Game to Prepare for Life

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Time Frame 120 minutes

Essential Question(s)

- How do the choices we make after high school impact the kind of life we lead?
- What do I want my career path to look like?

Summary

Give students a taste of life beyond high school in this real-world "Game to Prepare for Life" based on the popular board game. Students will get a career, salary, and family to provide for. Along the way, they will encounter expenses like housing, health, cars, and insurance. They will juggle their wants and needs to ensure they do not exceed their monthly budget. By the end of the game, they will have learned how career choices can impact a person's lifestyle and bank account.

Learning Goals

Evaluate education and career goals for the impact they have on the quality of our lives.

Attachments

- Booth Table Materials—Game to Prepare for Life.docx
- Booth Table Materials—Game to Prepare for Life.pdf
- Career Ledger (Career Tech)—Game to Prepare for Life.docx
- Career Ledger (Career Tech)—Game to Prepare for Life.pdf
- Career Ledger (College)—Game to Prepare for Life.docx
- Career Ledger (College)—Game to Prepare for Life.pdf
- Career Ledger (Community)—Game to Prepare for Life.docx
- Career Ledger (Community)—Game to Prepare for Life.pdf
- Career Ledger (Military)—Game to Prepare for Life.docx
- Career Ledger (Military)—Game to Prepare for Life.pdf
- Career Ledger (No Credential Required)—Game to Prepare for Life.docx
- Career Ledger (No Credential Required)—Game to Prepare for Life.pdf
- Career Ledger Templates—Game to Prepare for Life.docx
- Career Ledger Templates—Game to Prepare for Life.pdf
- Chance Cards-Text Only—Game to Prepare for Life.docx
- Chance Cards-Text Only—Game to Prepare for Life.pdf
- Charitable Card Sort—Game to Prepare for Life.docx
- Charitable Card Sort—Game to Prepare for Life.pdf
- Event Setup—Game to Prepare for Life.docx
- Event Setup—Game to Prepare for Life.pdf
- Four Corners—Game to Prepare for Life.docx
- Four Corners—Game to Prepare for Life.pdf
- Volunteer Booth Materials—Game to Prepare for Life.docx
- Volunteer Booth Materials—Game to Prepare for Life.pdf

Materials

- Event Setup (attached; 1 copy for organizers)
- Booth Materials (attached; 1 copy with handouts to give to volunteers)
- Career Ledger (College) (attached; 1 copy; on red paper)
- Career Ledger (Community) (attached; 1 copy; on blue paper)
- Career Ledger (Career Tech) (attached; 1 copy; on green paper)
- Career Ledger (Military) (attached; 1 copy; on yellow paper)
- Career Ledger (Degree Optional) (attached; 1 copy; on purple paper)
- Career Ledger Template (attached)
- Chance Cards (attached; 1 copy; on card stock)
- Four Corners (attached; 1 copy to display)
- Student devices
- Calculators for each booth
- Pencils
- Booth decorations (optional)

15 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Event Setup

The **Event Setup** packet has resources for planning, meeting, volunteer tasks, and copies. These resources are designed to start planning at least 8 weeks before your scheduled event.

Accessing GBL Games

In order to play "Get a Life," you will need to request access before the lesson. To request a Game Portal account, go to k20center.ou.edu/getgames and fill out the form available on the site. Once you have filled out the form, you will be given access for students to play the game.

Place students in pairs or have them work individually. Every student or pairs of students will need access to a computer with internet access. Have students log in to the Game Portal to play the "Get a Life" game.

Teacher's Note

Each time a student plays "Get a Life," they are randomly assigned to one of the game's 10 characters who receives random values for ACT score, GPA, and their family's college contribution amount. The game is designed to encourage students to play several times to get a feel for different careers and varying levels of education. The game takes between 5 and 15 minutes to complete each play-through, depending on how quickly the student plays. We recommend allowing enough time for all the students to play through at least twice. Track their progress in your Game Portal Dashboard.

Encourage the students to explore the game and to pay close attention to the relationships between education, income, debt, and career choice. After playing, ask students what differences they noticed with different careers, education levels, and finances. Ask students what careers they would want if they could pick for themselves. Ask them to explain why they chose that particular career. Ask students if they have ever played the board game "Life" and what they remember about it.

Sample Student Responses

- You have a little car as a game piece.
- You decide if you want to go to college or straight to a career.
- You get married and can land on spaces to add little stick kids to your car.
- Your goal is to retire with the most money to win the game.

Explain to students that they are going to get the chance to live out some choices on their own as they play the "Game to Prepare for Life."

Teacher's Note

Expectations for when your school will be playing the game, how you want students to select careers, how you will take attendance, and where you will want students to be as they complete the game will vary by school. Make sure your planning team has detailed these choices and shared them with all collaborating teachers so that they can share those expectations with their students.

Preview what the expectations will be for this real-life game where they are the pieces moving around a life-sized board.

30 minutes

Explore

Teacher's Note

Prior to the event, print the **Booth Materials** packet and provide copies of the volunteer directions and student-facing materials to all volunteers. Take print requests from volunteers as needed. Set up the space for the game prior to the event. On the day of the event, have volunteers who are manning the career section pass out careers and take attendance.

Careers can be assigned a variety of ways based on your preference. You can print out **Career Ledger** handouts in advance for students to choose from, or they can be fanned out for students to browse briefly as they enter. Each career packet has a different type of career focus, (college, tech, military, etc.), which may help students narrow their choices. These ledgers are printed in different colors because, routinely throughout the game, the *Chance* booth will spin a wheel, draw out a color, or call out a color (dependent on your plans) for students with that color paper to come and get one or multiple **Chance Cards** to see what "Life" has thrown at them. Some Chance Cards have good news, some bad. If you do not have access to colored paper, students can highlight their career or name with colored highlighters as they enter and check in.

Once students have checked in and picked up their career ledger, they are able to navigate to each booth as they choose. They have to visit every booth and have a volunteer initial that they visited before their game is complete. At each booth, students will have decisions to make and expenses to record in their ledgers. They will use the calculators at each booth to keep a running total of their balance. Booths include *car*, *home*, *furniture*, *childcare*, *health clinic*, *entertainment*, and many more.

See the **Booth Materials** attachment for details about what the choices are at each booth, a detailed instruction page for each volunteer, and student-facing materials to aid them as they make life decisions.

30 minutes

Explain

As students travel from booth to booth, they may notice that expenses add up quickly. All booth volunteers have instructions to help students who return to their booths to adjust their budget. Students may decide they want a less expensive car, or to be thriftier in their purchase of groceries or furniture. This is why it is important that students have access to pencils rather than pens for this game. They will be making adjustments. For students who can't get by just by making more frugal choices, they can visit the supplemental income booth to see if they would want to take on a second job.

Teacher's Note

Some students may ask about government assistance. This game is modeled on the board game "Life" and therefore does not include this as an option, but if your team is interested in exploring it with all of its outlying factors and eligibility requirements, it can be added as a supplement.

30 minutes

Extend

As students finish the game, have a designated spot for them to gather and reflect. This can be a great time to record exit interviews asking students on video what they enjoyed, what they learned, what they would have changed, and what surprised them. Rather than recording, these questions could also be placed on cards and given to groups of 5-6 students to sit together and discuss while they wait on others to finish the game.

15 minutes

Evaluate

To follow up with students the day after the event, have students participate in a Four Corners activity. Post one of the **Four Corners** cards in each corner of the room. Provide students with the following prompts and let them move to where they "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree." You can choose to use all or some of the following prompts:

- Going to college is important in order to have the lifestyle you want.
- I had plenty of money to cover my expenses.
- I was surprised by how much a house costs.
- I was able to afford the unexpected expenses from the chance cards.
- I was surprised by the extra things like tag and insurance you have to buy to have a car.
- I expected there would be lots of bills to pay.
- I was surprised by the amount of childcare costs.
- I feel that I have a better understanding of budgeting after this activity.

Research Rationale

College can be a life-altering experience for students, and not only academically. Here are just a few of the ways in which college can change students' lives for the better: Earning a bachelor's degree will allow students to earn, on average, $1 million more than high school graduates over the course of their careers (Abel & Deitz, 2014). College offers students an opportunity to build relationships with mentors and peers that will benefit them throughout their careers (Campbell, Smith, Dugan, & Komives, 2012). College graduates tend to have more job satisfaction, jobs that offer a greater sense of accomplishment, more independence and opportunities for creativity, and more social interactions in their jobs than noncollege graduates (Oreopoulos & Petronijevic, 2013). College graduates increase their chances of employment. Over the last 20 years, the unemployment rate for college graduates has been approximately half that of high school graduates (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). College helps students develop skills that prepare them for careers in the tech-driven economy, including nonroutine, abstract skills that aid in problem-solving, multitasking, and creativity (Oreopoulos & Petronijevic, 2013).

Resources

- Abel, J. R., & Deitz, R. (2014). Do the benefits of college still outweigh the costs? *Current Issues in Economics and Finance, 20*(3). https://www.newyorkfed.org/medialibrary/media/research/current_issues/ci20-3.pdf
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2018). Labor force statistics from the current population survey. https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat07.htm
- Campbell, C. M., Smith, M., Dugan, J. P., & Komives, S. R. (2012). Mentors and college student leadership outcomes: The importance of position and process. *The Review of Higher Education, 35*(4), 595–625. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/478995
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Four corners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/138
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Vision boards. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/2054
- Oreopoulos, P. & Petronijevic, U. (2013). Making college worth it: A review of the returns to higher education. *The Future of Children, 23*(1), 41–65. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25522645/