

course overview

1. Financial Literacy Foundations

- Why financial education matters
 - Assessing your current level of financial literacy
 - How personal values and goals shape financial decisions
 - Why people make poor financial choices (psychological, cultural, societal influences)
 - How appearances can be deceiving when it comes to wealth
 - Understanding and avoiding “money shame”
 - The importance of financial transparency and open communication
 - The dangers of trying to “keep up with the Joneses”
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2. Setting Goals and Building Habits

- How to create SMART financial goals
 - Using a zero-based budget to manage spending
 - Identifying the habits of financially successful people (and applying them in high school)
 - Using a sinking fund to save for short-term goals
 - Building an emergency fund
 - Dave Ramsey’s Five Foundations (simplified saving/investing steps)
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3. Income and Employment Skills

- How education can affect earning potential
- Researching realistic starting salaries for chosen careers
- Exploring community college, trade schools, and other cost-effective career paths
- What gig work is with benefits and drawbacks
- Finding your first job
- Completing job applications and interviews
- Writing a resume and creating a LinkedIn profile
- Understanding labor laws for minors and how to fill out working papers

- How to succeed at a first job
 - Experiencing paycheck-to-paycheck living through simulation
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4. Earning and Taxes

- Understanding paystubs (net pay, Social Security, 401(k), etc.)
 - Key tax forms: I-9, W-2, W-4, 1040
 - How taxes work and what they fund
 - How to file taxes
 - Calculating take-home pay using standard deductions
 - Exploring current events around taxation
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5. Spending and Budgeting

- Assessing current spending habits
 - Creating and managing a realistic monthly budget
 - Writing checks and balancing a checkbook
 - Practicing online banking
 - Building a grocery list within a set budget
 - Searching for an affordable apartment
 - Understanding the real costs of utilities and independent living
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6. Transportation and Car Ownership

- Shopping for a car with or without a loan
 - Understanding steps for buying a car
 - Calculating total car costs: insurance, gas, maintenance, wear and tear
 - Comparing MPG, driving history, and other factors that impact costs
 - Evaluating transportation alternatives (e.g., Uber, public transit)
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7. Credit and Debt

- History of credit cards
 - How interest rates and payment habits affect credit card debt
 - Understanding how debt can limit future choices
 - Introduction to credit scores and reports
 - What affects your credit score
 - Comparing credit and debit cards
 - The risks of co-signing a loan
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8. Predatory Practices and Scams

- Identifying predatory lending (e.g., payday loans, title loans)
 - Dangers of multi-level marketing schemes, Ponzi schemes, and crypto scams
 - How to spot and avoid identity theft
 - Common financial scams targeting young adults
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9. College and Career Decision-Making

- Understanding the long-term impact of student loans
 - How to research schools with high value (graduation rate, salary outcomes, loan burden)
 - Comparing financial outcomes of community college, 4-year schools, and trade programs
 - Identifying lesser-known pathways to career goals
 - Finding scholarships
 - Common mistakes in college selection
 - Exploring post-high school plans aligned with career goals
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10. Saving and Investing

- Solving and applying compound interest formulas
- Basics of investing (stocks, bonds, mutual funds)
- Reading a stock quote

- Diversification and risk management
- Exploring tools for teen investors (e.g., Fidelity Youth)
- Evaluating risk, return, and fees in retirement funds
- How retirement planning has changed in recent decades

final study guide

1. Introduction to Finance
 - a. How do American teens [rank](#) in their financial knowledge? **Day 1**
 - b. Why is it [important](#) to be financially literate? What factors may impact that literacy? **Day 1**
 - c. What are the 7 [financial values](#)? What are possible pitfalls of each? **Day 2-5**
 - d. What are [SMART goals](#)? Why are they important in financial planning? **Day 6**
 - e. What are the [cognitive biases](#) and how can they impact financial decisions? **Day 10, 12**
2. Teen Jobs
 - a. [Landing a job](#): what is a resume? What goes on it? What can you do to write a strong one (even without prior employment)? Why is it important even as a teen? What are factors in selecting a job? How does a cover letter differ from a resume? Who would make a good reference? Who should never be a reference? When should you show up to an interview? What should you wear? **Day 18**
 - b. What types of jobs do teens typically hold? **Day 9**
 - c. [Interviews](#): what are tips for a good interview? What sort of questions should you anticipate? What are suggestions particular to virtual interviews? How should you follow up? **Day 17**
 - d. What are [working papers](#)? Who fills them out? What are restrictions on employment for minors? **Day 13**
 - e. What information will go on a [job application](#)? **Day 11**
 - f. What [protections](#) do young workers have? **Day 13**
 - g. Why should you have a [LinkedIn](#)? How is it used? **Day 15**
 - h. How can you do well in your [first job](#)? **Day 19**
 - i. What is [gig work](#)? What are the pros and cons? **mini-lesson**
3. Saving
 - a. What is a [sinking fund](#)? How does it relate to saving? **Day 12, 33**
 - b. Calculate [compound interest](#) **Day 14, 16**
 - c. What does it mean to live [paycheck-to-paycheck](#)? How can saving reduce that risk? **Day 16**
 - d. What are the "[five foundations](#)"? **Day 8**
4. Paychecks and Taxes
 - a. [Paycheck](#) terms: (pay) period/current, (year) to date, 403b and 401k, deductions, direct deposit, employee, employer, family leave, federal taxes, gross pay (earnings), medicare, net pay (take home pay), paycheck, pension, salary, social security (FICA), state taxes, unemployment, withholdings **Day 22**
 - b. How do [tax brackets](#) work? How are they progressive (vs. flat)? **Day 28**
 - c. Employment and tax forms: [I9](#), [1040](#), [W2](#), [W4](#). What information is on these? What are their functions? **Day 19, 21, 26**
 - d. What do [taxes](#) pay for? **Day 26**
 - e. Be able to [calculate a paycheck](#) based on typical deductions. **Day 24**
 - f. How do you [file taxes](#)? By when? Using what? What are the possible outcomes? **Day 24, 26**
5. Budgets
 - a. What is a [zero-based budget](#)? [Envelope system](#)? How can these keep you on track? **Day 27, 29**
 - b. Be able to calculate [budget percentages](#) based on net pay. **Day 27**
 - c. What are typical utilities? **Day 31**
 - d. What are some alarming statistics related to health care and insurance? **Day 32**
6. Banking

- a. How do you [write a check](#)? **Day 29**
- b. What does it mean to balance or [reconcile a checkbook](#)? **Day 31**
- c. What can you do with [online banking](#)? **Day 32**
- d. What are terms related to [buying a car](#)? **Day 41**
- e. What are the [steps](#) in buying a car? **Day 34**
- f. What information is on a [mortgage statement](#): mortgage, principal, interest, escrow, unpaid principal, escrow, interest rate, maturity date, escrow, property taxes, homeowners insurance, PMI, HOA. **Day 43**
- g. What are the steps in buying a home? **Day 45**

7. Debt

- a. How do [credit and debit cards](#) compare? **Day 47**
- b. How can you buy a car with or without a loan? **Day 34**
- c. Use "[cost of credit calculator](#)". **Day 35**
- d. What are D Rams' credit myths? How did he explain each one? **Day 37, 39, 41, 43, 47, 49, 55**
- e. What are forms of predatory lending? **Day 37**
- f. How are [credit scores](#) determined? **Day 51**
- g. What do you "[need](#)" a credit score for? **Day 51**
- h. What do you do if your identity is stolen? **Day 53**

8. Further Training

- a. What are common [mistakes](#) in selecting a college? **Day 40**
- b. What are [trade schools](#)? When might they be a smart idea? **Day 50**
- c. What are the dangers associated with [college loans](#)? **Day 42, 44, 46, 48**
- d. How can [community colleges](#) save costs? **Day 52**
- e. What is the [FAFSA](#)? Why should students complete it? **Day 44**

9. Scams - what is each? What should you be on the lookout for?

- a. [Multilevel Marketing](#) **Day 54**
- b. [Crypto](#) **Day 56**
- c. [Ponzi Scheme](#) **Day 58**
- d. [Catfishing](#) **Day 60**
- e. [Job Scams](#) **Day 62**

10. Investments

- a. How has [retirement](#) become more difficult? **Day 57, 63**
- b. What are typical investments (CD, single stockbond, mutual fund, money market account, savings account)? Which are recommended? Why? **Day 57, 59, 61**
- c. Why are [mutual](#) and [index](#) funds best for long-term investing? How do they compare? **Day 61, 63, 65**
- d. What do the terms risk, return and liquidity mean? How do they relate? **Day 57, 59, 61**
- e. What information is on a [stock quote table](#)? How can you use it to evaluate your investment? **Day 59**