

# Getting banked

Students select a local bank or credit union to research to learn about what to consider when choosing a financial institution.

## Learning goals

### Big idea

Finding a bank or credit union that works best for you can help you manage your finances.

### Essential questions

- Why is it helpful to work with a bank or credit union?
- What local bank or credit union might meet your banking needs now or in the future?

### Objectives

- Learn about a local bank or credit union's products, services, locations, rates, and other factors
- Reflect on whether the bank or credit union might meet the student's banking needs now or in the future



### NOTE

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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 habits and norms
-  Financial knowledge and decision-making skills

**Grade level:** High school (9-12)

**Age range:** 13-19

**Topic:** Earn (Becoming an entrepreneur), Save and invest (Banking options, Choosing how to save), Spend (Buying things, Paying bills)

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

**Teaching strategy:** Blended learning, Personalized instruction

**Bloom's Taxonomy level:** Understand, Apply

**Activity duration:** 45-60 minutes

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### National Standards for Personal Financial Education, 2021

Spending: 8-2, 8-3, 8-4, 12-1, 12-2, 12-3, 12-5, 12-8, 12-9

Saving: 8-1, 8-3, 8-4, 8-6, 12-1, 12-2, 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

- Explore a local bank or credit union’s website to learn about its products, services, locations, rates, and other factors.
- Answer questions about what the bank or credit union has to offer and reflect on whether the student would consider banking there now or in the future.

## Preparing for this activity

- While it’s not necessary, completing the [“Banking basics card game”](#) 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.
- Make a list of a few local banks and credit unions that students can research in case they can’t find one on their own.
- Obtain computers or tablets with Internet access so students can conduct research.
  - Note: If you can’t arrange for students to have individual or group access, this can be done as a whole-class activity by projecting a bank or credit union’s website on a screen from a computer.

### What you’ll need

#### THIS TEACHER GUIDE

- [Getting banked \(guide\)](#)  
[cfpb\\_building\\_block\\_activities\\_getting-banked\\_guide.pdf](#)
- **A list of a few local banks and credit unions**

#### STUDENT MATERIALS

- [Getting banked \(worksheet\)](#)  
[cfpb\\_building\\_block\\_activities\\_getting-banked\\_worksheet.pdf](#)
- **Computers or tablets with Internet access**

## Exploring key financial concepts

Financial products and services are the tools you use to store money, make payments and purchases, send money to someone, and borrow money, which allows you to make major purchases like houses and cars, and pay for them over

time. Financial products and services include savings accounts, checking accounts, debit cards, mobile banking, and online banking. They also include credit cards, bill-payment services, and loans. While other businesses offer some of these products and services, many people choose to use banks and credit unions for these types of financial services. Almost all deposits at banks and credit unions are insured for up to \$250,000 by one of two federal agencies. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation insures bank deposits. The National Credit Union Administration insures credit union deposits. This means that if your bank or credit union fails or goes out of business, the federal government will cover any loss of your deposits up to \$250,000. Another benefit of having a checking or savings account at a bank or credit union is that when you have a job or when you receive financial aid while at college, you can generally have your money deposited directly into your account without fees.

Choosing a bank or credit union can be an important decision. It's helpful to research a bank or credit union's products and services and explore factors such as locations, rates, and fees. Knowing as much as you can before you open an account can help you choose the bank or credit union that works for you.

## TIP

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Because banking 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 if someone they know has a bank or credit union account.
  - If so, ask them to share some things they know about bank or credit union accounts.
- Read the “Exploring key financial concepts” section to students.
- Be sure students understand key vocabulary:
  - **ATM:** Stands for “automated teller machine,” a machine that lets bank customers perform basic transactions, such as deposits and withdrawals.
  - **Bank:** A financial institution and business that accepts deposits, makes loans, and handles other financial transactions.
  - **Bill-payment service:** A service you set up with a bank, credit union, prepaid card account, or a business you owe money to that lets you pay bills online or through a mobile app.

- **Checking account:** An account at a bank (sometimes called a share draft account at a credit union) that allows you to make deposits, pay bills, and make withdrawals.
- **Credit card:** An open-ended loan that allows you to borrow money up to a certain limit and carry over an unpaid balance from month to month. There is no fixed time to repay the loan as long as you make the minimum payment due each month. You pay interest on any outstanding credit card loan balance.
- **Credit union:** A cooperative financial institution that is chartered by the National Credit Union Administration (a federal independent agency) or a state government and is owned by its individual members.
- **Debit card:** A card used to make purchases at businesses (like grocery stores and gas stations) with money in your checking account.
- **Loan:** Money that needs to be repaid by the borrower, generally with interest.
- **Mobile banking:** A service that allows you to use your smartphone or tablet to manage your bank or credit union account without the aid of a teller. Generally, you can deposit checks into your account using this service, but not cash.
- **Online banking:** A service that allows you to use a secure website to manage your bank or credit union account without the aid of a teller. While you can transfer money between accounts using this service, you generally cannot deposit checks or cash.
- **Savings account:** An account at a bank (sometimes called a share savings account at a credit union) used to set aside money and that pays you interest.

## TIP

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Visit CFPB's financial education glossary at [consumerfinance.gov/financial-education-glossary/](https://consumerfinance.gov/financial-education-glossary/).

## Individual or group work

- Distribute the "Getting banked" worksheet to each student.
- Tell students that they'll research a nearby bank or credit union to decide whether they might consider banking there now or in the future.
- Students can work individually or as a group but should complete their own worksheet.
- Give a computer or tablet with Internet access to each student or group of students.
- Ask students to name a bank or credit union near their home or school that they'd like to explore.

- If some students can't identify a nearby bank or credit union, give them one from your list.
- Have students visit the bank or credit union's website and search for information to answer the worksheet questions.
- Students will then answer the reflection questions.

## Wrap-up

- Bring the students together and ask for volunteers to briefly share what they found useful or interesting about the bank or credit union they researched.
- Ask for volunteers to share their answers to the reflection questions.

## Suggested next steps

Consider searching for other [CFPB activities](#) that address the topics of earning (including becoming an entrepreneur), saving and investing (including banking options and choosing how to save), or spending (including buying things and paying bills). Suggested activities include "[Checking account basics](#)" and "[Playing a banking fact and fiction game](#)".

Before choosing a bank or credit union, it's helpful to find out whether any consumer complaints have been filed against it. You may consider having students search for the bank or credit union they chose on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Consumer Complaint Database at <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/data-research/consumer-complaints/>.

## 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.