

LESSON PLAN

Understanding Credit Scores

- IT'S A -
**MONEY
THING®**

INCLUDED IN THIS PACKAGE

- **LESSON PLAN** (2 pages)
- **ACTIVITY A** (3 pages)
- **ACTIVITY B** (1 page)
- **QUIZ** (1 page)
- **ACTIVITY A ANSWER KEY** (2 pages)
- **ACTIVITY B ANSWER KEY** (2 pages)
- **QUIZ ANSWER KEY** (1 page)

COLLECT FROM YOUR LIBRARY

- **VIDEO 02** (Breakdown of a Credit Score)
- **VIDEO 04** (Boost Your Credit Score)
- **HANDOUT 02** (Breakdown of a Credit Score)
- **HANDOUT 04** (Boost Your Credit Score)
- **PRESENTATION 02** (Breakdown of a Credit Score)

765





LESSON PLAN

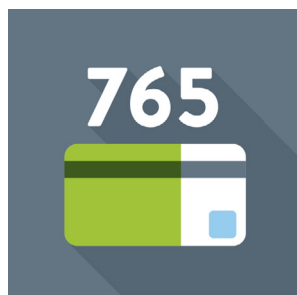
Understanding Credit Scores

GRADES

7 to 12

TIME

45 minutes



OVERVIEW

As young people begin to create their credit history, it's easy for a lack of knowledge and experience to create long-term financial detriments. The mindset of 'buy now, pay later' can be addictive for youths, and influence their financial trajectory for years to come. By learning how credit scores work, and the various factors that are used to calculate them, young people can empower themselves to make better financial decisions.

GOALS

- Introduce students to the concept of credit scores, how they're calculated and why they're important
- Provide students with the knowledge to form good credit habits

OBJECTIVES

- Define a credit score and identify its contributing factors
- Demonstrate both positive and negative practices that influence credit scores
- Read and interpret a monthly credit card statement
- Read and interpret a credit report

ASSESSMENT

Activities A and B can be used to gauge student understanding. An optional quiz has been provided with this lesson plan (the quiz is not factored into the lesson's 45-minute runtime).

Did you know?** This lesson plan explores concepts from Standard 4 (Using Credit) from the **Council for Economic Education's National Standards for Financial Literacy.

MATERIALS

- ☐ **VIDEO 02**—*Breakdown of a Credit Score*
- ☐ **VIDEO 04**—*Boost Your Credit Score*
- ☐ **HANDOUT 02**—*Breakdown of a Credit Score*
- ☐ **HANDOUT 04**—*Boost Your Credit Score*
- ☐ **PRESENTATION 02**—*Breakdown of a Credit Score*
- ☐ **ACTIVITY A**—*Credit Score Match and Answer Key*
- ☐ **ACTIVITY B**—*Spot the Bad Credit Choices and Answer Key*
- ☐ **QUIZ**—*Understanding Credit Scores and Answer Key*

PREPARATION

- Gather digital materials (videos and presentation)
- Print **HANDOUT 02** and **HANDOUT 04** for each student
- (Optional) Print **QUIZ** (Understanding Credit Scores) for each student
- Print and cut out cards for **ACTIVITY A**
- Prepare **ACTIVITY B** by either printing out physical copies for students or by preparing a copy for in-class display

Understanding Credit Scores

NOTES

[illegible]



ACTIVITY A

Understanding Credit Scores

CREDIT SCORE MATCH

Directions: Place cards in 'Positive Impact' and 'Negative Impact' piles.

01

**PAID BILLS ON TIME,
EVERY TIME**

02

**OPENED A FEW
CREDIT ACCOUNTS
AND NEVER
USED THEM**

03

**HAVE A CREDIT
CARD WITH HIGH
LIMIT AND LOW
BALANCE**

04

**HAVE A
LONG CREDIT
HISTORY**

05

**USING 10%
OF AVAILABLE
CREDIT**

06

**HAVE A BROAD
MIX OF DIFFERENT
CREDIT TYPES**

07

**USE A CREDIT CARD
FOR REGULAR
EXPENSES, PAYING
IT OFF IMMEDIATELY
EACH TIME**

08

**CHECKED CREDIT
REPORT AND HAD
INCORRECT INFO
REMOVED**

09

**SKIPPED A PAYMENT
THEN MADE IT UP
THE NEXT MONTH**

CREDIT SCORE MATCH

Directions: Place cards in 'Positive Impact' and 'Negative Impact' piles.





10

**PAID BILLS ON TIME,
ONCE**



11

**OPENED A FEW
CREDIT ACCOUNTS
AND USED THEM ALL
TO THE MAX**



12

**HAVE A CREDIT
CARD WITH HIGH
LIMIT AND HIGH
BALANCE**



13

**HAVE NO CREDIT
HISTORY**




14

**USING 60%
OF AVAILABLE
CREDIT**



15

**USE A SINGLE LINE
OF CREDIT FOR
ALL YOUR NEEDS**



16

**USE A CREDIT CARD
FOR A BIG IMPULSE
PURCHASE**





17

**HAD MANY
CREDIT CHECKS
PERFORMED BY
LENDERS**



18

**FINALLY PAID OFF A
BIG OUTSTANDING
BALANCE**



19

**HAVE A CREDIT
CARD WITH LOW
LIMIT AND LOW
BALANCE**



20

**USING 30%
OF AVAILABLE
CREDIT**



21

**OPENED A FEW
CREDIT ACCOUNTS
AND USED THEM
SPARINGLY**

CREDIT SCORE MATCH

Directions: Place cards in 'Positive Impact' and 'Negative Impact' piles.



22

**PAID BILLS LATE,
ONCE**




23

**CLOSED A CREDIT
CARD ACCOUNT
TO BEGIN PAYING
IT OFF**




24

**HAVE A CREDIT
CARD WITH A HIGH
INTEREST RATE
AND UNUSED
REWARDS**




25

**DECLARED
BANKRUPTCY
FIVE YEARS AGO**




26

**USING 90%
OF AVAILABLE
CREDIT**




27

**OPENED MANY
CREDIT ACCOUNTS
IN A SHORT TIME**





28

**USED A CREDIT
CARD TO PAY OFF
ANOTHER
CREDIT CARD**






29

**USING 70%
OF AVAILABLE
CREDIT**


30

**MADE A BUDGET
THAT TREATS YOUR
AVAILABLE CREDIT
AS INCOME**


31

**HAVE A CREDIT
CARD WITH LOW
LIMIT AND HIGH
BALANCE**





32

**USING 50%
OF AVAILABLE
CREDIT**

33

**OPENED A FEW
CREDIT ACCOUNTS
AND BUILT UP A
HIGH BALANCE
ON EACH**






ACTIVITY B

Understanding Credit Scores

SPOT THE BAD CREDIT CHOICES

Directions: Circle the bad credit choices on this example credit card statement.



CREDIT CARD STATEMENT


June 15 – July 14

ACCOUNT SUMMARY

PREVIOUS BALANCE	\$755.36
PAYMENTS AND CREDITS	\$160.20
PURCHASES	\$329.33
BALANCE TRANSFERS	\$0.00
CASH ADVANCES	\$40.00
FEES CHARGED	\$17.00
INTEREST CHARGED	\$7.52


PAYMENT INFORMATION





NEW BALANCE	\$989.01
Total Credit Available	\$1,000.00
Minimum Payment Due	\$15.00
Payment Due Date	August 5

 Last payment overdue, please pay now

Transactions

Date	Transaction details	Amount
JUNE 16	BLING KING EXPENSIVE FAKE JEWELS	\$160.20
JUNE 18	CASH ADVANCE	\$40.00
JUNE 21	*CASH ADVANCE FEE	\$5.00
JUNE 27	MOONBUCKS COFFEE, DOWNTOWN	\$9.90
JULY 01	CAT MART FELINE WAREHOUSE	\$55.30
JULY 04	*OVER LIMIT FEE	\$12.00
JULY 06	FINANCE CHARGE—INTEREST	\$7.52
JULY 07	REFUND—BLING KING RETURNS DEPT.	– \$160.20
JULY 10	MONDO MART	\$22.04
JULY 11	FARMER'S MARKET—CARL'S RUTABAGAS	\$9.50
JULY 14	WHATMASHOP ONLINE DOODADS	\$35.99
JULY 11	DELICATE TRUFFLE EMPORIUM	\$21.40
JULY 14	FIVE DOLLAR PIZZA SLICE	\$15.00

 YOU ARE NEARING YOUR CREDIT LIMIT



QUIZ

Understanding Credit Scores

NAME: _____

TOTAL
/ 5 pts

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Directions: CIRCLE the best possible answer to each question.

1. A credit score of 720 or more is considered:
 - a. Poor
 - b. Average
 - c. Good
 - d. Prime (Excellent)
2. How can you improve your credit score?
 - a. Open a large amount of credit cards in a short time
 - b. Monitor your credit
 - c. Keep your utilization low
 - d. a & b
 - e. b & c
3. What is the largest contributing factor to your credit score?
 - a. Mix of credit
 - b. New credit
 - c. Length of credit
 - d. Payment history
 - e. Capacity
4. To ensure that your credit report is accurate, you should:
 - a. Request your free credit report from each of the main credit bureaus
 - b. Review your personal information and make sure that it's up to date
 - c. Report any unauthorized activity to the issuing credit bureau
 - d. All of the above

/4 pts

TRUE OR FALSE

Directions: CIRCLE either true or false.

5. TRUE or FALSE Checking your credit report will negatively affect your credit score.

/1 pt

ACTIVITY A ANSWER KEY

Understanding Credit Scores

CREDIT SCORE MATCH

Directions: Go through the 'Positive Impact' and 'Negative Impact' piles of game cards and confirm the cards that are in the correct pile while correcting the cards that are placed in the wrong pile.

CARD	POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE	REASON
01	POSITIVE	Regular on-time bill payment will raise your credit score more than any other action
02	NEGATIVE	While having a good amount of available credit helps with your utilization ratio, zero use is seen to indicate higher future risk
03	POSITIVE	Having a low utilization ratio is a plus, especially when it is maintained with constant use
04	POSITIVE	A long credit history is a plus, assuming it isn't a history of late or missed payments
05	POSITIVE	Using less than 30% of total available credit helps your score
06	POSITIVE	A mix of credit types helps your score—just don't lose track
07	POSITIVE	Constant use of a card, while paying the balance in full and on time, will build up good credit
08	POSITIVE	Incorrect info can hurt your credit score, so get rid of it
09	NEGATIVE	Even when paid eventually, skipped and late payments hurt your credit score
10	POSITIVE	Paying bills on time only helps your credit score if you do it consistently
11	NEGATIVE	Many accounts with high utilization will hurt your credit score and can create compounding trouble with repayment
12	NEGATIVE	Too much credit utilization will hurt your credit score
13	NEGATIVE	Having no credit history means you have zero average credit length and haven't built up good credit through good behavior
14	NEGATIVE	Using more than 30% of total available credit hurts your score
15	NEGATIVE	A variety of credit helps your score more than using a single source
16	NEGATIVE	Using credit for items you can't normally afford can hurt your score through high utilization and late or missed payments
17	NEGATIVE	Too many 'hard inquiry' credit checks will negatively impact your credit score

ACTIVITY A ANSWER KEY

Understanding Credit Scores

CREDIT SCORE MATCH

Directions: Go through the 'Positive Impact' and 'Negative Impact' piles of game cards and confirm the cards that are in the correct pile while correcting the cards that are placed in the wrong pile.

CARD	POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE	REASON
18	POSITIVE	<i>Lower utilization rate and more money free for future expenses will help your credit score</i>
19	NEGATIVE	<i>Low balance with a low limit can still create a high utilization ratio</i>
20	POSITIVE	<i>30% or less is a good ratio, but any more and you may hurt your credit score</i>
21	POSITIVE	<i>Low credit use and developing credit history will help your credit score</i>
22	NEGATIVE	<i>Late payments are never good, but the overall trend is much more important</i>
23	NEGATIVE	<i>Reduces overall available credit, which influences utilization ratio; however, it can help you get back in control of credit use</i>
24	NEGATIVE	<i>Higher interest rates are only worth it if you don't carry a balance, and use the card rewards</i>
25	NEGATIVE	<i>Bankruptcy hurts your credit score for 7 to 10 years</i>
26	NEGATIVE	<i>Using more than 30% of total available credit hurts your score</i>
27	NEGATIVE	<i>Shortens average credit length and adds hard inquiries</i>
28	POSITIVE	<i>Paying a balance in full is good for your score, especially if the new credit card has a lower interest rate</i>
29	NEGATIVE	<i>Using more than 30% of total available credit hurts your score</i>
30	NEGATIVE	<i>This is a recipe for late or missed payments—only use credit that you have the funds to pay back promptly</i>
31	NEGATIVE	<i>Too much credit utilization will hurt your credit score</i>
32	NEGATIVE	<i>Using more than 30% of total available credit hurts your score</i>
33	NEGATIVE	<i>Too much credit utilization will hurt your credit score—many accounts will be even harder to keep under control</i>

ACTIVITY B ANSWER KEY

Understanding Credit Scores

SPOT THE BAD CREDIT CHOICES

Directions: Go over the example credit card statement and have students provide the bad credit choices they've spotted. Explain the reasoning behind each provided bad credit choice, then point out and explain any examples that students missed.

ACCOUNT SUMMARY

01	PREVIOUS BALANCE	\$755.36
	PAYMENTS AND CREDITS	\$160.20
02	PURCHASES	\$329.33
	BALANCE TRANSFERS	\$0.00
03	CASH ADVANCES	\$40.00
04	FEES CHARGED	\$17.00
05	INTEREST CHARGED	\$7.52

PAYMENT INFORMATION

06	NEW BALANCE	\$989.01
	Total Credit Available	\$1,000.00
	Minimum Payment Due	\$15.00
	Payment Due Date	August 5
07	⚠️ Last payment overdue, please pay now	

Transactions

	Date	Transaction details	Amount
08	JUNE 16	BLING KING EXPENSIVE FAKE JEWELS	\$160.20
09	JUNE 18	CASH ADVANCE	\$40.00
	JUNE 21	*CASH ADVANCE FEE	\$5.00
	JUNE 27	MOONBUCKS COFFEE, DOWNTOWN	\$9.90
	JULY 01	CAT MART FELINE WAREHOUSE	\$55.30
10	JULY 04	*OVER LIMIT FEE	\$12.00
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	JULY 11	FARMER'S MARKET—CARL'S RUTABAGAS	\$9.50
	JULY 14	WHATMASHOP ONLINE DOODADS	\$35.99
12	JULY 11	DELICATE TRUFFLE EMPORIUM	\$21.40
	JULY 14	FIVE DOLLAR PIZZA SLICE	\$15.00

13 ⚠️ YOU ARE NEARING YOUR CREDIT LIMIT

ACTIVITY B ANSWER KEY

Understanding Credit Scores

SPOT THE BAD CREDIT CHOICES

Directions: Go over the example credit card statement and have students provide the bad credit choices they've spotted. Explain the reasoning behind each provided bad credit choice, then point out and explain any examples that students missed.

ITEM	WHY IT'S A BAD CREDIT CHOICE
01	<i>Previous balance is near the credit limit, showing a continued high credit utilization rate</i>
02	<i>Large amount of purchases relative to credit limit—points to a habit of overspending</i>
03	<i>Cash advance shows the cardholder isn't keeping up with debt</i>
04	<i>Fees charged, and the compounding effect they create, could be avoided with better spending habits</i>
05	<i>Interest can be avoided by making sure to pay in full on time</i>
06	<i>New balance shows continued high credit utilization rate, and points to card staying near limit constantly</i>
07	<i>Last payment overdue hurts credit and creates more debt through late fees and interest</i>
08	<i>Bling King Expensive Fake Jewels is a bad spending decision</i>
09	<i>Cash advance creates extra fees and interest, lowering chances of paying in full on time</i>
10	<i>Over limit fee caused by using more credit than available—this can have a direct effect on credit score</i>
11	<i>Refund indicates spending beyond ability to pay</i>
12	<i>Delicate Truffle Emporium and Five Dollar Pizza Slice; bad spending decisions at the end of a billing cycle</i>
13	<i>Nearing credit limit shows high utilization rate</i>

QUIZ ANSWER KEY

Understanding Credit Scores

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Directions: CIRCLE the best possible answer to each question.

1. A credit score of 720 or more is considered:
 - a. Poor
 - b. Average
 - c. Good
 - ☒ d. Prime (Excellent)
2. How can you improve your credit score?
 - a. Open a large amount of credit cards in a short time
 - b. Monitor your credit
 - c. Keep your utilization low
 - d. a & b
 - ☒ e. b & c
3. What is the largest contributing factor to your credit score?
 - a. Mix of credit
 - b. New credit
 - c. Length of credit
 - ☒ d. Payment history
 - e. Capacity
4. To ensure that your credit report is accurate, you should:
 - a. Request your free credit report from each of the main credit bureaus
 - b. Review your personal information and make sure that it's up to date
 - c. Report any unauthorized activity to the issuing credit bureau
 - ☒ d. All of the above

/4 pts

TRUE OR FALSE

Directions: CIRCLE either true or false.

5. TRUE or ☒ FALSE Checking your credit report will negatively affect your credit score.

/1 pt