



Activity: Reality Check!

Focus: College & Career Pathways

Materials: Paycheck Sheet, Budgeting Handout, Reality Check Station Sheets, Pencil ; Links to Assist: [Paycheck Sheet](#) , [Budgeting Handout](#) , [Reality Check Station Sheets](#)

Grade Range: 7th & 8th

Time: 30 Minutes

Synopsis: Mentors will explain to students that being able to budget your money is an important skill to have when they get jobs in the future. Students will then be given fake checks and go around 4 different classroom stations: Rent, Groceries, Bills, Entertainment, and Transportation/Gas. At each station, students will choose what expenses they want to make and fill out their budgeting sheet as they go along. At the end, mentors and students will go over their budget sheets and see if students were able to mindfully budget all the expenses.

Instructions:

1. Mentors will begin the lesson by explaining to students that being able to budget your money is an important skill to have. Budgeting is defined as, "A spending plan for your money that ensures that you will always have enough money for the things you need and the things that are important to you."
2. Next, tell students that today's lesson is a budgeting simulation. Give the fake check handout sheet, as well as the budgeting hand sheet to each student. This fake check will contain \$2,000 and the budgeting sheet is broken down into several categories such as: Rent, Groceries, Bills, Entertainment, and Transportation/Gas.
3. Break students up into groups and explain that they will go to each station and choose how to spend and save their money. As they choose what expenses they believe to be important, students will subtract the designated amounts from their \$2,000 starting point by using the budgeting sheet provided.
4. Give students 15-20 minutes to go around the stations—roughly 5 minutes each. Mentors, be sure to help students fill out their budgeting sheets by doing the math to see how much money they have and what is remaining at the end!
5. Once students have gone through and completed each station, regroup, and take student volunteers to explain how they budgeted and what they choose/why. Mentors, be sure to share how you budget in your own lives!