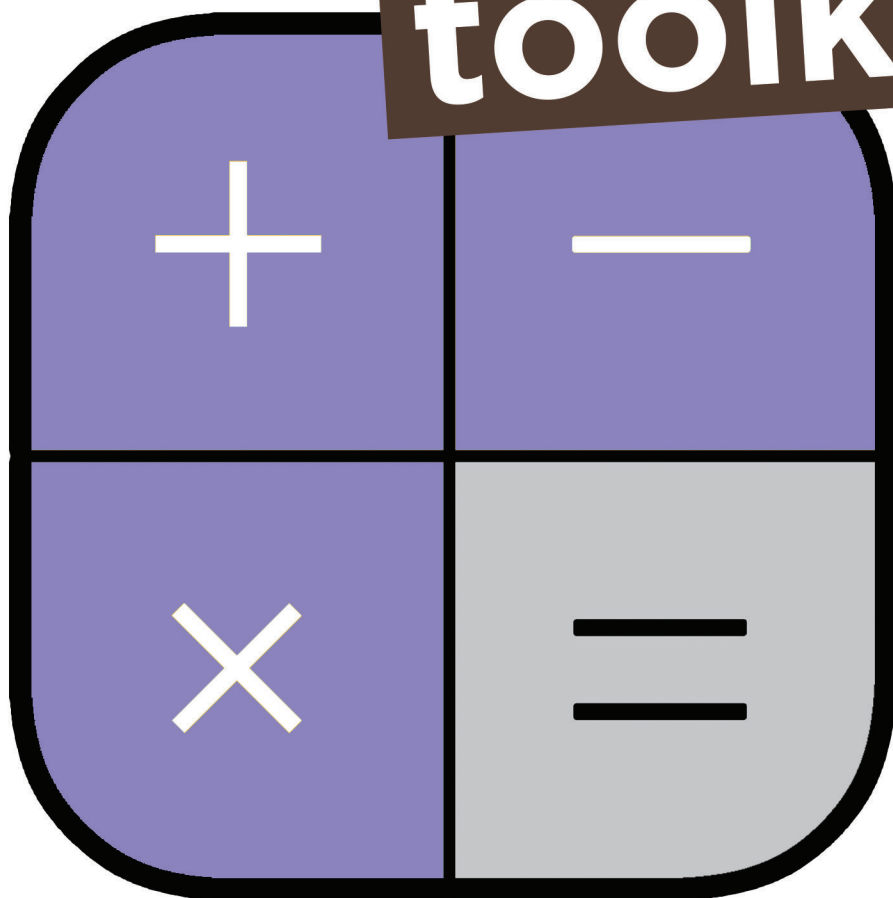


eva's FINANCIAL LITERACY

toolkit



EVA'S FINANCIAL LITERACY TOOLKIT
Participant Activity Booklet

Created by Meaghan Brugh

Design & Layout by Jamey Vella - Anxiety Attack Designs
Layout assisted by Marc Paquet
Printed at The Phoenix Print Shop

www.evasfinancialkit.ca

(C) Eva's Initiatives 2015

Welcome to the Eva's Financial Literacy Toolkit!

Financial literacy making you feel stressed already? These workshops are meant to help, not to stress! You might want to ask yourself why money makes you feel so anxious – is it because of debt? Bad credit? Banking fees? Well, you're not alone! Most Canadians struggle with these financial woes at one point or another in their lives. Exploring your relationship with money and making a plan to change it to a healthy one is a wonderful gift to give to yourself. You deserve to be financially free and independent! You owe this to yourself. Take these workshops seriously, and motivate yourself to learn as much as you can. Because knowledge is power. And power makes you stronger. And being stronger makes you live longer. So there you have it: doing these workshops will make you live longer! Ok, so I can't promise that part exactly, but I can promise that while learning about finances isn't the most fun in the world, these workshops will give you some quick tips and will actually make your life easier in the long run.

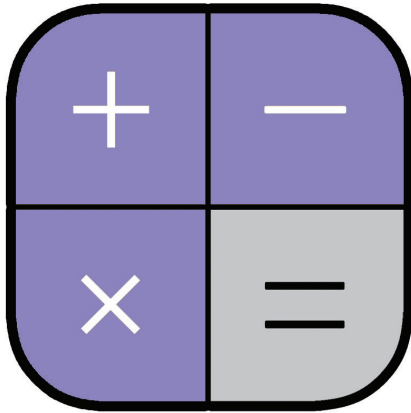
Give me 6 workshops worth of effort and you'll see the difference!

Sending financial well wishes your way,

-Meaghan, Program Creator

Contents

Workshop One: Budgeting Basics.....	1
Workshop Two: Savvy Saver.....	7
Workshop Three: Brainy Banking.....	13
Workshop Four: Tackling Taxes.....	19
Workshop Five: Defeating Debt.....	25
Workshop Six: Conquering Credit.....	31



The Blueprint Workshops Workshop 1: Budgeting Basics

“Don’t tell me where your priorities are. Show me where you spend your money and I’ll tell you what they are.”

–James W. Frick

Budgeting: Isn’t it just the best?! Isn’t it just the most fun you have ever... ok, I’m obviously joking. It’s terrible. Budgeting is so boring that it makes grocery shopping seem like a thrill. I’d rather sit in a room listening to nails on a chalkboard than create a budget for myself. So why do I and so many other people put ourselves through such a dull and annoying task? Because it’s necessary! Because the money that you save from budgeting can keep you out of trouble and buy you treats. And treats ARE fun. Try it out - there are many ways you can budget, so you’ll need to find what works for you. Be creative! Be truthful. And be diligent. If you’re faithful to your budget, it’ll be good to you too.

Step One: I want you to either write a word or draw a picture below when you see the word BUDGETING

Was this a positive word or picture? Negative? Think about it - why was it the first thing to come to your mind? In order to get your budget to work for you, you’ll need to tease out this relationship. It’s time to figure how to beat budgeting.

So what is budgeting and how do we make it as painless as possible?

Building a Budget: There are four basic steps in creating a budget. Whether it's your 27th draft or first attempt, you will need to do the following:

- 1) List all income after taxes: if you're not familiar with the deductions made from your income, please see Chapter Four, Part One.
- 2) List all expenses: fixed and variable. Included in expenses can be savings and debt repayment goals as well. Sometimes people prefer to complete their budgets and then see what's left over for savings and debt, and others wish to start with making those goals and then work around them. I would suggest start with your savings and debt reduction goals already in place, and then adjusting them later if you need to. Please see Chapter Two for savings and debt reduction templates.
- 3) Total it up and figure out the difference.
- 4) Trim expenses as needed. While it's always a good idea to trim your spending, this is what you'll have to focus on if your budget doesn't balance or the savings don't match up with your goals.

Fixed vs. Variable expenses: Fixed costs refer to expenses that are the same price every month. Examples could include rent and phone bills. Variable costs refer to expenses that vary from month to month. Examples could include eating out, entertainment, clothing, and seasonal influences like purchasing Christmas or birthday gifts.

List some of yours:

My Fixed Costs	My Variable Costs
1)	1)
2)	2)
3)	3)

Budget Scenarios: Put together a budget for one of these people. Your mission: Income and expenses should be equal or there should be money left over in order for them to reach their goals. The budget also needs to be realistic! Try to accurately guess how much they'd be spending.

<p>Jeremy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single • Makes minimum wage full-time, heavy smoker • Savings goal: A car (how much will he have to save every month?) 	<p>Martha</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single mother of 2 young children • Makes \$35,000 annually • Savings goal: Wants to save for her kids education (try to calculate how much this will be to the best of your knowledge)
<p>Hank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lives with a common-law partner • Both partners make minimum wage full-time • Goal: Pay off OSAP debt of \$15,000 	<p>Priscilla</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single • Makes \$18/hour and works full-time, loves to go out with her friends • Savings goal: Vacation to Mexico next year and pay off Line of Credit of \$10,000

Budget:**Income**

Net income from wages (after taxes and deductions)	\$
Any other income?	\$
TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME: \$ _____	

Expenses

Housing Expenses	Living Expenses
Rent or mortgage: \$	Transportation: \$
Utilities: \$	Food: \$
Cable and internet: \$	Child care: \$
Phone: \$	Laundry: \$
Other: _____ \$	Loans and credit card(s) payment: \$
	Medical/dental expenses: \$
	Prescription drugs: \$
Personal Expenses	Emergency fund: \$
Recreation and Entertainment: \$	Other: _____ \$
Eating out: \$	
Cigarettes, drugs and alcohol: \$	School Expenses
Personal grooming (clothes, hair): \$	Tuition: \$
Other: _____ \$	Fees: \$
	Books: \$

TOTAL MONTHLY EXPENSES: \$ _____

Overall Balance (TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME)	\$
(subtract) TOTAL MONTHLY EXPENSES	\$
= (-) Overspending or (+) Savings	-/+ \$

What happens if the budget doesn't balance? Make more money or spend less.

- In order to spend less, it's important to look at your expenses and prioritize (needs vs. wants chart)
- Make a plan to shop more cheaply (It is possible, I promise! You can use the Living on the Cheap chart in Chapter Two for some ideas)

Needs	Wants

How to use this chart: Start by splitting your month's purchases into one of these two above categories. Then go through and put the cost beside each purchase and give it a rating of importance from 1 onwards (1 being can't live without). This will help you figure out your exact costs and what you can eliminate.

Tips to consider:

- Don't spend more than 30% of your income on housing; you should be saving at least 5% of your income; and if you have debt 15% of your income should be going towards paying it off. This isn't always possible if you're living alone especially in a big city that has more expensive rent, but try to get as close to 30% as possible.
- You can use a worksheet like the one I'll give you, phone budget apps, or ones like Gail Vaz Oxlade's online template: http://www.gailvazoxlade.com/resources/interactive_budget_worksheet.html
- Envelopes or jars: If worksheets don't work for you, there are many other creative ways to budget. You can figure out how much of your budget is for fixed and variable spending, set the fixed money aside to pay those costs, then divide the variable spending amounts, using labelled envelopes or jars to store the money you need for each category. You spend from the envelope or jar and when the money is gone, you stop spending.
- Allowance: Once you cover fixed costs, you could give yourself a weekly allowance for all variable spending. When your weekly allowance is gone, you stop spending. Banks are a good way to help you with this by setting up automatic transactions that remove some money from your chequing account and put it directly into your savings.
- Use your bank to help you manage your money: Use online banking to help manage your savings goals! Have automatic transactions moving from your chequing account into an e-savings account that you can only access online. We'll talk more about this in Chapter Three.

Do not:

- Forget or purposely reduce your expenses on your budget
- Overestimate your income (always play it safe)
- Use next month's income to balance this month's budget (be better than that to future you!)
- Plan on borrowing money to balance your budget (ie. pay expenses with your visa or line of credit \ when you don't have enough in your Chequing Account to pay those off)

Now it's your turn! This next budget template is for you:

Tip #1: Use a pencil – you will most likely need to move some numbers around.

Tip #2: After doing the budget, make sure that you use the possible problem and solutions chart to map out how you will deal with obstacles.

Budget:**Income**

Net income from wages (after taxes and deductions)	\$
Any other income?	\$
TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME: \$ _____	

Expenses

Housing Expenses	Living Expenses
Rent or mortgage: \$	Transportation: \$
Utilities: \$	Food: \$
Cable and internet: \$	Child care: \$
Phone: \$	Laundry: \$
Other: _____ \$	Loans and credit card(s) payment: \$
	Medical/dental expenses: \$
	Prescription drugs: \$
Personal Expenses	Emergency fund: \$
Recreation and Entertainment: \$	Other: _____ \$
Eating out: \$	
Cigarettes, drugs and alcohol: \$	School Expenses
Personal grooming (clothes, hair): \$	Tuition: \$
Other: _____ \$	Fees: \$
	Books: \$

TOTAL MONTHLY EXPENSES: \$ _____

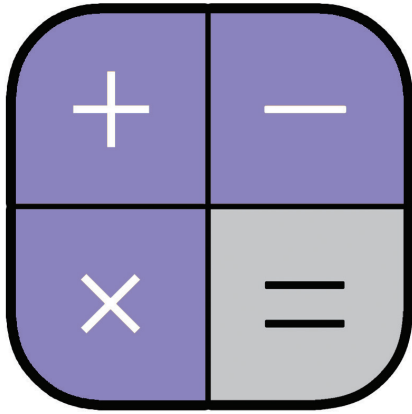
Overall Balance (TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME)	\$
(subtract) TOTAL MONTHLY EXPENSES	\$
= (-) Overspending or (+) Savings	-/+ \$

What might get in the way of sticking to your budget?	Possible Solutions

Goal-making and Tracking:

Set some goals for yourself! These aren't for anyone else - just you, and just by writing them down, you may improve your chances of reaching them. It's time to make some healthy changes!

<p>SMART Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific • Measurable • Achievable • Realistic • Time-bound 	<p>Short-term:</p> <p>Medium-term:</p> <p>Long-term:</p>
<p>Possible barriers and solutions</p>	<p>What may get in the way of me achieving my goals:</p> <p>My solutions to these barriers:</p>
<p>One thing I'll do in the next 24 hours that will help me get on track with my budget is...</p>	



The Blueprint Workshops Workshop 2: Savvy Saver

“Too many people spend money they haven’t earned, to buy things they don’t want, to impress people they don’t like”

– Will Rogers

Spending and Saving: Effective money management to stay within the budget you’ve created is indeed an art. Setting savings and spending goals is one thing, but rejecting temptation in your daily life with all that fun stuff to buy isn’t easy for anyone. Saving is a habit that needs forming that needs you to be hard on yourself. Once you’re used to it of course it’s easier, just as it’s easier to save money when you make more money, but even if it’s \$5 a week, which arguably everyone can do, this forms the habit and allows you to watch the progress of your savings take place. Do it for yourself, and do it for your future.

Step One: I want you to either write or draw the first thing that comes to your mind when you see the word SAVING

Was this a positive word or picture? Negative? Think about it - why was that the first thing to come to your mind? What about when you hear the word spending? Does it stress you out or does it make you feel better when you think about spending your money? What do you like spending it on?

Do the quiz on the next page to test your relationship with spending.

Part ONE: Spending

Spending Survey: Give yourself a score for each of the sentences below. Give yourself an A for Always, B for Sometimes and C for Never.

1. Name brands do not affect my purchases...
2. I always keep my receipts...
3. If I have a question about a product, I'm not afraid to ask it...
4. I compare products before I buy them...
5. I'm not an impulsive shopper...
6. When I shop for food, I look at the unit price (quantity vs. price - always available on the price tag in the grocery store). For example, is 99 cents for 1 can of pop better than \$8 for 12 cans? The formula to figure this out is: $PRICE \div AMOUNT = UNIT PRICE$
7. If I'm not satisfied with something I bought, I return it...
8. I stock up on things I need during sales or at bulk stores...
9. I check a store's return policy before I make a purchase...
10. I bring a list when I go grocery shopping...
11. Before making a major purchase, I research the product well and look at reviews...

Did you end up with mostly A's, B's and C's? Chat with a partner about what this means about you, and where you might want to work on because it could be costing you more money than you realize.

What you spend your money on: Use this chart to list some of the things that you buy a lot and note how often you buy them in a month. Put down how much they usually cost, then figure out how much you spend on them in a month.

Things I buy often	How often I buy them	Average prices	Cost per month
		Total:	

Total it up - were you surprised at how much you spend? Now go through each item and give it a rating

from 1 to 10, 1 being necessary purchase to live and 10 being could easily live without. Are there any expenses on here you would want to cut?

Living on the Cheap: Living costs add up! Even items that are on sale can sometimes be the force that breaks through the roof of your budget no matter how well you justify the purchase to yourself. “Oh, well I just NEEDED that new TV, and it was 30% off! Practically free!” Guess what? It wasn’t free. You have to be careful where you spend your money, because it takes your hard work to earn it. The good news? There are cheap options! You just have to be a savvy spender and saver and you too can know where to look for the cheapest deals. Work in pairs or small groups to complete the following chart for your city. Just fill in cheap ideas for each category and then share with the class.

Food	Internet	Clothing
Transit	Furniture	Entertainment

Extra Ideas to Cut Spending:

- Make gifts instead of buying them
- Avoid buying snacks
- Plan your weekly meals in advance
- Pack a lunch: a \$5 difference between a home-made lunch and a store-bought lunch can mean a savings of \$1200 a year!
- Use public parks in the summer as a free day out or date
- Grow your own garden - plant some herbs and maybe some vegetables depending on the space you have. This could save you some cash, and the activity of taking care of your newly grown plants is a free one!
- Be healthy - exercise and eat well. You’d be surprised at how much this could save you in the long run...
- Don’t carry too much cash on you - you may be more tempted to spend it on frivolous purchases
- Use the library for reading materials and internet
- Save any bonus income or tax returns you receive - don’t spend them!
- Complain! Very few consumers complain when they are dissatisfied, but companies are always interested in customer satisfaction. You don’t have much to lose by expressing your dissatisfaction. Just make sure you do it in a respectful way.

How to Complain Effectively:

Step 1: Contact the salesperson

If that doesn't work... **Step 2:** Contact the company headquarters

If those don't work... **Step 3:** Contact government offices and consumer organizations. If you do not know where to start, call the government office of consumer affairs where you live. For a complete list in your area please visit the Canadian Consumer Handbook at www.consumer.ic.gc.ca/handbook

Tips:

- Always, always always keep important information! Include the sales receipts, repair orders, warranties, cancelled cheques, contracts and any letters you have written to or received from the company.
- Don't wait. You may lose your money or your right to compensation if you wait too long.
- Always check the exchange or return policy before you buy!

The Costs of School: The idea of going back to school or starting it for the first time is one that sometimes people don't consider every detail of. Higher education, whether it be a college or university program, is a wonderful thing for many reasons but it also costs a lot of money! Make sure you understand all of its associated costs before diving in. Have you thought about:

Tuition: Tuition fees vary from school to school and program to program. They also vary across the country. You will need to do some research to see what the costs are for programs that are of interest to you.

Applying: Remember that it costs money to even apply to schools. This can be around \$100, maybe even more, for some programs and doesn't guarantee your acceptance.

Textbooks: These costs vary by program and usually run into the hundreds of dollars. Sometimes you can buy used books or photocopy library copies, so it's worth some research before purchasing full-priced texts.

Supplies: The cost of school supplies can really add up. It depends a lot on your program. Supplies can include such things as paper, pens, calculators, binders, a computer, computer supplies, printer and print cartridges. They can also include specific equipment necessary for a particular course of study, such as lab equipment.

Fees: You may also have to pay athletic fees, student union fees, health and insurance fees, and so on. These costs vary but can add up to \$800 or more per year. Some fees may be optional, but if you don't pay, you may not be able to use some services. Again, just make sure you understand what you're paying for.

Housing: Moving out on your own

One decision many people face when they look for independent housing is whether to move out on their own or move in with one or more roommates. Both can have their challenges. If you move out on your own, the cost will usually be higher than if you were able to share the cost with others. However, living with others, even if it's with friends, can be a challenge. It's usually a good idea to establish house rules right away. For example, you may find that you have differences in terms of work/study habits, or neatness/cleanliness, or how visiting friends behave, and so on. You will also want to figure out how to divide costs like rent, utilities, cable, internet, etc. The more organized you are, the less chance of a sticky situation down the road that could end up with high tempers and lots of emotions. Money is an emotional thing and housing is expensive, so just keep yourself organized.

Part TWO: Savings

Did you know that the savings rates of Canadians dropped from 16.7% of their income before taxes in 1984 to 0.4% in 2004?

What are you saving for? Goals are important to keep us motivated in making good financial decisions. Everyone needs goals to work towards, and everyone's goals are different. Think about what you want your future to look like. What do you need to get yourself there? It's time to map it out for yourself so you can start working towards that image.

Use this chart to record your short-, medium-, and long-term savings goals. This chart can also be used to organize your debts and monthly repayment strategy. Sometimes it's helpful to complete this chart before doing your budget, but it depends on what works best for you. Sometimes people prefer to wait and see what's available after their monthly fixed costs.

Goal	Cost	Time Frame	Monthly Savings

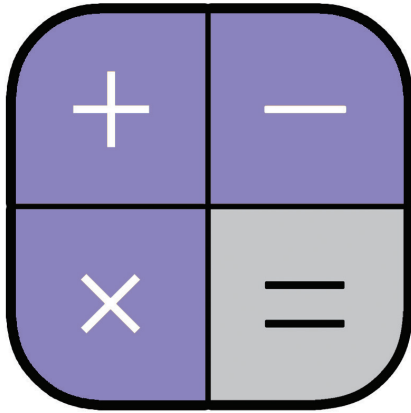
What might get in the way of saving?	Possible Solutions

Tip: If you're having a difficult time creating goals for your future, it's a good idea to start saving anyways to give yourself the head start. A good way to start is to try to save a toonie a day. If you can, that adds up to \$730 a year. You might find that you don't have to give up that much to save \$2 a day. And, if you did, and saved from when you are 15 to 30, and earned 3% interest, that would end up at about \$15,000. There's a lot you can do with \$15,000...

Goal-making and Tracking:

Set some goals for yourself! These aren't for anyone else - just you, and just by writing them down, you may improve your chances of reaching them. It's time to make some healthy changes!

<p>SMART Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific • Measurable • Achievable • Realistic • Time-bound 	<p>Short-term:</p> <p>Medium-term:</p> <p>Long-term:</p>
<p>Possible barriers and solutions</p>	<p>What may get in the way of me achieving my goals:</p> <p>My solutions to these barriers:</p>
<p>One thing I'll do in the next 24 hours that will help me get on track with my saving and spending is...</p>	



The Brickwork Workshops Workshop 3: Brainy Banking

“A bank is a place where they lend you an umbrella in fair weather and ask for it back when it begins to rain.”

–Robert Frost

Banking: This is a subject that divides many people. Some love banking - they find it easy and convenient and can't imagine their lives without having their money stowed away in an account. Others hate banks with a burning passion that makes the relationship between Thor and Loki look cheerful (Norse mythology references are the best - don't judge!). Some people use their bank accounts rarely and can end up paying fees that they don't understand and get frustrated but don't ask any questions so they end up just paying them. You will find that communication is key for a successful banking experience, and everything in life is negotiable. Take this workshop to figure out what will work for you.

Step One: I want you to either write a word or draw a picture below when you see the word BANKING

Was this a positive word or picture? Negative? Think about it - why was that the first thing to come to your mind? Is it because of a bad past experience with a bank? Chat to a classmate about your best/worst banking experiences. Was there something you should have done differently as well?

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Banking:

Let's dive right into it. What are the pros and cons of banking because both do exist, so let's lay it all on the table and then we can begin to comb through some of the major problems we face as banking clients.

Pros	Cons

So is banking worth it? Is it not? Why? Chat to your fellow participants about what you think.

What about credit unions?

Difference between a bank and a credit union: Credit unions are not-for-profit financial cooperatives that are typically more community-minded. When the credit union makes profits, the members see higher interest rates on their savings and lower loan interest rates (everyone wins). When you're a member of a credit union, you're actually part owner. Banks are for-profit and make money from the use of their clients' savings to invest it or lend it out to other clients. For more information, please see the link listed in the Resources section of this chapter. There are pros and cons to using either.

Which do you think is better? Why? Chat with a partner about your decision.

What about when **Alternative Financial Services** are added to the mix? Alternative Financial Services are companies like Money Mart and Payday Loans places that offer cheque-cashing services or even some of them do same-day tax refunds. Name some pros and cons of these places as well. Do you have a story about one of these companies to share?

Tips for people dealing with a fraudulent banking history: Start by talking to the financial institution in which it happened. See if they are willing to forgive the mistake (phrase it as a mistake!) and depending on the severity of the fraud, they may forgive it. The excuse has to be reasonable. If you decide that you want to bank in a different place, do not mention your fraudulent past. And lastly (and most importantly), do not ever do it again!

How do you open a bank account? You'll need to bring the right ID, have a list of the questions you want to ask, and if you're refused an account make sure you ask the bank to put it in writing so that you can report it to the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada.

When can the bank refuse to give me an account?

A bank can legally refuse to open an account for you if:

- You cannot show the right ID.
- The bank thinks you will use the account to break the law.
- You committed a crime against a bank in the past 7 years.
- The bank thinks you gave false information when applying for the account.
- The bank thinks that opening the account might bring harm to its customers or staff.
- You do not agree to let the bank do a check on you about the things above.

Identification you can use: You'll either need two pieces from A, or 1 from A and 1 from B.

List A	List B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Driver's license •Passport •Birth Certificate •SIN •Certificate of Indian Status •Certificate of Canadian Citizenship or Certificate of Naturalization •Permanent Residency Card or Citizenship and Immigration Form IMM1000, IMM1442, IMM5292 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Employee ID Card •Debt Card or Bank Car with your signature (or Credit Card) •Current foreign Passport

When choosing a bank account, remember to think about:

- Convenience (hours they're open, location)
- Services they offer, compared with your needs and their costs
- Number of ATMs around town
- Interest offered on savings

What if I have an account, and the bank makes a mistake on it?

If you have a complaint about how the bank has handled transactions on your account, take these steps:

1. Speak to a customer service representative at your branch
2. Write a letter to the branch or area manager
3. Write a letter to the bank's internal Ombudsman (represents the interests of the public by investigating and addressing complaints)
4. Call the Ombudsman for Banking Services and Investments (OBSI), toll-free at 1-888-451-4519

How to use your bank account: Typically it's suggested that everyone maintain two bank accounts: one chequing and one savings. Often it's easiest to manage these accounts by using online banking. Most banks will help their clients get used to online banking if they go in and ask for assistance.

Savings Accounts: Best used for short- and medium-term savings goals because of the interest earned. Watch out for a limited number of free transactions and make sure you understand the service fees! They can really add up! If you try to pay off your visa with your savings account, for example you might be charged a fee.

Chequing Accounts: These should be used for your everyday banking and bill-paying transactions. You will not earn any interest on money kept in a Chequing Account. Unless you're a student, you'll probably be charged a monthly account fee. Feel free to negotiate for a better deal, especially if you've been a client of theirs for a long time.

Saving through your bank: Pay Yourself First is a concept that basically means before any other expense, give your future self some cash. This can be done by manually transferring some money to a savings account each time you get paid, or you can always use the classic piggy bank to put away some cash for yourself every pay period. My personal favourite is if you know the dates you'll be paid, you can set up an automatic transfer of funds with online banking. For example, if you get paid every other Thursday, why not set up an automatic payment for every other Friday to transfer \$50 from your Chequing Account (where your direct deposit from work should be going) to your Savings Account? If you want to start this by using online banking but don't know how, a representative from the bank can help you out. While you're there, make sure they show you how you can do it yourself in case you want to make any changes!

Here's an example of how much you could be saving:

Amount saved per month	Amount saved after 1 year	Compound interest rate	Total saved in 10 years	Total interest earned in 10 years	Total savings in 10 years (savings + interest)
\$10	120	3%	\$1200	\$216.94	\$1416.94
\$20	\$240	3%	\$2400	\$433.87	\$2833.87
\$50	\$600	3%	\$6000	\$1084.68	\$7084.68
\$100	\$1200	3%	\$12,000	\$2169.35	\$14,169.35
\$200	\$2400	3%	\$24,000	\$4338.71	\$28,338.71

* Note: the 3% interest rate shown in this table is actually quite a high interest rate. It's not impossible to get, so make sure that you communicate with your bank to ensure that your savings account is how you want it.

Warning: Did you know that you need to pay tax on the interest you make from a high-interest savings account? How can I get around this? you may ask... Well, open up a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA)! You can contribute up to \$5500 a year to a TFSA, but this will most likely go up to \$10,000 over the next year. TFSAs are great ways to keep your savings safe. If you want to withdraw your money, that's no problem, but it will take a couple of days. This is particularly helpful for impulsive spenders - it means that you'll have to wait a little bit and may decide that you don't need the cash anyways. Questions? Ask a representative from your local bank branch!

If you're interested in investments: There are many investment opportunities once you're comfortable banking and in a financially secure position. The best person to talk to about this is usually a representative from your local bank branch. Get as much information as you can from them, then take your knowledge and have a careful look at your income before investing it anywhere. Often it's best to start with a TFSA - don't let banks sell you on the idea of RRSPs or Mutual Funds if you're not ready. Sometimes a TFSA is a better retirement tool than an RRSP anyways.

RRSPs: These are plans you can invest in to help save for your retirement. Money made from investments in an RRSP is not taxable if the money stays in the RRSP. Money from RRSPs is taxed when the funds are taken out. You can take money out of an RRSP at any time, but those funds taken out of the plan will be taxable as income.

Resources:

Acorn Canada: They have reports on the payday lending industry in Canada. www.acorncanada.org

Canadian Banker's Association: Information and research about the banking system in Canada. www.cba.ca

Difference between a bank and a credit union: <http://money.howstuffworks.com/personal-finance/banking/difference-between-bank-and-credit-union3.htm>

Information on TFSAs: <http://www.tfsa.gc.ca/>

Ombudsman for Banking Services and Investments: This is where you'd go to file a complaint if it wasn't addressed at your bank's internal Ombudsman. www.obsi.ca

What if I think a bank was wrong to refuse me an account? If the bank refuses to give you an account, the law says they must give you a letter stating this fact. The letter informs you of your right to contact the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada (FCAC). You can call the FCAC toll-free for help at 1-866-461-3222. www.fcac.gc.ca

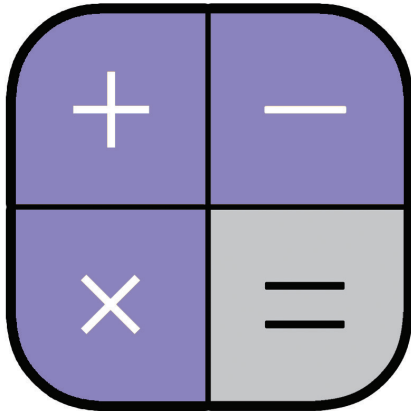
The FCAC informs consumers about their rights and responsibilities when dealing with banks.

The "Get Smarter About Money" website of the Investor Education fund has a lot of great information about investing, saving, and banking. Check it out at: www.getsmarteraboutmoney.ca/en/pages/default.aspx

Goal-making and Tracking:

Set some goals for yourself! These aren't for anyone else - just you, and just by writing them down, you may improve your chances of reaching them. It's time to make some healthy changes!

<p>SMART Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific • Measurable • Achievable • Realistic • Time-bound 	<p>Short-term:</p> <p>Medium-term:</p> <p>Long-term:</p>
<p>Possible barriers and solutions</p>	<p>What may get in the way of me achieving my goals:</p> <p>My solutions to these barriers:</p>
<p>One thing I'll do in the next 24 hours that will help me get on track with my banking is...</p>	



The Brickwork Workshops Workshop 4: Tackling Taxes

“The hardest thing to understand in the world is the income tax.”

–Albert Einstein

Taxes: Don't worry, this subject isn't going to kill you out of boredom. In fact, it might even help you get more money back from filing taxes. And I don't know anyone who thinks getting money is boring. Information about income and taxes helps you to ensure that you are being paid accurately and getting the most out of your yearly tax returns. Don't lose money just because you think it's boring to learn about. Be aware and learn as much as you can! You won't regret it!

But first... you know the drill by now. Write the first word or picture that comes to mind when you hear or see the word TAXES:

What about GOVERNMENT?

Feeling stressed or angry for some reason? Why? Typically in my research, Taxes and the Government came in first place to aggressive word or picture associations (you should have seen some of them!). Let's chat about reasons why we're cautious or even anxious when we start to think about these things.

Part ONE: Income

Have you ever carefully looked at your paystub before? Do you know what each section means? Would you be able to tell if there was a mistake on yours?

Pay Stub Activity: Try and fill in the blanks on Terry's paystub. He's paid biweekly and got paid today. Can you figure out the details? Hint: if you want to figure out a percentage of \$700, you multiply 700 by the percentage. For 4.95% for example, you have to move the decimal point over to the left two so the formula becomes $700 \times 0.0495 = \text{CPP Deduction}$. Doesn't make sense? I hate math too - go through the examples with your classmates and instructor and I promise it'll get easier and it's useful math to know!

Terrific Telecommunications Ltd
234 – Main Ave.
Toronto, ON
A1B 2C3

Pay period:
Pay date:
Cheque No: 000656

SIN: 456-123-789

Terry Jones
123 Bloor Street West
Toronto, ON A1B 2C3

Earnings:

Pay Rate:	# of Hours:	Gross Pay:	YTD:
\$10/hr	70	\$700	\$3500.00

Deductions:

Federal Income tax	\$55.50	\$277.50
ON Provincial Tax	\$11.83	\$59.15
Canada Pension Plan (CPP) (4.95%)	\$	\$
Employment Insurance (EI) (1.88%)	\$	\$

Total:	\$	\$575.70
--------	----	----------

Net pay:	\$	\$2924.30
----------	----	-----------

Work through the following questions as a group:

- 1) What does gross pay mean? Net pay? CPP? EI?
- 2) What should you do with your paycheque? What should you not do with your paycheque?
- 3) What is your SIN number used for?

- 4) When does your employer have to give you your T4? What is your T4?
- 5) What is income tax? What do we pay it on?
- 6) How does the government decide how much tax we need to pay?
- 7) What does the government do with our income tax money?
- 8) What's the difference between being employed and self-employed for taxes?

Part TWO: Taxes

Did you file your taxes on time last year? Have you never filed your taxes before? Why? What's your biggest fear when it comes to filing?

Discussion questions:

- 1) Why should you file your taxes?
- 2) Should you file an income tax return if you have really low or zero income?
- 3) What is the difference between a tax credit and a tax deduction?
- 4) Which of the following actions results in the biggest penalty from the CRA?
- 5) True or false, you can deduct moving expenses on your tax return?
- 6) True or false, can you claim a tax credit for a charitable donation?
- 7) Where can you get the forms? Where can you go for help with doing your taxes?

How to do your taxes:

Where do I get the tax forms? If you want to do paper copies (I haven't met anyone who does paper copies anymore...), you can get them at the post office, from a Service Canada location, or online from the Canada Revenue Agency. More and more people use software that allows them to do the forms on their computers (like TurboTax or Ufile!).

Other options:

- If you are on a low income, you can get free help with doing your taxes at a volunteer community tax clinic (take a look on the website in the resource section for the one nearest you).
- If you have problems with your taxes, it is best to call the CRA.
- There are tax professionals who can help you with your taxes for a fee.
- Warning: you are responsible for your tax return even if someone has prepared it for you. Never sign a blank tax return.

Keep EVERYTHING! It is important to keep all papers and receipts that support your income tax return for at least 6 years. Here are some things you definitely need to keep:

- Information slips from your employer and bank (T4 and/or T5)
- Post-secondary education information slips (T2202A)
- Any tax-related papers you receive from the government
- If you are self-employed, keep a record of your income and all expenses
- Union or professional dues (money you pay to be a member)
- Public transit monthly passes
- Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) contribution slips
- Child care receipts
- Moving expenses, if you moved to be at least 40km closer to work (or to college or university if you are a student)
- Medical expenses (such as prescription medicine, dentist, glasses)
- Receipts for income tax you paid in another country
- Receipts for donations to Canadian charities or Canadian political parties

There may be other slips and receipts you need to keep to support your income tax return. Before you get your taxes done, double check that you have everything you need to bring with you. If you're missing any papers, give the CRA a call at 1-800-959-8281.

Getting your Notice of Assessment: After you file your taxes, you will receive a Notice of Assessment from the Canada Revenue Agency. The notice confirms your tax amounts and explains any changes the government made to your return. Don't lose it! If you think you will, scan it and put it on a USB key or your Dropbox folder. Any questions about yours or missing it? Call the CRA: 1-800-959-8281.

Getting your refund: You can receive a refund by direct deposit to your bank account or by cheque in the mail. Follow the instructions on your tax return to set up the way you want to receive your refund cheque and any important communication.

Remember: If you move, you must inform the CRA so you will still get your refund!

Warning: Some businesses advertise 'instant refunds' when they do your tax return. These are not really refunds, but a kind of loan. They can also come with high fees and no guarantee that the refund amount is correct. You might still end up owing money.

If you owe the CRA money:

You might owe the CRA money because of:

- Income tax
- Benefit overpayments
- Defaulted student loans
- EI overpayments and penalties
- Any other overpayments

What to do if you owe the CRA money:

Any amount that you owe should be paid in full ASAP!!! They might charge you interest if you don't pay right away. You can pay through your bank, or write a money order and send it to the nearest payment office (Do NOT send cash in the mail).

If you cannot pay: Always always always contact them to discuss your situation. Be honest! If you can't pay, you need to tell them upfront.

- Call 1-888-863-8657 if you owe money for income tax or 1-866-864-5823 if it's about a different government debt. Remember that they'll probably ask you to prove your identification.
- You may be able to arrange smaller payments made overtime. You may have to give evidence of your income, expenses, assets – you can do this over the phone. Remember that if you fail to make the agreed payments, they might cancel the arrangement and take legal action (trust me, you don't want this to happen...)

What happens if you don't pay or cooperate:

- They might take it out of your income tax return (this is called a set-off)
- They may take some of your wages (this is called garnishment)
- They can legally take you to court
- They may seize and sell your assets

Resources

Canada Revenue Agency (CRA): www.cra-arc.gc.ca

Canada Benefits Program: www.canadabenefits.gc.ca This site helps you find out what federal and provincial government benefits you may be eligible for.

Federal tax credits and benefits calculators: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/clcltr/menu-eng.html>

Online course for how to prepare returns: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/dctrs/lrn-tx/menu-eng.html

Tax tips for students: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/sgmnts/stdnts/menu-eng.html

Volunteer tax preparation clinics: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/sgmnts/stdnts/menu-eng.html
 For information across Canada: 1-800-959-8281

Information on the Canadian tax system: www.taxtips.ca

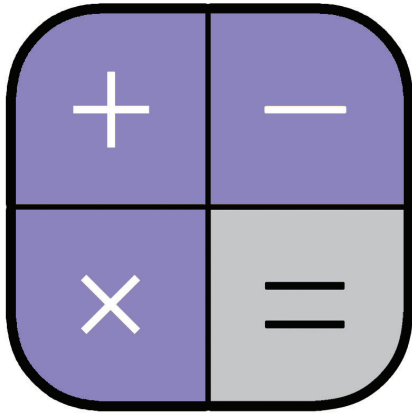
Take a look at these common myths about taxes: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/taxes/10-tax-filing-myths-that-could-cost-you-money-1.1266240>

Information on when and where you do and do not need to provide your SIN number: <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sin/info/yoursin.shtml>

Goal-making and Tracking:

Set some goals for yourself! These aren't for anyone else - just you, and just by writing them down, you may improve your chances of reaching them. It's time to make some healthy changes!

<p>SMART Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific • Measurable • Achievable • Realistic • Time-bound 	<p>Short-term:</p> <p>Medium-term:</p> <p>Long-term:</p>
<p>Possible barriers and solutions</p>	<p>What may get in the way of me achieving my goals:</p> <p>My solutions to these barriers:</p>
<p>One thing I'll do in the next 24 hours that will help me get on track with my taxes is...</p>	



The Rooftop Workshops Workshop 5: Defeating Debt

“If there is anyone to whom I owe money, I’m prepared to forget it if they are.”

– Errol Flynn

Debt: Did you know that the average level of household debt in Canada, not counting mortgage debt, has been in the range of \$25,000 in recent years? Many Canadians took on debt without really knowing how much they could afford, and didn’t plan for their interest rates to rise. No, this doesn’t mean that you can now justify getting three new credit cards to go on a shoe shopping spree just because “everyone else is doing it”. What I’m saying is that debt isn’t the end - a lot of people successfully repay theirs, but it can also always get worse so take immediate action! It’s also good to know that sometimes debt is necessary and not all debt is bad. It just comes down to how we manage it once we have it. Be good to your debt, because it can be cruel.

You know the drill by now... word/picture association game! Draw or write the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word DEBT:

Share yours with a classmate. Discuss why that was what you first thought of. Do you think that all debt is bad? Why?

Activity: Good Idea/Bad Idea. Listen to the instructor as they give your team a statement. You'll have to figure out if it's a good idea or a bad idea for debt repayment.

Tips for creating a debt repayment plan:

Be realistic. Offer to make a payment that you are sure you can afford. Missing a payment could put your proposal in danger. Don't make promises you can't keep.

Be reasonable. Creditors will want to get paid back within a reasonable amount of time. The longest time frames are three to five years. It could be less depending on the amount owed.

Be specific. Make the details of your proposal clear. Tell the creditor when you will contact them in the future. Be sure that you follow through.

Be polite. Ask for your creditor's help, rather than telling them what to do. If the person you talk with is not helpful, ask to speak to his or her supervisor. Try to deal with the same person each time you call (get their name and ID#). Keep in touch until the problem is solved.

Keep a record of the conversation. This should include:

- Company name
- Phone number
- Name of the person you spoke to
- Date and time
- Description of what was said and any agreements
- Ask for any agreement to be put in writing

If your debt has gone to collections:

You have the right to:

- Be told in writing that your account has been turned over to collections
- Confidentiality: A collection agency cannot discuss your debt with anyone other than you creditor or a co-signer, unless you give them permission
- Ask to be contacted in writing only. The calls will then stop
- Ask for a statement of account every 6 months that shows the amounts you have paid and the balance you owe

A collection agency has the right to:

- Call you at home or at work
- Call any time after 7am and before 9pm except on holidays
- Discuss details of your debt with you and the creditor
- Contact your friends, employer, relatives, or neighbours to get your telephone number and address only
- Contact a person who has co-signed for the credit that is now overdue
- Contact a person if you have given permission for them to be contacted

A collection agency cannot:

- Try to collect debt without writing to you first
- Use threats or language to frighten and intimidate you
- Pressure you to repay the debt to the point of harassment

- Give you false or misleading information
- Add any costs to the debt you owe
- Contact you on holidays, unless you ask them to
- Contact you before 7am or after 9pm, unless you ask them to
- Contact you on Sundays before 1pm or after 5pm, unless you ask them to
- Contact your friends, employer, relatives or neighbours for any information about you other than your telephone number or address
- Suggest that any of these people mentioned above pay your debt
- Call your cell phone, unless you ask them to
- Pretend to be a lawyer or legal authority
- Take you to court without permission from your creditor
- Involve police or send you to jail
- Take your property

Student debt: Some people are so worried about getting student debt, like OSAP for Ontario residents, that they end up in a really rough financial situation during school. Remember when I said that some debt is good? What do you think about student loans? Is it an investment in your future? When does it become bad debt?

Possible Benefits	Possible Risks

Activity: Debt Repayment Plans: What would you do for these scenarios if a friend asked your opinion? Work with a partner to offer the person in each scenario some information that may help them develop a good repayment plan.

1) Oliver: \$2000 Visa (20%), \$10,000 OSAP (6%), \$500 Overdraft (daily interest), \$500 Phone that is in collections

2) Jack: \$3500 Visa (20%); \$2000 out of a \$10,000 Line of Credit (8%), \$5000 OSAP (6%)

3) Magda: \$2000 Money Mart (20%), \$1000 Overdraft (daily interest), \$1000 Visa (20%)

4) Filipe: \$2500 Visa (20%) that's about to go to collections

5) Wynn: \$15,000 OSAP (6%) but you have no income

Was that easy to do or difficult? Why? Did it get easier as you went along?

Resources:

National Student Loan Services Centre: 1-888-815-4514 <https://nslsc.canlearn.ca>

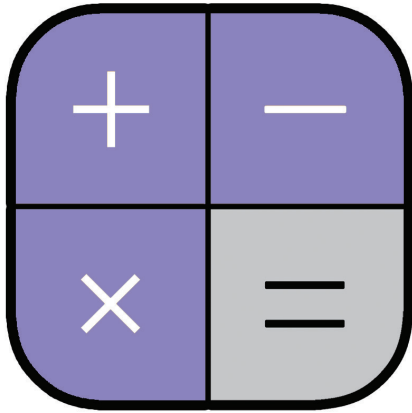
Gail Vaz-Oxlade's Debt Repayment Calculator: http://www.gailvazoxlade.com/resources/own_up_to_debt_worksheet.html

You can also create your own excel spreadsheet to manage your debt numbers and create a repayment plan! Remember to include the creditor's or collection agent's contact information in a spreadsheet like this.

Goal-making and Tracking:

Set some goals for yourself! These aren't for anyone else - just you, and just by writing them down, you may improve your chances of reaching them. It's time to make some healthy changes!

<p>SMART Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific • Measurable • Achievable • Realistic • Time-bound 	<p>Short-term:</p> <p>Medium-term:</p> <p>Long-term:</p>
<p>Possible barriers and solutions</p>	<p>What may get in the way of me achieving my goals:</p> <p>My solutions to these barriers:</p>
<p>One thing I'll do in the next 24 hours that will help me get on track with my debt is...</p>	



The Rooftop Workshops Workshop 6: Conquering Credit

“Neither a borrower nor a lender be, for loan oft loses both itself and friend.”

–William Shakespeare

Credit: is... the coolest AMIRITE?! Right everyone? Hello? Ok, so maybe I'm alone in my interest in the way that credit works, but hear me out on this one. Credit controls much of our modern lives so it's crucial to understand. Bad credit can cost you money because you may have to pay higher interest rates on loans you take out, it could lose you an apartment you applied for and some jobs are even now requesting a copy of your credit report to look at your financial character. It paints a picture of whether or not you keep your promises. So be patient with this workshop, and get comfortable with the idea that you'll have to be building your credit for the rest of your life. The more you know, the more power you have. Control your credit - don't let it control your life instead!

The last time I'll make you draw anything! Write or draw the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word CREDIT:

What was the image you came up with? Why do you think that was it? Does it even make sense? Did you just draw a donkey drinking a mojito? I mean, I know credit is confusing so it's not out of the realm of possibilities, but try to figure out what credit means to you.

Defining credit: It can mean different things to different people, but often it can be simply defined as making a financial promise to someone, or getting something now and paying for it later. A creditor is the person or institution lending the money. When you make an agreement with a creditor, this information is recorded using your identity and sent to Canada's credit bureaus. All agreements with creditors, whether they be with phone companies, credit cards, car loans or lines of credit at banks, will show up on your credit report. This is a statement about whether or not you've kept your promises. More information about credit reports and scores is included later on in this chapter.

The Pros and Cons of Credit: The perception of credit, just like debt, is usually quite negative. Why do you think this is the case? Can you list some pros and cons?

Advantages	Disadvantages

The most thought-of form of credit is of course the credit card. This is a tricky one because for those people who don't have a credit card they're not building their credit history but they're also not risking debt. Credit cards should not be taken on lightly. Their risks need to be fully understood. When you're picking out a good credit card for yourself, remember to research the following:

Features	
Annual fee	
Interest rate	
Grace period	
Rewards and extras	
Extra fees or penalties	

How interest is calculated on the credit card:

- The Visa interest rate is usually 20% annually

Let's say our friend here Yolanda got her first credit card (go ahead and draw a picture of Yolanda...)

and got all excited and went on a shopping spree to add to her collection of golden apples (clearly I've lost my creativity...). Now she owes \$1000 on her credit card! Yikes!

So how do we figure out how much Yolanda will end up paying in monthly interest?

- Take the balance, multiplied by 20%, and divided by 12 months: $\$1000 \times .2/12 = \16.67 interest/month
- Yolanda got her first visa bill in the mail, and thought “PHEW!” because it was only for \$20 instead of the full amount. She felt pure, beautiful relief, but should she have? If she pays the 2% minimum payment of \$20, she will only be paying \$3.33 toward the \$1000 balance. The rest will go to pay the interest.

Which will look like this...

$$\$1000 + \$16.67 - \$20 = \$996.67$$

Here is what happens if Yolanda makes only the minimum payment for three months:

	Payment	To interest	To principal	Balance
1st month	\$20.00	\$16.67	\$3.33	\$996.67
2nd month	\$19.93	\$16.61	\$3.32	\$993.35
3rd month	\$19.87	\$16.55	\$3.32	\$990.03

*If she only pays the minimum payment of 2% toward her debt each month, it will take her more than 26 years to pay off the debt. This will cost over \$3000 in interest!

So what do you think Yolanda should do?

Tips for managing your credit:

- Only use as much credit as you can afford to pay back
- Do not treat credit like free money – it can be very expensive money
- Shop around for the lowest interest rate
- Understand your agreement. Make sure you know the payment deadlines and the penalties for late payments
- Avoid maxing out or using all your available credit
- Figure out the total price you are paying when you use credit. How much will it cost with interest?
- Read your credit card statements. Make sure the charges and purchases listed are correct. If they are not correct, call your credit card company right away.
- Mark your payment deadlines on a calendar. Allow a few days for processing time before the due dates.
- Pay your full balance by the due date every month if you can
- Do not miss payments. If you cannot pay the full amount, always make at least the minimum payment.
- Tell your creditor if you cannot pay on time. Many lenders will be willing to help you manage your payments if you communicate with them.

Credit Bureaus:

Equifax: www.equifax.com

TransUnion: www.transunion.ca

Lenders use the information they get from credit bureaus to predict how you will manage credit in the future. You are allowed to get a copy of your credit report for free once a year by mail or anytime online for a fee. No one is allowed to see your credit report without your permission. A credit bureau can only provide a copy of your report for the following purposes:

1. Applying for credit
2. Collecting a debt
3. Applying to rent an apartment
4. Applying for a job
5. Applying for insurance

Did you know... Credit reports are not shared across international borders – your credit history does not follow you to a new country.

Tip: Check your report at least once a year! Mistakes happen. It is up to you to check your report and take steps to correct the information.

The Credit Report: Your credit report will show the identification information the credit bureau has on file about you. Protect your credit report and if you want to throw it out, shred it first. It has a lot of confidential information on it like your name, age, job title, spouse's age, name and marital status, how many children or dependents you have, address now and in the past, education and work qualifications, current and past jobs, estimated income, assets like home or car, if you paid your bills on time, debts, regular living expenses. It doesn't include criminal matters, it won't have your race, sex, ancestry or political affiliation on it, nor will it have information older than 7 years.

For each credit account that's on it, there will be a number and letter beside the account: The letter is an R, I, or O and the numbers range from 0-9.

- R = Revolving (ie. visa)
- I = Instalment (ie. car loan)
- O = Open (ie. phone)

Each credit account also gets a number rating on a scale between 0 and 9. 1 means you pay your bills on time according to the terms of your credit agreement. 9 means you have not paid your bills as agreed and the account has been placed for collection.

Rating	Description
R0	Too new to rate: approved but not used
R1	Pays within 30 days of billing, or pays as agreed
R2	Pays in more than 30 days but less than 60 or one payment past due
R3	Pays in more than 60 days but less than 90 or two payment past due
R4	Pays in more than 90 days but less than 120 or three or more payment past due
R5	Account is at least 120 days past due but is not yet rated R9
R6	No rating exists
R7	Paid through a consolidation order, consumer proposal or credit counselling debt management program
R8	Repossession of security
R9	Bad debt or placed for collection or bankruptcy

You should be able to see the contact information for any collections agencies your debts have been sent to, but it's better to go back to the original creditor directly and try to make a deal with them. If they refuse, try to negotiate with the collections agency. Say you'll only be able to pay back half of what you owe, but you can do so today. Take a look at the Dealing With Creditors section in the Debt workshop for more information.

What to do if you see an error on your report:

1. Find the documents that prove there is an error. For instance, if the report says you did not pay a bill, find the receipt that shows you made the payment.
2. Make a copy of your proof
3. Call the credit bureau. Explain the error. Find out what they need from you so that they can do a check on the item in dispute.
4. Send the credit bureau a letter or fill out their dispute form. Include all the information needed to check into and correct the error. This process can take up to 30 days.
5. The credit bureau will contact the creditor or financial institution to confirm that an error was made.
6. If they agree an error was made, the credit bureau has 30 days to correct the error on your report (90 days in Alberta).
7. If the financial institution does not think there was an error, you can still write a statement explaining your side of the story. The credit bureau will add this to your report so that people can see your side.
8. You can also contact the financial institution to register a complaint. By law, all financial institutions in Canada must have a process for resolving complaints from customers.

The Credit Score: A credit score is a number between 300 and 900 that credit bureaus use to rate the information in your credit report. Credit bureaus use a mathematical formula based on many factors to arrive at your credit score, but there are five main ones: Types of credit (10%), payment history (35%), amounts owed (30%), length of credit history (15%), and new credit and inquiries (10%).

Ways to improve your credit score:

1. Pay your bills on time
2. If you can't pay, take action and communicate with the lender
3. Pay balances in full if you can
4. Pay your debt as fast as you can
5. Stay within your limit
6. Don't apply for credit too often
7. Use credit – you need to establish a good rating somehow
8. Correct any errors – mistakes happen and they may not be your fault, but it's your responsibility to correct them.

Statute of Limitations: The charts on the next page involving the Equifax and TransUnion credit bureaus show how long information remains on credit reports - fill in the number of years items stay on your report for your province.

Equifax:

Credit transactions (from the date of last activity)	years
Judgments (from the date satisfied or deposit)	years
Collections (from the date of last activity)	years
Secured loans (registered items, from the filing date)	years
Bankruptcy (from the discharge date)	years
Registered consumer proposal, orderly payment of debts (from the date paid)	years
Credit counselling (from the date paid)	years

TransUnion:

Credit transactions (from the date of last activity)	years
Judgments (from the date satisfied or deposit)	years
Collections (from the date of last activity)	years
Secured loans (registered items, from the filing date)	years
Bankruptcy (from the discharge date)	years
Registered consumer proposal, orderly payment of debts (from the date paid)	years
Credit counselling (from the date paid)	years

Fraud: Credit card fraud totalled about \$200 million in Canada in 2003, according to the RCMP. Debit card fraud is not far behind at about \$150 million per year and thieves are becoming very creative. Fraud can really affect your life because if someone steals your identify and then leaves loans in your name high and dry, your credit will very quickly go down the hole.

Types of fraud and scams: There are many different types of frauds and scams intended to steal your identity or money. Examples are false advertising, fraudulent telemarketing, multi-level marketing and pyramid schemes, deceptive business practices, fraudulent electronic commerce, mail fraud, counterfeit money. The most important prevention technique is just to be very aware and cautious when it comes to your identity and money!

Tips on dealing with fraud:

- Legitimate lotteries do not require you to pay a fee to tax to collect winnings
- Never send money to anybody you don't know and trust
- Examine terms and conditions carefully for hidden costs
- Don't make any decisions without doing your homework
- If you have been approached by someone asking you to transfer money for them, it is probably a scam
- Don't click on any links in a spam e-mail

What to do if your identity has been stolen:

- File a police report
- Contact all creditors
- Protect your bank accounts ASAP
- Contact phone busters National Call Centre (to find out more, visit www.capitalone.ca)

Resources:

Government services Consumer Protection Branch: 416-326-8800

Credit repair agencies: These are businesses that promise to fix your credit report, usually for a fee. They generally cannot do anything for you that you could not do, either yourself or by having someone help you. Instead, consider getting help from a credit counselling service, like Credit Canada. For more information on credit repair agencies and what they can and cannot do, see the Ministry of Consumer Services website at www.ontario.ca/mcs or www.yourlegalright.on.ca and click on “Consumer Law”

Gail Vaz-Oxlade’s tips on finding good credit counselling agencies versus ones that may be taking advantage of vulnerable individuals: <http://www.nomoredebts.org/blog/credit-counselling-society/gail-vaz-oxlade-asks-scott-hannah-how-to-find-best-credit-counselling-agency.html>

Report a scam: Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre www.antifraudcentre.ca 1-888-495-8501

Non-profit credit counselling agencies in Ontario:

InCharge Debt Solutions www.incharge.ca 1-888-424-3404

Credit Canada www.creditcanada.com 1-800-267-2272

The Ontario Association of Credit Counselling Services (OACCS) can also give you information on not-for-profit credit counselling agencies. The OACCS is a registered charity that represents a member network of these agencies. They can be reached at 1-888-7-IN DEBT or www.oaccs.com/agencies.html

unauthorized credit card transactions: www.fcac-acfc.gc.ca

To protect yourself from debit card fraud, visit Industry Canada’s office of consumer affairs’ website: www.consumer.ic.gc.ca/debitfraud

For more information on identity theft, visit: www.cmcweb.ca/idtheft

To test your vulnerability to fraud take the Fraud Quiz: www.consumer.ic.gc.ca

Visit the Royal Canadian Mounted Police website: www.rcpm-grc.gc.ca This site describes most recent scams, counterfeiting and telemarketing fraud

For more information or to report telemarketing fraud, visit the PhoneBusters Website: www.phonebusters.com

Goal-making and Tracking:

Set some goals for yourself! These aren't for anyone else - just you, and just by writing them down, you may improve your chances of reaching them. It's time to make some healthy changes!

<p>SMART Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific • Measurable • Achievable • Realistic • Time-bound 	<p>Short-term:</p> <p>Medium-term:</p> <p>Long-term:</p>
<p>Possible barriers and solutions</p>	<p>What may get in the way of me achieving my goals:</p> <p>My solutions to these barriers:</p>
<p>One thing I'll do in the next 24 hours that will help me get on track with my credit is...</p>	

CONGRATULATIONS!

You just completed all six Eva's Financial Literacy Workshops! You're amazing! And now you are officially an Eva's Financial Literacy grad. Your mission now is to keep up with those goals you set and good habits you formed and watch your savings grow!

