

PROJECT: Rein In Your Wants

Your task: As a student (especially in high school), there's a good chance you're not responsible for paying for all of your own living expenses -- housing, groceries, insurance, etc. -- which means much of your spending could be on "wants." In this project, you'll assess your current spending, try one recommended strategy for cutting your spending, and then develop your own plan to see if it works any better.

Part I: Initial Trial - Track Your Spending

Make a copy of this [Track Your Spending Sheet](#)^{1,2} and complete Tab 1 using the following steps:

- ☐ After you make a purchase, record the date, what the purchase was, and the total cost
 - ☐ Continue using this same spreadsheet for the timeframe your teacher assigns you -- it could be 1 week, 2 weeks, etc.
 - ☐ If you need extra rows, add them before line 22, the Total.
1. If you were to categorize each of your purchases (Ex: Food, entertainment, transportation, etc), what are the main areas you spent money in?
 2. How do you feel about the amount you spent? If you have a budget for yourself, does this spending fit within that budget?

Part II: Suggested Intervention

Use the same spreadsheet and click on Tab 2. Now you are going to track spending for the same amount of time as the initial trial, but you're going to implement the following intervention:

- ☐ BEFORE you make any purchase, you'll ask yourself, **"HOW HAPPY IS THIS PURCHASE GOING TO MAKE ME?"**
 - ☐ Choose between:
 - ☐ 0 -- it will make me sad
 - ☐ 1 -- it will make me a little bit happy
 - ☐ 2 -- it will make me very happy
 - ☐ If you still make the purchase, fill in the Track Your Spending Sheet with the info
3. How did your spending during this intervention compare to your initial spending?

¹ [Entering & Editing Data](#)

² [Formatting Columns & Rows](#)

4. Did reflecting on how happy the purchase would make you change your spending habits at all? Why or why not?
5. Are there items you purchased that you assumed would make you happy, but in retrospect did not?

Part III: Your Own Intervention

Use the same spreadsheet and click on Tab 3. Now you are going to track spending for the same amount of time as the initial trial, but you're going to implement your own intervention

- ☐ Make any modifications you need to Tab 3 of the spreadsheet to meet the needs of your intervention
 - ☐ For each purchase you make, fill in the Track Your Spending Sheet with the info
6. Explain the intervention you developed for yourself.
 7. Why did you think this intervention would work well for you?
 8. How did your spending in this intervention compare to your initial spending and the first intervention?

Part IV: Summary

9. Many Americans struggle to live within their budget. After completing this project, why do you think budgeting is so difficult for so many?