# Contents



# Teaching with Mr. 401(k): A Companion Pack for Educators and Parents

*A free companion to “Mr. 401(k)’s Principles of Financial Literacy,” built from the book’s own apparatus and its standards-alignment map. Everything here is editable: copy, expand, and re-order as you see fit.*

**In this download.** Three files travel together: this pack, the one-page plan for students (*The Plan on One Page*), and the full benchmark-by-benchmark standards map (*Mr. 401(k) and the National Standards: A Map for Educators*).

**Version 1.0 · July 2026.**

---

## How to use this pack

This book is a trade book that grew out of a taught course, not a textbook. It works three ways in a classroom or at a kitchen table: as the anchor text for a personal-finance unit, as enrichment that supplies the *why* underneath a standards checklist, or as a self-study guide a motivated student can run alone. This pack gives you the apparatus to teach from it: a standards map so you know where the book carries your unit, a chapter-by-chapter teaching grid, ready-to-copy worksheets, and notes on the few topics the book covers lightly on purpose.

You do not need to teach the chapters in order, and you do not need all of them. The book is built so that later chapters restate what they need, and a reader can begin at Chapter 5, where the first paycheck arrives, and circle back to the foundations later. Teach to your time and your standards.

A note on the math: every worked example in the book is shown in full, with real numbers. That means you can put any example on the board and recompute it live with a class. The answers in the book are the answer key.

## What is in this pack

1. **Standards alignment at a glance.** How the book maps to the National Standards for Personal Financial Education. The full benchmark-by-benchmark map ships alongside this pack as its own document.
2. **The chapter teaching grid.** For each chapter: the big idea, key terms, the exercises already built into the book, and one discussion prompt and one activity you can use as written.
3. **Reproducible worksheets.** Five printable templates drawn from the book's own exercises.
4. **The lightly covered topics.** Where insurance, credit, fraud, and giving live in the book, and how to extend them.
5. **Facilitator notes.** Where the answers live, and how to assess.

---

## 1. Standards alignment at a glance

The book was mapped, benchmark by benchmark, against the 2021 *National Standards for Personal Financial Education* (Council for Economic Education and the Jump$tart Coalition), at both the 8th-grade and 12th-grade bands. Most state personal-finance standards derive from or cross-reference this framework. The full benchmark-by-benchmark map, with a verbatim book quotation behind every claim, ships alongside this pack as *Mr. 401(k) and the National Standards: A Map for Educators*, so a curriculum coordinator who has to defend an adoption can check every claimed standard against the text; the summary is below.

Each standard was graded conservatively: **Covered** (concept, worked example, and a student exercise), **Introduced** (defined and illustrated, not exercised), **Touched** (mentioned), or **Absent**.

| Topic area | 8th grade (Covered / Introduced / Touched / Absent of total) | 12th grade (Covered / Introduced / Touched / Absent of total) |
|---|---|---|
| I. Earning Income | 6 / 2 / 0 / 1 of 9 | 8 / 3 / 0 / 0 of 11 |
| II. Spending | 1 / 3 / 0 / 0 of 4 | 4 / 4 / 0 / 1 of 9 |
| III. Saving | 4 / 2 / 0 / 0 of 6 | 5 / 3 / 0 / 1 of 9 |
| IV. Investing | 6 / 1 / 0 / 0 of 7 | 10 / 3 / 0 / 1 of 14 |
| V. Managing Credit | 6 / 1 / 0 / 0 of 7 | 4 / 6 / 2 / 1 of 13 |
| VI. Managing Risk | 2 / 4 / 0 / 1 of 7 | 1 / 5 / 4 / 2 of 12 |
| **All six areas** | **25 / 13 / 0 / 2 of 40** | **32 / 24 / 6 / 6 of 68** |

Read a row this way: in Earning Income at the 8th-grade band, of nine standards the book Covers six, Introduces two, Touches none, and leaves one Absent.

Read as a whole: the book addresses 38 of the 40 8th-grade standards and 56 of the 68 12th-grade standards at the Covered or Introduced level. Across both grade bands, the book Covers 57 of 108 benchmarks and addresses 94 of 108 at the Covered or Introduced level. Its deepest coverage is in Earning Income, Saving, and Investing, where its worked-math identity lives. Its lightest is Managing Risk, which the book handles as a survey in Appendix B rather than a full unit. Use the grid and the worksheets to carry the strong areas, and the notes in Section 4 to supplement the light ones.

**Beyond the standards.** The book teaches a body of material the standards do not ask for, and that material is its identity: what money is and where it came from, how value works, the accounting equation, how banks create money, a balanced chapter on Bitcoin, inflation at depth, the time value of money as arithmetic, a full college-investment analysis, and a business-plan capstone. In a standards-aligned classroom this functions as the conceptual *why* underneath the *how*.

---

 

## 2. The chapter teaching grid

For each chapter: the big idea in one line, key terms, the exercises already in the book, and one extra discussion prompt and one activity you can assign as written. "TAI" means a Think About It prompt; "GFI" means a Go For It exercise. The book carries 47 Think About It prompts, 7 Go For It exercises, and a chapter summary in every chapter.

### Introduction

- **Big idea.** Money is stored choice, and money is time. The book is built on Learn It, Earn It, Own It, Grow It.
- **Discuss.** What is one money decision your family makes that you have never understood the reason for?
- **Do.** Have each student write the one money question they most want answered by the end of the unit. Revisit it at the end.

### Part I: What Is Money?

**Chapter 1: The 300,000-Year Question** - **Big idea.** Money is a recent human tool that must do three jobs and meet six tests. - **Key terms.** Medium of exchange, store of value, unit of account; acceptability, portability, durability, scarcity, divisibility, fungibility; M2. - **In the book.** Four TAI prompts; the 300,000-year timeline (Figure 1.1); the M2 "nearly tripled" close. - **Discuss.** Which of the six characteristics does a gift card fail, and why? - **Do.** Have students rank four "moneys" (cash, a gift card, a video-game console, a concert ticket) against the three functions.

**Chapter 2: Why Does Money Have Value?** - **Big idea.** Three theories (commodity, credit, state) explain why paper has value; the dollar is fiat, and trust is the foundation. - **Key terms.** Commodity money, Credit Theory, State Theory, fiat money, intrinsic value. - **In the book.** The IOU thought experiment; airline miles and school points as in-system money. - **Discuss.** Would you accept a classmate's written IOU for $100? What would have to be true first? - **Do.** Design a classroom token currency and list what would make students trust it or abandon it.

**Chapter 3: Human Action and the Secret Economics of a Can of Coke** - **Big idea.** Value is not built into objects; people assign it, and it changes with circumstance. - **Key terms.** Subjective value, human action, diminishing marginal utility, opportunity cost. - **In the book.** The can of Coke at four prices; the pizza-slice utility walk. - **Discuss.** Name something worth a lot to you and little to a friend. What explains the gap? - **Do.** Students price the same item in four settings and explain each price.

**Chapter 4: Why People Trade** - **Big idea.** Voluntary trade creates value on both sides; specialization and markets set prices at the margin. - **Key terms.** Gains from trade, specialization, comparative advantage, market, price. - **In the book.** The lunchroom trade; the concert-ticket resale at the margin. - **Discuss.** How can both sides of a trade walk away better off if nothing new was made? - **Do.** Run a five-minute classroom trade of small items and chart who felt better off and why.

## Part II: Earning, Spending, and Keeping

**Chapter 5: Three Ways to Make Money** - **Big idea.** Earned, passive, and portfolio income work differently and build on each other. - **Key terms.** Earned/passive/portfolio income, gross vs. net, withholding, dividend, dividend yield, capital gain/loss, depreciation. - **In the book.** Babysitting and yard-work math; the McDonald's vs. Starbucks job comparison; the Coca-Cola dividend example. - **Discuss.** Why is depending on one paycheck risky even when it is a good paycheck? - **Do.** Worksheet 1 (spending log) pairs naturally here; also have students compute net pay from a sample gross wage.

**Chapter 6: Smart Spending** - **Big idea.** Spending is a deliberate choice; the sticker price is rarely the full cost. - **Key terms.** Fixed/variable/periodic expenses, needs vs. wants, opportunity cost, sneaky (hidden) costs. - **In the book.** GFI: the one-week spending log; the gaming-console total-cost example. - **Discuss.** What is a purchase whose true cost was much higher than its price? - **Do.** Worksheet 1 (One-Week Spending Log).

**Chapter 7: Taxes and Budgets** - **Big idea.** Taxes come out first; a budget is a prediction you steer by. - **Key terms.** Marginal tax bracket, effective rate, pay yourself first, emergency fund, the budget steps A to F. - **In the book.** Worked marginal-bracket math; GFI: build your own budget. - **Discuss.** Why does "pay yourself first" beat "save what is left over"? - **Do.** Worksheet 2 (My First Budget).

## Part III: What You Own and How Money Works

**Chapter 8: Assets** - **Big idea.** Assets are what you own that have value; they sort by tangible/intangible and current/fixed, and value depends on which question you ask. - **Key terms.** Asset, tangible/intangible, current/fixed, book value, market value, agreed value. - **In the book.** The classification "Try It" exercise; the bicycle valued three ways. - **Discuss.** What is something you own whose book, market, and personal value differ? - **Do.** Students classify ten of their own possessions on the two axes.

**Chapter 9: Liabilities** - **Big idea.** A liability is what you owe; debt has a cost (interest), and there are only four ways to repay. - **Key terms.** Liability, principal, interest, amortization, debt service, credit score. - **In the book.** The friend-loan example; the worked thirty-year mortgage; prediction TAI prompts. - **Discuss.** When is borrowing a smart move, and when is it a trap? - **Do.** Have students identify the interest-versus-principal split in the year-one mortgage table.

**Chapter 10: Equity, Net Worth, and the Accounting Equation** - **Big idea.** Assets minus liabilities equals equity. Net worth is that equation applied to you. - **Key terms.** Equity, net worth, the accounting equation (A = L + E), balance sheet, underwater. - **In the book.** Car-equity and house-equity walk-throughs; GFI: build your balance sheet; the "net worth is not human worth" framing. - **Discuss.** Why can two people with the same income have very different net worth? - **Do.** Worksheet 3 (My Balance Sheet).

**Chapter 11: How Money Works: Banks, Lending, and the Money Supply** - **Big idea.** Banks create money when they lend; the system runs on confidence, and that is its fragility. - **Key terms.** Spread, fractional reserve banking, the deposit cascade, bank run, FDIC, moral hazard, M2, the Federal Reserve. - **In the book.** The cascade in which a single $500 deposit supports about $2,050 after four rounds of lending; the 2015 Greek capital-controls account; GFI: look up M2 on FRED. - **Discuss.** If a bank lends out money it created, what stops it from creating unlimited amounts? - **Do.** Worksheet 4 prompts (M2 lookup); chart the cascade as a class.

**Chapter 12: Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Cash System** - **Big idea.** Bitcoin is money without an issuer; understand how it works, its custody and volatility risks, and judge it against the three functions yourself. - **Key terms.** Blockchain, mining, proof of work, halving, 21-million cap, self-custody ("not your keys, not your Bitcoin"), counterparty risk. - **In the book.** The Rubik's Cube image for proof of work (hard to solve, easy to check); the custody irony; the volatility record (Figure 12.2). - **Discuss.** What does it mean that an exchange-held coin has the same structure as a bank deposit? - **Do.** Students score Bitcoin against the six characteristics from Chapter 1. (Teach neither for nor against; the chapter does not.)

## Part IV: The Math That Matters

**Chapter 13: Inflation and the Shrinking Dollar** - **Big idea.** Inflation quietly drains the purchasing power of each dollar; real return is what is left after it. - **Key terms.** Inflation, CPI, real vs. nominal return, hyperinflation, the Cantillon effect. - **In the book.** The ice-cube image; Weimar and Venezuela cases; worked real-return cases. - **Discuss.** Why can a raise that matches inflation leave you no better off? - **Do.** Students compute the real return on a 3% savings account in a 4% inflation year.

**Chapter 14: Interest, Compounding, and the Power of Time** - **Big idea.** Compounding is interest earning interest, and time is the most powerful variable in finance. - **Key terms.** Simple vs. compound interest, present and future value, Rule of 72, APR vs. APY. - **In the book.** The 14-versus-40 centerpiece ($1,915,105 vs. $1,326,833); the Rule of 72 table. - **Discuss.** Why does the 14-year-old end ahead despite investing far less? - **Do.** Students use the Rule of 72 to estimate doubling times at 6%, 8%, and 10%.

**Chapter 15: Is College a Smart Investment?** - **Big idea.** College is an investment you can analyze: total cost, likely earnings, completion, and cheaper paths. - **Key terms.** Return on investment, FAFSA, 529 plan, total cost of attendance, College Scorecard. - **In the book.** The two-versions-of-Jane comparison; GFI: the College Scorecard homework. - **Discuss.** What would make the same degree a smart buy for one student and a poor one for another? - **Do.** Worksheet 5 (College Scorecard worksheet).

### Part V: Putting Money to Work

**Chapter 16: Smart Investing: Getting Started** - **Big idea.** A small amount, invested regularly in a few broad low-cost funds, for a long time, is the whole playbook. - **Key terms.** Stocks, bonds, funds (ETF/mutual fund/index/target-date), fee drag, dollar-cost averaging, diversification, the four questions. - **In the book.** The fee-drag comparison; price discovery and bubbles; the four questions for a portfolio. - **Discuss.** Why does a 1% fee matter so much over decades? - **Do.** Students compare two funds' fees and project the gap over 30 years using the book's figures.

**Chapter 17: Investing for the Long Run: Retirement Accounts** - **Big idea.** The account a fund sits in changes how much you keep; tax-advantaged accounts and an employer match are close to free money. - **Key terms.** Traditional vs. Roth, employer match, vesting, contribution limit, custodial Roth IRA. - **In the book.** The Roth-versus-taxable comparison; GFI: ask a parent about a custodial Roth IRA. - **Discuss.** Why is a custodial Roth so powerful for a teenager specifically? - **Do.** Students list what counts as "earned income" that would qualify a teen to contribute.

**Chapter 18: Putting It All Together, and the Traps to Avoid** - **Big idea.** The whole book in miniature: earn, set aside taxes, buffer, invest, and stay off the wrong side of compounding. - **Key terms.** The four-step recipe, emergency fund, the credit-card trap, the four questions. - **In the book.** The $100,000 recipe; the worked credit-card trap ($2,168 on $1,000); GFI: name a job and a monthly amount. - **Discuss.** How does the same force (compounding) build wealth and build debt? - **Do.** The Plan on One Page (separate handout) is the natural capstone here.

### Epilogue and Appendices

- **Epilogue: Life Lessons.** Four lessons worth keeping, the author's "why," and a charge to pass it forward. **Do.** Students write their own "why."
- **Appendix A: The Money Mavericks Business Plan Project.** A nine-section, team-based capstone with a sixty-second pitch. **Do.** Worksheet 6 (the nine-section scaffold) runs this as a unit.
- **Appendix B: Protect It.** A consumer-protection mini-unit: insurance basics, credit reports and scores, and scams. **Do.** Students learn the three tells of a scam and the payment tells.

---

 

## 3. Reproducible worksheets

These are drawn straight from the book's own Go For It exercises. Copy them freely for your students. Each names the chapter it comes from.

### Worksheet 1: One-Week Spending Log (Chapter 6)

Name: ______________________ · Date: ______________

For one week, write down every purchase, no matter how small. Do not change your spending yet. Just look.

| Day | What I bought | Amount | Fixed, variable, or periodic | Essential or discretionary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

**Total for the week: $________.** At the end, look for one surprise. What did you spend more on than you expected?

 

### Worksheet 2: My First Budget (Chapter 7)

Name: _____________________ · Date: _____________

Pick an income to plan with (your own, or a sample such as $2,000 a month). Work the steps in order.

- **A. Total income:** $________
- **B. Pay yourself first (long-term savings, aim for about 15%):** $________
- **C. Set aside taxes (about 10%):** $________
- **D. Emergency fund (until it holds three to six months of needs):** $________
- **E. Cover essentials (needs):** $________
- **F. What is left, split between wants and more savings:** $________

**Check:** B + C + D + E + F should equal A. The gap between this plan and what actually happens is the most useful number a budget gives you.

 

### Worksheet 3: My Balance Sheet (Chapter 10)

Name: ____________________ · Date: _____________

| What I own (assets) | Value | What I owe (liabilities) | Amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| __________________ | $ ___ | _____________________ | $ _____ |
| __________________ | $ ___ | _____________________ | $ _____ |
| __________________ | $ ___ | _____________________ | $ _____ |
| __________________ | $ ___ | _____________________ | $ _____ |
| __________________ | $ ___ | _____________________ | $ _____ |
| __________________ | $ ___ | _____________________ | $ _____ |
| __________________ | $ ___ | _____________________ | $ _____ |
| __________________ | $ ___ | _____________________ | $ _____ |
| **Total assets** | $ ___ | **Total liabilities** | $ _____ |

**My net worth = total assets − total liabilities = $_______.** A negative number is normal at the start of a financial life. The point is to know the number and to watch it move.

 

## Worksheet 4: The Money Supply in Your Lifetime (Chapter 11)

Name: ______________________ · Date: ______________

Go to FRED, the Federal Reserve's free data site, and search for "M2."

- M2 in the year I was born (______): $________
- M2 today (______): $________
- How many times larger is it now? ________
- M2 in a parent's birth year (______): $________; times larger today: ________

**One question to sit with:** have asset values truly risen, or are dollars simply worth less?

 

### Worksheet 5: The Investor’s Homework on College (Chapter 15)

Name: ______________________ · Date: ______________

Pick one school on the U.S. Department of Education’s College Scorecard, and one career in the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Occupational Outlook Handbook.

- School: ________________
  - What graduates typically earn: $________
  - What students typically borrow: $________
  - Share of students who finish: ________%
- Career: ________________
  - Typical pay: $________
  - Expected job growth: ________

**The question:** does the likely earning justify the likely borrowing, for this school and this path?

 

### Worksheet 6: The Money Mavericks Business Plan (Appendix A)

Team: ____________________ · Date: _____________

Work the nine sections in a notebook. Aim for honest answers you can improve, not perfect ones. (This scaffold also serves as the one-page version of the project.)

1. **Business Identity.** Name; mission (what problem it solves and why it exists); vision (where it is going); logo (optional).
2. **Products and Services.** What you sell; what makes it valuable; how it earns money; what you charge and why; how many sales to break even.
3. **Target Market and Customers.** Who they are (age, interests, location); where they will find you.
4. **Costs and Expenses.** Startup costs; where the startup money comes from; ongoing monthly costs.
5. **Competition and Differentiation.** Who else solves this; what makes you different; why a customer chooses you.
6. **Marketing and Customer Engagement.** How people find out you exist; how you bring them back.
7. **Team and Responsibilities.** Who is on the team; who is responsible for what.
8. **Challenges and Risks.** What could go wrong; your plan for each.
9. **The Pitch.** A persuasive description you could deliver in about a minute.

## 4. The lightly covered topics

The book covers four topics on purpose at a lighter touch. Each one is mapped below: where it lives in the book, and how to extend it if your standards ask for more.

- **Insurance and risk.** Appendix B surveys the four kinds of insurance most readers will meet (auto, health, renters, life) and defines premium, deductible, copayment, and coinsurance. To go deeper, add the avoid-reduce-retain-transfer framework, a worked premium-versus-deductible trade-off, the mechanics of health insurance (networks and employer premiums), and fuller treatments of disability and life insurance.
- **Credit scores and reports.** Appendix B teaches the credit bureaus, the FICO range (300 to 850) and its factor weights, free weekly reports, the security freeze, and how landlords, employers, and insurers read the file. To go deeper, add the consumer-credit-protection laws (the Fair Credit Reporting Act, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, and the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act) and the dispute process, the federal-versus-private student-loan distinction, and alternative financial services such as payday lending, check cashing, and pawnshops.
- **Fraud and consumer protection.** Appendix B teaches the three tells of a scam, the payment tells, phishing, and recovery steps. To go deeper, add a current-events scan: have students bring one real scam attempt and diagnose it against the tells.
- **Charitable giving.** The Epilogue carries the values message ("leave it better than you found it") rather than a giving framework. To add the personal-finance treatment, teach giving as a budget line and introduce the idea of giving appreciated assets.

---

 

## 5. Facilitator notes

- **Answer keys.** Every math example in the book is worked in full in the text, so the book itself is the answer key. Put any example on the board and recompute it with the class; the numbers will match to the dollar.
- **Assessment ideas.** Each chapter ends with a summary suitable for a short written quiz. The Go For It exercises double as performance tasks. The business-plan capstone (Appendix A) and the Plan on One Page work as unit-level assessments.
- **Discussion norms.** The book treats contested topics (Bitcoin, the money supply, the cost of college) evenhandedly and asks students to decide. Where the book declines to argue a side, the classroom can do the same: surface both readings and let students reason.
- **Checking our claims.** The standards map behind Section 1 carries a verbatim book quotation for every claimed standard. If a claim does not hold up against the text, that is worth knowing; the map is meant to survive exactly that check.

 

## Currency and license

The book's figures were current as of mid-2026, and the standards map reflects the 2021 edition of the National Standards for Personal Financial Education. Refresh this pack when the book is revised or when the standards are updated. The standards-alignment figures in Section 1 reflect the 2026-07-02 standards map and should be re-synced from it whenever the map is re-run.

This pack and the book it accompanies are for educational purposes only. Neither provides financial, investment, legal, or tax advice. Encourage students and families to take decisions about their own money to a qualified professional who knows their situation.



*This is Version 1.0, July 2026. If you are holding a copy that has traveled, the newest version lives at the address above.*