

## LEARNING EXPERIENCE BRIEF

# JA Finance Park<sup>®</sup> Entry Level

### ■ Financial Literacy

*JA Finance Park* Entry Level helps students build a foundation upon which they can make intelligent lifelong financial decisions, including those decisions related to income, expenses, savings, and credit.

The *JA Finance Park* learning experience comprises 13 required teacher-taught, in-class lessons. It culminates in a hands-on budgeting simulation that is implemented either at a *JA Finance Park* facility, mobile unit, or virtual site. Additional extension activities are available for each lesson topic. Lessons are offered in a traditional classroom presentation format and in a project-based learning (PBL) format. Both formats provide educators a method of delivery that will best meet the needs of their students.

## CURRICULUM OUTLINE

### Unit One: Income

Students recognize the fundamental role of income in managing their personal finances and the factors that affect income and take-home pay. They come to understand that the decisions they make about education and career have an impact on their potential income and quality of life.

#### **Implementation Option One: Traditional Lesson Format—Three (Required) 45-Minute Lessons**

##### **Lesson One: Plan Your Future**

Students make the distinction between abilities, aptitudes, interests, work preferences, and values. They explore various sources of income, including salaries and wages, interest, and business profit.



## LEARNING EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

- Primarily educator-led
- Curriculum delivery in person (face-to-face in the classroom) or virtually (online in a remote classroom)
- 13 required sessions, plus optional extension sessions
- On-site or virtual *JA Finance Park* simulation
- This learning experience is part of the *JA Financial Literacy Pathway* with a secondary focus on Work and Career Readiness competencies and is designed for Grades 7–8. The learning experience may receive 18 or more ICH based on delivery of the optional content. The learning experience is primarily educator-led content, with multiple options for volunteer engagement.

# JA Finance Park Entry Level

## Lesson Two: Careers

Students identify their career interests and goals and how they relate to future income. They set a career goal they will revisit at the end of the program.

## Lesson Three: Taxes and My Income

Students learn about the federal government's three main taxes on income and determine net monthly income by deducting federal income, Social Security, and Medicare taxes.

## Extension Activities

- Career Exploration Tool
- Career Choice Research
- Being an Entrepreneur
- Starting a Lawn Care Business
- STEM Careers
- Social Security and Medicare
- Sales Receipt Analysis
- How to Complete a 1040-EZ Income Tax Form

## Implementation Option Two: Project-Based Learning Format—Four (Required) 45- to 50-Minute Lessons

### Lesson One: My Life—Got Skills?

Students rate their interests, abilities, and values. They determine work preferences and match them to career options.

### Lesson Two: My Life—College or Not?

Students explore how their decisions about education and career have an impact on their income potential and quality of life.

### Lesson Three: My Life—Where's All My Money? Part One

Students are introduced to the concept of taxes, why they are paid, and their impact on income. They determine net monthly income.

### Lesson Four: My Life—Where's All My Money? Part Two

Working in teams, students debate the use of tax dollars and how they are distributed.

# JA Finance Park Entry Level

## Unit Two: Saving, Investing, and Risk Management

Students explore saving and compare investments as part of their overall financial planning. They also examine risk and how insurance may help protect savings from both planned and unplanned events.

### Implementation Option One: Traditional Lesson Format — Two (Required) 45-Minute Lessons

#### Lesson One: Saving and Investing

Students are introduced to various short- and long-term saving and investment options, such as savings accounts, stocks, and mutual funds.

#### Lesson Two: Managing Risk

Students recognize that insurance policies are a common way to minimize risk for accidents and unforeseen circumstances.

#### Extension Activities

- Understanding College Costs and the FAFSA
- Understanding Stock Quotes
- Roth IRAs: Teens and Retirement Savings
- Compound Interest and the Rule of 72
- Junior Achievement \$ave USA “Risk and Insurance” online lesson

### Implementation Option Two: Project-Based Learning Format — Two (Required) 45-Minute Lessons

#### Lesson One: My Life—Pay Myself First?

Students examine how they can benefit from paying themselves first. They compare the impact that money, time, interest rates, and inflation have on the growth of their investments.

#### Lesson Two: My Life—Insurance Too?

Students recognize that insurance policies safeguard against risk by providing compensation in the event of sickness, injury, accidents, or other insured circumstances.

## Unit Three: Debit and Credit

Students compare financial institutions and their services. Through discussion and a game activity, they weigh the advantages and disadvantages of debit and credit. Students also examine the effect that personal finances have on credit scores and credit reporting.

# JA Finance Park Entry Level

## **Implementation Option One: Traditional Lesson Format — Four (Required) 45-Minute Lessons**

### **Lesson One: Banking Partners**

Students identify the types of financial institutions and the services they provide.

### **Lesson Two: Personal Spending**

Students become aware of the advantages and disadvantages of debit and credit cards.

### **Lesson Three: Savvy Shopping**

Students participate in the Savvy Shopper game and see firsthand the costs and benefits of debit and credit.

### **Lesson Four: Managing Credit**

Students explore credit reports and credit scores, discover why they are important, and learn how to build good credit.

### **Extension Activities**

- Checks and Checking Accounts
- Installment Debt (Buying on Time)
- Rent or Home Ownership
- Leasing or Buying a Car
- Identity Theft

## **Implementation Option Two: Project-Based Learning Format — Three (Required) 45-Minute Lessons**

### **Lesson One: My Life—Financial Institutions**

Students identify the various types of financial institutions and the services they provide.

### **Lesson Two: My Life—The Cost of Credit**

Students explain the use of debit cards and credit cards and their advantages and disadvantages.

### **Lesson Three: My Life—My Credit Score**

Students understand what a credit score is, why it is important, and how to build good credit.

# JA Finance Park Entry Level

## Unit Four: Budget +

Students discover the importance of spending money wisely and recognize a budget as a valuable tool. They create a personal budget based on saving and lifestyle goals and day-to-day situations.

### **Implementation Option One: Traditional Lesson Format—Three (Required) 45-Minute Lessons**

#### **Lesson One: Think Before You Spend**

Students define what good money management is and why it is important. They discuss how setting financial goals and being an informed consumer will help them better manage their money.

#### **Lesson Two: What Is a Budget?**

Students identify the components of a successful budget.

#### **Lesson Three: Who Uses a Budget?**

Students practice budgeting and learn how this tool can help them responsibly manage their daily finances.

#### **Extension Activities**

- Sample Budgets
- Personal Budget
- Paying for Postsecondary Education

### **Implementation Option Two: Project-Based Learning Format—Three (Required) 45-Minute Lessons Plus Project Preparation**

#### **Lesson One: My Life—“Riches to Rags” . . . Not Me!**

Students explore common reasons why people run into financial difficulty, including unemployment, medical bills, overextended credit, and poor decision making.

#### **Lesson Two: My Life— Income—Expenses = Reality**

Students identify the components of a successful budget and distinguish between different kinds of budgets.

#### **Lesson Three: My Life—In Control of My Money**

Students make choices and discover how to maintain a budget. They prepare a budget based on goals and income.

# JA Finance Park Entry Level

## **Culminating Project Preparation: Two Class Sessions or Homework**

Using the knowledge and skills gained from the JA Finance Park curriculum, students create a portfolio and presentation describing their education path, career path, savings goals, risk management strategy, or budget plan.

## **JA Finance Park Simulation and Debriefing Lesson**

(Simulation applies to both traditional and project-based learning formats.)

Students experience the JA Finance Park simulation, where they apply classroom learning to create a family budget based on a hypothetical life situation. They recognize the impact of credit history on budget planning and purchasing options.

## **Implementation Option One: Traditional Lesson Format**

### **Debriefing**

During the debriefing, students revisit their career goals to see how the JA Finance Park experience may have changed their plans for the future.

## **Implementation Option Two: Project-Based Learning Format**

### **My Life Presentation**

Students present their insights and knowledge related to one of the four JA Finance Park curriculum sections.

## LEARNING EXPERIENCE BRIEF

# JA Finance Park<sup>®</sup> Advanced

### ■ Financial Literacy

*JA Finance Park* is Junior Achievement's capstone curriculum for personal financial planning and career exploration. This teacher-led classroom curriculum culminates with a visit to *JA Finance Park*, a realistic on-site or mobile facility, or virtually in the classroom, where participants engage with volunteers and put into practice what they've learned by developing a personal budget. A new advanced curriculum and simulation gives teens and young adults a more personal focus. Participants select their career and define their future lifestyle and financial goals. The advanced simulation allows participants to see the long-term impact of their education, savings, and credit decisions.

This learning experience has a primary focus of the JA Financial Literacy Pathway and a secondary focus of the Work and Career Readiness Pathway and can be placed in Grades 9–12 and post-high school. Use of the advanced curriculum in middle school is possible with a variance. The learning experience may receive 12 or more ICH based on delivery of the optional content. The learning experience is primarily teacher-led but also requires volunteers.

## VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

- Flexible options to participate at an on-site or mobile facility, or virtually:
  - Deliver activities using tailored volunteer guides, or assist with curriculum sessions
  - Work with participants during the simulation
- Minimum of 3 hours required



## ADVANCED CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

- Blended program with flexible options for delivery and learning.
- Foundation (required) sessions engage participants in collaborative, experiential activities and projects.
- Participants have access to self-paced online extension activities.

## ADVANCED ON-SITE SIMULATION HIGHLIGHTS

- Deep dive into financial consequences of life choices and decisions impacting long-term goals.
- Choose an “adult adventure,” where participants select personas based on career and education selections.
- Navigate financial decisions through various life stages, budgeting beyond 1 month.
- Includes updated volunteer role during simulation visit and new volunteer resources.

# JA Finance Park Advanced

## 1 Theme One: Employment and Income

Participants will learn how career choices can affect personal income potential. This theme consists of two teacher-led foundation sessions that are 45 minutes in length. There are also several optional self-guided extension activities available to deepen and expand on the foundational learning, including topics such as My Work Values and Entrepreneurial Strengths and Talents. Participants also have an opportunity to complete Program Pre-Test.

## 2 Theme Two: Employment and Education

Participants will begin planning for their futures by exploring different occupations and secondary education options. This theme consists of one 45-minute teacher-led session. Optional self-guided extension activities include topics such as Paying for Post-Secondary Education and Interpreting a Financial Aid Award Letter.

## 3 Theme Three: Financial Responsibility and Decision Making

Participants will consider the importance of setting and prioritizing financial goals and the decision-making steps needed to obtain them. This theme consists of one 45-minute teacher-led session. Optional self-guided extension activities include topics such as Buying your First Car and Philanthropy.

## 4 Theme Four: Planning and Money Management

Participants will learn budgeting concepts to improve their understanding of how to manage their personal finances. This theme consists of one 45-minute teacher-led session. Optional self-guided extension activities include topics such as Extracurricular Expenses and A World Without Cash.

## 5 Theme Five: Risk Management and Insurance

Young adults under thirty often think they do not need life, health, and disability insurance. Participants will discover that the decision to purchase insurance takes careful thought and consideration. This theme consists of one 45-minute teacher-led session. There are two optional self-guided extension activities: Auto Insurance and Mortgages.

## 6 Theme Six: Investing

Participants will explore the advantages of investing in a diversified portfolio as part of a personal financial plan. Participants will learn about a variety of investment options and explore reasons for investing, such as retirement. This theme consists of one 45-minute teacher-led session. There are two optional self-guided extension activities: Purchasing Stocks and Investing for Retirement.

## 7 Theme Seven: Simulation and Debrief

Participants will participate in the *JA Finance Park* simulation (at an on-site or mobile facility, or virtually). Then participants will reflect on the activities they participated in during the simulation and engage in an activity to connect their learnings and takeaways from the simulation to their future career and money management goals. Participants can also complete Program Post-Test to determine their knowledge gain over the course of the program.