Lesson 2.9: Budget Like a Boss

Unit: Unit 2, Me, My Goals, My Money (Individual Growth and Life Readiness) **Topic:** 2.3 Money Basics **Grade:** 6 to 8 (written at grade 7; see Differentiation for the grade 6 support and grade 8 stretch) **Days:** 2 class periods of 40 minutes **Room:** Classroom or FACS lab; no kitchen needed

Standards

- NYS module line: NYS IGLR 4. Financial Readiness b) Create and follow a budget
- NYS module line: NYS IGLR 4. Financial Readiness g) Evaluate the impact of various family transitions on personal finance (taught in the Day 2 grade 8 stretch and the income-drop scenario)
- CTE theme line: CTE FCL 4. Buying Goods and Services c) Develop a spending and savings plan (budget) based on income and expenses
- CTE theme line: CTE FCL 1. Earning Income e) Analyze systems for recording income and documenting expenditures
- NYS FACS Learning Standard 3 (Intermediate), Key Idea: Students will understand and be able to manage personal resources of talent, time, energy, and money and make effective decisions in order to balance their obligations to work, family, and self.; Performance Indicator: Students are able to budget their time and money.
- CDOS Standard 3a Universal Foundation Skills: Managing Resources
- National FCS 3.0: 2.6.2 Use sound money management principles in personal and family finances.

Enduring understanding and essential question

Big idea: A budget is not a punishment. It is a plan that tells your money where to go before it leaves. The people who feel richest are not the ones with the most money; they are the ones who know where theirs goes. **Essential question:** If you had to write down every dollar you spend for a week, what would surprise you?

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. (Low) Given a list of ten expenses, label each one fixed or variable and define a budget in one sentence.
2. (Mid) Given a scenario card with a monthly net income and an expense list, build a monthly budget that pays savings first, covers every fixed need, and does not spend more than the income.
3. (High) Compare the finished budget to the 50/30/20 guide, judge where it is off, and revise one line with a written reason tied to the scenario's savings goal.

Vocabulary

Tier 2 (general academic): estimate, fixed, variable, revise, surplus Tier 3 (FACS): budget, income, expense, fixed expense, variable expense, savings goal, pay yourself first, 50/30/20. See Vocabulary 02.md for Turkish, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Materials and setup

- Budget Builder and the four scenario cards: Handout 02.09 - Budget Builder and Scenario Cards.md (Day 1 uses page 1, the one-week estimate; Day 2 uses the Budget Builder and one scenario card per student)
- Calculators, one per pair
- Students' $100 sheets from Lesson 2.7 and their SMART goal from Lesson 2.4 (in the FACS folders)
- Slides: Slides 02.09 - Budget Like a Boss
- Setup notes: cut the scenario cards so each student gets one; six copies of each of the four cards covers a class of 24. Prices are Long Island prices for 2026 and marked *[update]. No food handled today. [Sal: if the ClassroomStreet budgeting mode exists, Day 2 runs inside it with the same four scenarios entered as profiles.]*

Pre-assessment

The exit cards from Lesson 2.8 tell you who knows net from gross. Day 1's do now asks for a one-week spending guess; a student who writes "$0, I do not spend anything" gets the prompt "What about lunch, a snack, a game?" and usually finds $15. Day 2's do now checks fixed versus variable before anyone builds anything.

Do now and hook (Day 1, Time: 4 min)

On the board: "Guess: how much money passed through your hands in the last seven days? Write the number. Then list what it went to."

Debrief: hand vote on ranges (under $10, $10 to $25, $25 to $50, over $50). Hook: tell the Alex story in four sentences. Alex got $40 a month and it vanished. His mom made him write everything down for a week. Snacks Monday, a game Wednesday, coffee Friday. Twelve dollars gone on nothing he could remember. "Today you find your twelve dollars."

Do now and hook (Day 2, Time: 3 min)

On the board: "Fixed or variable? Phone plan. Pizza on Friday. Bus pass. A birthday gift. Streaming. Write F or V next to each." Quick choral check. Hook: hold up a scenario card. "You are about to become someone else for 20 minutes. They have a job, or an allowance, and a goal. Build their month."

Procedure

Step	Teacher will	Students will	Time
Day 1, 1. Direct	Slides 2 to 4. A	Copy the definition.	8 min

instruction: what a budget is	budget is a plan for income and expenses over a set time, usually a month. Income for a budget is net, not gross (Lesson 2.8). Expenses come in two kinds. Fixed: the same amount every month, and you cannot skip it without a consequence (phone plan, bus pass, a subscription until you cancel it). Variable: changes month to month and you control it (food out, clothes, games, gifts). Sort ten examples on slide 4 as a class.	Label the ten expenses F or V on Part A of the handout.	
Day 1, 2. Direct instruction: 50/30/20 at your scale	Slides 5 and 6. The adult guide: 50 percent of net to needs, 30 percent to wants, 20 percent to savings. For a teen, needs are often small, so the rule flips to an order: save first (at least 20 percent), cover the fixed needs, then wants with what is left. Show it on a $100 month: $20 saved, up to $50 needs, up to $30 wants. Connect to Lesson 2.4: the savings line is your SMART goal divided	Compute 20, 50, and 30 percent of $140 on the handout. Write their SMART goal from Lesson 2.4 as a monthly amount.	6 min

	by the number of months you have.		
Day 1, 3. Learning activity: the one-week estimate	Part B of the handout. Students estimate the next seven days: money in (allowance, a job, a gift they expect) and money out (lunch, snacks, rides, a game, a gift), one line per item with a day and an amount. Total both. Find the projected balance. Then the twelve-dollar question: circle every line that is a want under $5. Add those up. Circulate with the clipboard checklist.	Fill in the seven-day estimate. Total in, total out, balance. Circle the small wants and add them. Answer: “If I saved just those, how much would I have in a month?”	14 min
Day 1, 4. Share and debrief	Take three students’ small-want totals and put them on the board, times four for a month. Ask the deepen questions. Preview Day 2: “Tomorrow you get a real month with a real income and real Long Island prices.”	Report. Correct their totals.	4 min
Day 2, 1. Direct instruction: the Budget Builder	Slides 8 to 10. Walk through the Budget Builder top to bottom with one scenario (Mateo) as the model, stopping before the variable section. Order of operations: write net income; write the savings line first (the goal divided by	Follow on their own Budget Builder. Get a scenario card. Read it twice.	5 min

	months); list fixed expenses and subtract; what is left is for variable expenses; if the variable list costs more than what is left, cut wants, never savings, never a fixed need.		
Day 2, 2. Learning activity: build the month	Students build the month for their scenario. Circulate. The three questions to ask at every desk: “Did you save first? Does every fixed line have a number? Is the bottom line zero or above?” When a student finishes, they move to Part D: the 50/30/20 check (needs, wants, savings as percents of income) and one revision with a reason.	Build the budget on the Budget Builder. Total. Check the bottom line. Compute the three percents. Revise one line and write why, tied to the savings goal.	20 min
Day 2, 3. Pair check	Pairs swap Builders. The checker reads the scenario card and the budget and answers three yes or no questions on the bottom of the Builder: savings first, fixed covered, bottom line zero or above. One sentence of advice.	Check a partner’s budget. Sign it. Return it. Fix one thing if the checker found it.	6 min

Questions to ask

Monitor understanding:

- Is a bus pass fixed or variable? What about a birthday gift?
- What number goes on the income line: gross or net?
- What is the first line you fill in after income? Why that one?

Deepen learning:

- Priya's card wants a car in a year. Is that goal realistic at $680 a month net? What would have to give?
- If your income does not change and your expenses go up, what happens to the savings line? Name two fixes.
- Alex found $12 a week in small wants. What is the version of that in your week?

Check for understanding

Day 1, during Step 3: clipboard checklist, yes or no on "at least five expense lines," "totals computed," and "small wants circled and added." Day 2, during Step 2: the three desk questions (savings first, every fixed line has a number, bottom line zero or above). A student with three yeses moves to Part D without help. A student with a negative bottom line gets the prompt: "Which want goes first?"

Closure (Day 1, Time: 4 min)

3-2-1 exit line on the bottom of Part B: 3 expenses you estimated this week, 2 that are fixed, 1 number: your small wants for a month. Three students read one line aloud. Collect the sheets; hand them back tomorrow.

Closure (Day 2, Time: 6 min)

Exit card on the bottom of the Builder: "One thing I would change about this person's spending, and one line of my own budget I now want to write." Three students read one line aloud. Collect the Builders and keep them in the FACS folders. Say where this goes: "This budget comes back in Project 02. After the ClassroomStreet challenge you will rewrite it with what you learned, and the rewrite is part of your project grade." Sort the Builders into "got it" (savings first, fixed covered, bottom line zero or above, percents computed) and "needs more"; the "needs more" pile gets five minutes of teacher time at the start of Lesson 2.10.

Differentiation and supports

- ELL: the Budget Builder has each section labeled in plain words with an icon described in the handout; the words income, expense, fixed, variable, savings are on a card in English, Turkish, Portuguese, and Spanish (see Vocabulary 02.md); sentence starter for the revision: "I changed ___ from $___ to $___ because the goal is ___."
- IEP and 504 (general): scenario card A (Mateo) has the fewest lines and clean numbers; a student may work with a partner on one Builder; calculators; the Builder has the subtraction set up in boxes; extended time into Lesson 2.10's do now if needed.

- Grade 6 support: use scenario cards A and D only (allowance and babysitting incomes with four fixed lines or fewer); skip the percent check in Part D and do the revision only.
- Grade 8 stretch: scenario card B (Priya, the cashier) or C (Jasmine, the summer income that has to last ten months); after Part D, write a second version of the budget if income drops 25 percent, and say which line took the cut and why. Preview of CTE FCL 1. e): name one app or paper system this person could use to track the month and one problem with it.
- UDL checkpoint used: multiple means of engagement (four scenarios with different incomes, and a choice of which to take at grade 8) and multiple means of representation (the 50/30/20 guide shown as percents, as dollars on a $100 month, and as an order of steps).
- No-kitchen or no-machine alternative: not a lab; none needed. Without calculators, all card prices are whole dollars or end in .50.

Assessment

Objective	Standards met	Learning task	Assessment (formative or summative; tool)
1. Label fixed and variable; define a budget	FCL 4. c); FCL 1. e)	Part A, Day 1 Step 1; Day 2 do now	Formative; Part A checked (8 of 10 correct is “got it”); summative on the Money Basics Quiz items 7 and 8 (Lesson 2.13)
2. Build a monthly budget from a scenario	IGLR 4. b); FCL 4. c); Std 3 PI C; National FCS 2.6.2	Budget Builder, Day 2 Step 2	Formative now (desk questions, pair check); the Builder is revised after Topic 2.4 and scored on the Project 02 rubric as the personal budget criterion
3. Compare to 50/30/20 and revise with a reason	IGLR 4. b); CDOS 3a Managing Resources; Std 3 PI C	Part D, Day 2 Step 2	Formative; Part D scored complete, partial, or missing for daily work

Homework

None. Optional after Day 1: track your real spending for three days on the back of Part B. Bring it. It replaces the estimate if you have it.

Connections

Math: percent of a number and multi-step subtraction; the math teacher can use the four scenario cards for a percent practice set the same week. ClassroomStreet: the budget built here is the starting point for the Investor Challenge in Topic 2.4 and the revision in Project 02. *[Sal: if a local credit union runs a youth account program, this is the lesson to invite them to; they can bring a real budget worksheet.]*

Sources

- NYS Middle Level CTE FACS Content Module 01, Individual Growth and Life Readiness (nyctecenter.org, June 2018), line 4. b). Copy in 02 Standards/NYS Module PDFs/.
- NYS Middle Level CTE Theme Module 03, Financial and Consumer Literacy, lines 4. c) and 1. e). Same folder.
- NYS Learning Standards for Health, Physical Education, and Family and Consumer Sciences (1996), Standard 3, Intermediate. Wording per 02 Standards/STANDARDS SOURCES - web research.md.
- National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education 3.0 (LEAD FCS Education, 2018), competency 2.6.2.
- The 50/30/20 guide is a widely used personal finance rule of thumb (needs, wants, savings as shares of net income); it is a guide, not a standard.
- Sal's own materials: the Budget Like a Boss packet (Brentwood South, 2026, Lesson Dups/Unit_4_Financial_Literacy/education_teachingwork_budget_like_a_boss_2026_04.docx) supplied the Alex story, the one-week estimate table, and the personal budget template. The scenario cards and the 50/30/20 step order are new. Cost of living numbers draw on his Cost of Living Reality Check packet in the same folder.

Teacher notes

- If Day 1 runs short, cut Step 4 to one student's total. If Day 2 runs short, cut the pair check to the three yes or no questions with no advice sentence. Never cut "save first"; it is the one habit the rest of the topic depends on.
- Common mistake: students put the savings line last and fill it with whatever is left, which is usually zero. Make them write it second, right under income, before any expense.
- Second common mistake: a fixed expense gets cut to make the budget balance ("I will just not pay the phone"). Ask what happens next month. Fixed means fixed.
- The four cards are built so that A and D balance easily, B balances only if wants are cut hard, and C forces the student to divide a lump sum across ten months. Assign on purpose.
- Keep the Builders. They come back after Lesson 2.19 for the Project 02 revision. The summary lines at the bottom of the Builder (income, needs, savings, wants, total, balance) use the same six lines as Part 7 of the Investor Report template, so the "Before" column is a straight copy. *[Sal: your Cost of Living Reality Check packet has the adult version of this with rent and groceries; that one fits Unit 4 (Environmental Design) when students plan a first apartment.]*