



The following questions can be used as “exit tickets” or other reflective tools for students after completing each session of the online simulation.

Session One: The Truth Revealed

The simulation begins with a “Go Wild” round in which students must purchase eight different items without considering their cost, causing a definite failure in budgeting that emphasizes the importance of financial planning. Following the “Go Wild” activity, each student receives his/her randomly assigned unique Life Situation consisting of a personal account number, family status, job title, gross annual income, and monthly Federal Tax, Social Security, and Medicare amounts. Using financial information contained in the Life Situation, each student calculates his/her Net Monthly Income (NMI). During this session, students also calculate percentages (based on their NMI) that will later be used as minimum and maximum guidelines for spending in each personal budget category.

Possible Reflection Questions

- Can I cover my wants and needs with the average salary of a high school graduate?
- What goes into calculating net monthly income?
- How do income tax and other taxes impact the amount of money I bring home each paycheck?

Session Two: The Big Search

Students explore JA Finance Park, enter each business, listen to salespeople introduce their respective budget categories, and then collect Option Sheets that outline options available for purchase. Once they’ve gathered all 18 Option Sheets, they must sort the budget categories into Primary Expenses and Secondary Expenses.

Possible Reflection Questions

- Give an example of a primary and a secondary expense?
- In your opinion, what is the difference between a primary and secondary expense?
- Why should you have a minimum and a maximum that you will spend in each budget category?

Session Three: The Budget Puzzle

This core activity in the JA Finance Park Virtual simulation requires the students to view each Option Sheet, consider all available choices for that budget category, and select the items or services on that Option Sheet that fall within their minimum and maximum monthly spending range. Students are instructed to aim for a Remaining Balance of \$0 after all decisions have been made, but they may move on to the next session if they achieve a balance of \$25 or less. Prior to the conclusion of this session, any student with remaining dollars will find that the system automatically places this remaining money into their savings account. During this session, some students receive an Unlucky Chance Card, which requires them to spend some of their NMI on expenses they did not plan for in their budget. These students must revisit their already completed budget altering some decisions to free up necessary funds to pay for the Unlucky Chance Card expense.

Possible Reflection Questions

- What was the most challenging part of balancing your budget?
- What would you use the money you set aside in savings for?
- What was one thing you learned about financial decisions in today’s simulation?
- If you received an unlucky chance card, what adjustments did you have to make? If you received a lucky chance card, how did you decide to spend the one-time bonus of extra money?

Session Four: The Final Commitment

Following and the creation of their monthly budget in Session Three, students spend Session 4 returning to each JA Finance Park Virtual business to pay their monthly bills. All bills must be paid using either a check or a debit card. Following the completion of each successful payment transaction, students must record the amount spent in the business and keep a running balance on their Account Ledger.

Possible Reflection Questions

- Why should you keep an accurate account ledger?
- How did it feel to pay the bills you committed to paying in the previous session?
- What is one thing you learned that you can apply in your life now?
- What is one thing you learned that you can apply in your life in the future?