



Making it Work Together: Money and Roommates

LESSON 8: TEACHERS GUIDE

Whether it's lending a hand in a group project, passing the ball for a goal or working together to win on a video game battlefield, students often work together for a common purpose. But applying these skills to their finances can be difficult for teens, especially when it comes to learning to balance money and first-time roommates. In this lesson, students will explore what it means to have a financial partnership with a roommate, analyze situations that could test that partnership, and discuss the importance of communication when sharing expenses with another person.

Topic: Relationships, Money and Financial Agreements

Time Required: 60 minutes

SUPPLIES:

- Notebooks
- Computers or tablets
- Internet access
- *Washington Post* article: "The More the Merrier?" at [washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/19/AR2006101901497.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/19/AR2006101901497.html)
- Student activity sheet

PREPARATION:

- Copy student activity sheet
- Copy article or provide access to it at [washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/19/AR2006101901497.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/19/AR2006101901497.html)

STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET:

Financial Feuds: Making Peace with Roommates

In this activity, students will discuss different ways to handle financial conflicts with roommates.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Students will...

- Understand components of financial agreements between roommates
- Evaluate the pros and cons of sharing financial information with another person
- Discover the importance of communicating about finances

STANDARDS:

Jump\$tart Standards:

- Financial Responsibility Standards 5 and 6

Common Core ELA Anchor Standards:

- Reading: Key Ideas and Details
- Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration
- Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
- Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Essential Question*“What do I need to consider in a financial partnership?”***Investigate: The Power of Partnerships**

[Time Required: 10 minutes]

1. Ask students to record in their notebooks a time when they made a purchase with someone else. For example, have they ever pooled money with siblings to buy their parents a gift, or pitched in with friends to buy a pizza? Ask them to consider how they decided who would contribute what, and if any problems arose in making those decisions.
2. Invite volunteers to share their stories. Ask how they would handle a situation in which someone didn't follow through with his part of the agreement. What would they say to a friend who didn't pay her fair share? Why is it important to agree on how everyone will contribute before making a shared purchase?
3. Explain that making a purchase with someone else means becoming part of a partnership. How would students define the word **partnership**? What are the traits of a successful partnership (e.g., each pulling their own weight, helping one another out)? Can students share examples of effective partnerships they know in real life? Why are those relationships strong?

Student Preparation: What's Fair When You Share?

[Time Required: 20 minutes]

4. Ask students to think about what it means to have a financial partnership with a roommate. What kind of expenses do roommates share and how do they divide those costs? What happens if someone doesn't follow through or if the roommates disagree on how money should be spent?
5. Record student responses on the board, and then distribute the article “The More the Merrier?,” asking students to read it while keeping the concept of financial partnerships in mind.
6. Next, ask students to analyze the article and discuss the differences between the two financial partnerships portrayed. Why did the second story have a stronger partnership than the first story? What factors were different between the two scenarios? What are the most important elements to consider before creating a financial partnership with a roommate someday? Add students' contributions to the board.

**TEACHER'S TIPS****What is the Essential Question?**

The Essential Question is designed to “hook” the learner, promote inquiry and engagement with the lesson, and allow students to exercise problem-solving abilities. It addresses a larger concept, does not have a right or wrong answer, and requires higher order thinking skills.

Class Discussion:

To jump-start the class discussion, assign “The More the Merrier?” as homework prior to this class. In order to prepare for your discussion, ask students to write a one-page reflection on what the article taught them about looking for a roommate.

Challenge: Solving Financial Feuds

[Time Required: 20 minutes]

7. Distribute the student activity sheet ***Financial Feuds: Making Peace with Roommates***.
8. Explain that students will work in pairs to solve possible financial conflicts that may arise with a roommate. Give partners 10 minutes to discuss and answer.
9. Invite partners to share their responses to each of the scenarios with the class and compare their solutions with other groups. Ask students why some solutions are better than others. For example, why is sitting down and talking to your roommate a better approach than ignoring the problem?

Reflection

[Time Required: 10 minutes]

Ask students to reflect in their notebooks about how they will approach the relationship with their first roommates. What will they consider before choosing a roommate and what will they do to make the partnership strong? How will they handle problems that may arise?



TEACHER'S TIPS

Extension Activity:

For more financial partnership activities, ask students to draft a sample roommate agreement detailing items like financial contributions, borrowing one another's personal belongings, food expenses and guest rules. Students can create their own agreement or search online for templates and downloadable forms.

What is Reflection?

The Reflection part of the class gives students the opportunity to reflect on the bigger-picture meaning of the exercise, and to assimilate and personalize some of the concepts and ideas learned about in the class.





Financial Feuds: Making Peace with Roommates

LESSON 8: ANSWER KEY

Note: Students will develop their own answers to the scenarios, but you can connect their ideas with some overarching concepts provided below.

1. Who ate my food?

Discuss the importance of making arrangements that work for everyone. Because food is kept in a common area, help students see the value in discussing ground rules and restrictions to avoid conflicts.

2. Decorating your place

Agreeing to terms that are fair for both parties is a large part of a successful financial partnership. Discuss the need to agree on contributions before moving in together so everyone is happy with the arrangement.

3. Streaming video

Use this scenario to discuss the importance of addressing issues up front to avoid conflicts down the road. One roommate making decisions for the entire house or apartment has the potential to evolve into the “norm.”

4. Passwords please

If you’ve covered **Lesson 7** on identity theft, remind students of the dangers in divulging personal information, even with someone you know. Additionally, ask students to think about the credit impact if their roommate did not pay a bill (**Lesson 6**).

5. Broken promises

If you’ve discussed **Lesson 6** on credit scores, talk about strategies to determine a roommate’s “creditworthiness” before moving in (e.g., through a screening or application process).