

# Budget Busters

## Instructions

Budget Busters is an activity that allows students to understand the importance of budgeting and managing their finances in a game format.

### Supplies Needed

- **Budget Busters Score Sheet** – one copy per group
- **One set of each of the following cards:**
  - Salary (printed on green) – a total of 5 different cards
  - Situation (printed on pink) – a total of 22 different cards
  - Bonus (printed on blue) – a total of 10 different cards
- **One set per group** of the cards with information on **Housing, Transportation, Insurance, and Food** (printed on yellow)
- **Small box or bag** (to draw cards from)
- **Calculator**
- **Play money** (optional) – any type of play money would be acceptable. One option is to order a set of Monopoly money. One set of Monopoly money costs \$3.50. It is available from Hasbro. To order Monopoly money, go to [www.hasbro.com](http://www.hasbro.com). At the top of the page, click on Customer Service, then click on Replacement Parts. Select the K-O Titles section, then use the pull down menu to select Monopoly Order Form. Print out and mail the order form.

### Instructions for Using Budget Busters Game

1. Before beginning the activity:
  - Count out the net monthly salary (the bottom number on the green cards) for each education level.
  - Place pink cards in a small bag or box for students to draw from.
  - Make copies of the score sheet.
2. Divide the class into 4 or 5 groups. Each small group will work together as a team. Each group will need a recorder and a banker, which can be the same person.
3. Explain to the class that this is a budgeting activity. They will be given a salary based on the card they draw. The object of the game is to have money left at the end of the activity. There will be 4 rounds,



each representing one week of the month (situations on pink cards). Halfway through, there will be a bonus round (blue cards).

4. Have each group draw one of the green cards and distribute the salaries accordingly.
5. Give each group a set of yellow cards for expenses related to Housing, Transportation, Insurance, and Food. The small group must make a selection from each of these cards and record the dollar amount on their score sheet. When the group has made their selections, total the amount they have spent. This is the amount they must pay you. Have them count the cash they have on hand and enter that number under "disposable income" on their score sheet.
6. Discuss financial terms such as:
  - a. Gross income – an individual's income before taxes and deductions are subtracted
  - b. Net income – remaining from an amount, especially of money, after all necessary deductions have been made
  - c. Net monthly income – net income divided by 12 months
  - d. Disposable income – income that remains available for spending after deductions for taxes and other necessary obligations are paid
7. Have each group select a pink situation card and read it out loud. Collect or pay out money as the situation dictates. Groups should record their income or expenses on the score sheet.
8. After each group has drawn a pink card, ask them if they would like to save money. If so they should record the amount they wish to save on the appropriate lines. Discuss the concept of saving (money set aside for future use.) Savings can be accessed by groups if they don't have enough cash on hand to meet their expenses. If they do so, have the group record the amount under withdrawals.
9. Repeat steps 7 and 8.
10. Take pink cards out of the bag/box and put blue cards in for the bonus round. Explain that, in general, the pink cards represent expenses you can plan for, while the blue cards are little expenses or income events that aren't always planned, but can help or hurt your budget, nonetheless. Record what happens under the bonus round.
11. Take blue cards out of the bag/box and put pink ones back in.
12. Repeat steps 7 and 8 twice.
13. Once each group has drawn 4 pink cards and 1 blue card, have the groups total the cash they have on hand. Add this amount to their savings balance for a total cash count. The group with the highest total wins.
14. Some groups will run out of money before the game is over. Have them keep track of how much they have gone over and report that at the end of the game. If the class approves, you can give them a loan.