations for your education and career, construct a resume and cover letter for your 30-year-old self, and when you're done, use it as a college and career road map.
- **Option #3:** Create a LinkedIn account highlighting your professional strengths.

### Share three tips for making yourself stand out as a potential employee.

## Acing the Interview

Discover tips and resources to help prep before the job interview:

**Resource:** The Interview. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff77](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff77)

**What kind of questions might an interviewer ask you? How might you prepare to answer those questions?**

**Using the Problem-Action-Solution (PAR) outline, craft an example that highlights a time you successfully solved a problem.**

## Action Plan: Landing a Job, cont.

### Working From Home: Building a Side Hustle or Business

One of the fastest-growing segments of America's workforce is the self-employed. Is a side hustle or business ownership in your future? Answer the following questions to see if such a gig is right for you.

**Resource:** Working from Home. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff78](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff78)

#### What does it take to be your own boss?

Research working from home and list three things that need to be handled if you are self-employed.

#### What skills might you use to work from home?

### Taking Next Steps

How could you begin building job skills now with an internship or volunteer position?

**Resource:** Internship Resources. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff79](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff79)

# Action Plan: Family Life

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Each stage of family life can present different challenges and rewards: Heading out on vacation? Getting a new pet? Figuring out entertainment for the month? Get prepared by planning ahead.

**Directions:** Your teacher will assign this activity as an individual or group exercise.

## Set Your Sights

**Which of the following family life adventures is most interesting to you? Why?**

- Welcoming a new pet
- Planning a trip
- Hosting a party

*Note: Depending on your selection above, work on your Action Plan only.*

## Welcoming a Pet

To provide the best care for a pet, you'll want to be able to afford to meet its needs, including the basics like food and health care. With this in mind, think carefully and review your budget before deciding to welcome an animal into your family.

**Resource:** How to Save Money While Welcoming a New Pet to Your Home. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff83](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff83)

**What kind of pet are you interested in?**

## Action Plan: Family Life, cont.

**Is this pet affordable in your life? What are the up-front costs? What are the recurring costs?**

(List items and estimated prices)

Items	Cost
	Total: \$

### Planning a Trip

From choosing a spot to getting your gear, learn about five ways to save before setting off on your next adventure. Read the article at the link below before answering the questions.

**Resource:** How to Save Money on Your Next Outdoor Adventure [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff84](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff84)

**What kind of trip are you interested in taking? Where will you go?**

**What will your budget be for the whole trip?**

**Calculate the costs and record your total. How did you stay within your budget?**

Use the Travel Budgeting calculator: [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff85](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff85)

Before boarding the plane or departing on a road trip, use the Travel Budgeting calculator to help map out your expenses so you don't spend beyond your means.

## Action Plan: Family Life, cont.

### Hosting a Party

Hosting a party requires planning. Use the Entertainment Planner calculator to budget for your party so you don't overspend. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff86](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff86)

**What kind of event are you hosting? (Birthday celebration, graduation party, Pi Day party, etc.)**

**What will your budget be for the whole event?**

**Calculate the costs and record your total. How did you stay within your budget?**

Use the Entertainment Planner Calculator: [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff86](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff86)

# Action Plan: Handling the Unexpected

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While we can't predict what will happen in our future, we can prepare for the unexpected. Financial security is essential to successfully managing major life events, and that means planning to create an emergency fund and thinking about insurance.

**Directions:** Do your homework before beginning this activity; learn more about handling the unexpected at the resource listed below.

**Resource:** Handling the Unexpected. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff92](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff92)

## Building an Emergency Fund

An emergency fund is money that you have saved to help you cover unexpected costs that come with everyday life. Experts say it's smart to build and maintain an emergency fund with three to six months' worth of living expenses.

**Resource:** Building an Emergency Fund [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff90](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff90)

**Nearly half of Americans cannot come up with \$1,000 in the event of an emergency.<sup>5</sup> Construct a list of possible emergencies that someone could not afford to pay for without having three to six months' worth of expenses set aside in a savings account for that purpose.**

**How much should you save for an emergency fund if your total monthly expenses are \$250? Or \$1,000?**

Take a look at your finances and determine how much you should be saving in preparation for the unexpected. A typical emergency fund should cover three to six months' worth of expenses.

**Resource:** Emergency Fund financial calculator [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff91](https://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff91)

**If your friend had an emergency fund goal of \$1,500 and can save \$100 per month, how long would it take to build an emergency fund?**

<sup>5</sup>Bankrate's January 2019 Financial Security Index survey

## Action Plan: Handling the Unexpected, cont.

### Insurance in Case of Emergency

Unexpected events can take a lasting toll on your financial security. While you can't predict what experiences you will encounter in life, there are steps you can take to prepare for the unexpected by having insurance.

**Resource:** Planning for the Unexpected. [practicalmoneyskills.com/ff92](http://practicalmoneyskills.com/ff92)

**What is insurance?**

**How can insurance help in handling the unexpected?**

**Summarize how each type of insurance below protects/helps in case of the unexpected:**

**Medical/health insurance**

**Life insurance**

**Auto insurance**

**Renters insurance**

## Action Plan: Handling the Unexpected, cont.

### Homeowners insurance



# Glossary of Terms

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Study this list of personal finance terms to help warm up before playing Financial Football. By mastering these terms, you will have a better opportunity to answer questions in the game correctly and score.

**401(k):** A 401(k) is a feature of a qualified, employer-sponsored retirement plan that allows eligible employees to contribute a portion of their wages to individual accounts.

**529 plan:** A savings plan operated by a state or educational institution, designed to help set aside funds for future college costs. Savings deposited in a 529 plan grows tax-free until withdrawn.

**Annuities:** An annuity is an investment agreement in which you pay an insurance company a specified amount of money and the insurer invests it for you with the promise to pay you back on a future date or series of dates.

**Assets:** Anything of material value owned by an individual or company. This may include your house, car, furniture — anything that's worth money.

**Auto insurance:** Insurance designed to cover a driver, and often a vehicle, financially in the event of an accident or theft.

**Bookkeeping:** The recording of financial transactions and exchanges.

**Budget:** A plan for future spending and saving, weighing estimated income against estimated expenses.

**Capital gains:** Profits from the sale of an investment.

**Career objective:** The goal of your current career efforts, or a short statement of definition on a resume about the position you are seeking.

**Cash flow:** The total amount of money being transferred into or out of a business, account, or an individual's budget.

**Copayment:** Primarily for health insurance; the amount you owe each time you visit the doctor after you have met your deductible.

**Collateral:** An asset or amount of money provided as security for repayment of a loan.

**Collision insurance:** Auto insurance that covers certain costs if your vehicle is damaged.

**Cost comparison:** Comparing the cost of two or more goods or services in an effort to find the best value.

**Cost-benefit analysis:** Analyzing whether the cost of an item is more than, equal to, or less than the benefit that comes from its purchase.

**Deductible:** The amount an insured person must pay for services before the insurance provider begins to cover costs.

**Depreciation:** The decrease in value of assets over time.

**Down payment:** The amount a consumer pays up front for something on the day of the purchase.

**Emergency fund:** Money set aside for emergency expenses, recommended to cover 3–6 months of expenses.

## Glossary of Terms, cont.

**Employer-sponsored savings plan:** A benefit plan offered by an employer for employees at relatively low cost.

**Entrepreneur:** Someone who owns or operates his or her own business.

**Estate:** The whole of an individual's possessions, including property and debts.

**Estate plan:** The process of arranging for the dispersal of an individual's estate in the event of death.

**Executor:** A person or institution appointed to carry out the terms of a will.

**Expenses:** The money an individual spends regularly for items or services.

**Federal taxable wages:** The sum of all earnings by an employee that are subject to a specific taxation.

**Flexible savings account (FSA):** A special account you put money into that you use to pay for certain out-of-pocket health care costs. You don't pay taxes on this money. This means you'll save an amount equal to the taxes you would have paid on the money you set aside. There are two types of FSAs — one for health-care-related expenses and the other for dependent-care-related expenses. The accounts are separate, and you may sign up for either or both during your open enrollment period. FSAs offer a way for those with health insurance to set aside money that is pretaxed to pay for their health care costs, known as "qualified expenses," which include (but are not limited to) deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, monthly prescriptions, and more. They can also be used for expenses incurred out of network.

**Foreclosure:** A legal process in which a mortgaged property is confiscated because the borrower has failed to keep up payments.

**Grants:** Grants are a type of financial aid that you don't have to repay and are usually based on financial need. Grants can come from the federal government, your state government, your college or career school, or a private or nonprofit organization. It is a sum of money given for a particular purpose, such as college tuition.

**Gross income:** The total amount of money an individual has earned before voluntary deductions, such as 401(k) contributions, and involuntary deductions, such as taxes are taken out.

**Health insurance:** Insurance designed to cover the costs of health care expenses.

**Health savings account (HSA):** A pretax savings account designed specifically for medical expenses. Only those who have high-deductible health plans can select an HSA. For you to qualify for a HSA, this high-deductible health plan (HDHP) must be your only health insurance plan, you must not be eligible for Medicare, and you cannot be claimed as a dependent on someone else's tax return.

**Homeowners insurance:** Insurance designed to cover the costs of damage to home or property in the event of a theft, natural disaster, or other unexpected event.

**Income:** Payment received for goods or services, including employment.

**Income tax:** Tax levied by a government directly on personal income.

**Individual retirement account fund (IRA):** A retirement account that allows individuals to contribute a limited yearly sum toward retirement on either a pretax (traditional IRA) or after-tax (Roth IRA) basis.

## Glossary of Terms, cont.

**Inflation:** The overall increase in the cost of products and services over time.

**Insurance:** An agreement that helps to protect against financial risk in the event something unexpected happens.

**Insurance policy:** A contract between a consumer and insurance company outlining coverage plans.

**Lease:** A contract outlining the rental terms of a piece of property, whether a car, an apartment, or another space.

**Liabilities:** Everything that you owe, which may include your mortgage, credit card balance, interest, student loans, and loans from family and friends.

**Life insurance:** Provides financial protection for one's family in the event of one's death. It is primarily designed to replace the income stream relied on by beneficiaries.

**Loan:** Money or assets borrowed and paid back with interest over time.

**Loan principal:** An amount borrowed that remains unpaid, excluding interest.

**Long-term financial goal:** A financial goal that will take longer than a year to achieve.

**Mortgage:** A loan secured in order to purchase property.

**Mortgage payment:** The payment a borrower makes each month toward the purchase of a home.

**Mortgage term:** The agreed-upon amount of time to pay off a mortgage.

**Net worth:** Your financial wealth at one point in time. The formula to calculate net worth is simple:  
Net worth = assets – liabilities

**Opportunity cost:** The loss of potential gain from other alternatives when one alternative is chosen.

**Premium:** The amount paid to an insurance provider monthly in order to maintain an insurance plan.

**Private mortgage insurance (PMI):** Insurance to help protect a mortgage lender in the event a borrower cannot make payments.

**Property tax:** A capital tax on property based on its estimated value.

**Purchase price:** The price paid for an item or service.

**Renters insurance:** Covers your personal property in a rented apartment, condo, or home against unexpected circumstances such as theft, a fire, or sewer backup damage — and will pay you for lost or damaged possessions. It can also help protect you from liability if someone is injured on your property.

**Scholarship:** An award of financial aid for the purpose of education that does not need to be repaid. This is a grant-in-aid to a student (as by a college or foundation).

**Short-term financial goal:** A financial goal that will require less than six months to achieve.

**SMART goals:** An acronym guideline for setting financial goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Related.

## Glossary of Terms, cont.

**Social Security taxes:** A tax on individuals used to fund the U.S. government's Social Security program based on earnings history.

**Student loan:** A loan, offered to students for education-related expenses, that must be repaid.

**Thrift Savings Plan (TSP):** A retirement savings and investment plan for federal employees and members of the uniformed services.

**Tuition:** Fees paid in exchange for instruction from a school (primary, high school, college, vocational).

**Unexpected expenses:** Unplanned for and unforeseen expenses. An emergency fund can help with these expenses.

**Variable expenses:** Expenses that change in price and frequency each month.