Unit 1: Foundations on Investment

Content Area: **Business Management and Information**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**
Length: **4-5 weeks**
Status: **Published**

Summary

This course introduces students to the principles of investing and the ways individuals can build wealth responsibly over time. Students will explore a range of investment options, from stocks, bonds, and mutual funds to real estate, commodities, and digital assets, all while learning how to balance risk and reward through diversification and asset allocation. Through hands-on simulations and interactive activities, students will apply core concepts such as the time value of money, ethical investing, and fraud awareness to real-world financial decisions. By the end of the course, students will be able to analyze investment opportunities, understand market behavior, and make informed choices aligned with their financial goals and values.

This unit is part of the larger aforementioned course sequence and specifically focuses on the fundamentals of investing, where students will understand that investing is a long-term strategy that is made by informed decisions. By the end of this unit students will be able to identify the difference between savings and investing, describe the relationship between risk and return, and differentiate between legitimate investment opportunities and potential scams or fraudulent schemes.

Students in Business Management and Information Systems classes develop skills that are intended to give them a competitive advantage in the workplace. Through the study of core business topics and current events, this curriculum encourages students to refine their speaking and listening skills, collaborate with their peers, and explore and research potential career paths.

Revision Date: August 2026

Standards

9.1.12.CFR.4: Demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationships among attitudes, assumptions, and patterns of behavior regarding money, saving, investing, and work across cultures.

9.1.12.FP.3: Relate the concept of delayed gratification (i.e., psychological distance) to meeting financial goals, investing and building wealth over time.

9.1.12.FP.4: Identify how unconscious beliefs like "money scripts" (money avoidant, money worship, money status, money vigilant) influence financial decision-making.

9.1.12.FP.5: Evaluate how behavioral bias (e.g., overconfidence, confirmation, recency, loss aversion, etc.) affects decision-making.

9.1.12.FP.6: Evaluate the relationship of familial patterns, cultural traditions, and historical influences on financial practice.

9.1.12.FP.7: Determine how multiple sources of objective, accurate and current financial information affect the prioritization of financial decisions (e.g., print information, prospectus, certified financial planners, internet, sales representatives, etc.)

9.1.12.PB.1: Explain the difference between saving and investing.

9.1.12.PB.2: Prioritize financial decisions by considering alternatives and possible consequences.

9.1.12.RM.2: Identify types of investments appropriate for different objectives such as liquidity, income, and growth.

9.3.12.BM.1 Utilize mathematical concepts, skills and problem solving to obtain necessary information for decision-making in business.

9.3.12.FN.8 Describe and follow laws, regulations and ethical standards that affect finance operations and transactions.

9.3.12.FN.13 Manage a financial product or service mix in order to respond to market opportunities.

9.3.12.FN-SEC.1 Describe and follow laws and regulations to manage business operations and transactions in the securities and investments industry.

9.3.12.FN-SEC.2 Manage the use of financial resources to perform key duties in the securities and investments industry.

9.3.12.FN-SEC.3 Plan, monitor and manage day-to-day securities and investments operations.

9.3.12.FN-SEC.4 Utilize career-planning concepts, tools and strategies to explore, obtain and/or develop in a securities and investments career.

9.3.12.FN-SEC.5 Determine client needs and wants and respond through planned, personalized communication to guide purchase decisions and enhance future securities and investments opportunities

RI.CI.9–10.2. Determine one or more central ideas of an informational text and analyze how it is developed and refined over the course of a text, including how it emerges and is shaped by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.MF.9–10.6. Analyze, integrate, and evaluate multiple interpretations (e.g., charts, graphs, diagrams, videos) of a single text or text/s presented in different formats (visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

RI.AA.9–10.7. Describe and evaluate the argument and specific claims in an informational text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and reasoning.

SL.PE.9–10.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with peers on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

A. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

B. Collaborate with peers to set rules for discussions (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views); develop clear goals and assessment criteria (e.g., student developed rubric) and assign individual roles as needed.

C. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

D. Respond thoughtfully to various perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and justify own views. Make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

SL.II.9–10.2. Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, qualitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

SL.PI.9–10.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically. The content, organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

SL.UM.9–10.5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

In accordance with New Jersey's Chapter 32 Diversity and Inclusion Law, this unit includes instructional materials that highlight and promote diversity, including: economic diversity, equity, inclusion, and tolerance.

The standards in this unit reflect a developmental progression and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including the humanities, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness, and global citizenship.

Essential Questions

Essential Questions:

- How can investing help individuals achieve short term and long term goals?
- How do risk and reward influence investment decisions?

Enduring Understandings:

- Investing is a long-term strategy that can help individuals achieve varying levels of financial successes, however, all investments carry a risk.
- Successful investors make informed decisions mitigating risks, evaluating return and marketing conditions and diversifying their investments; it is not based on emotions or speculations.
- Building long-term wealth depends on understanding how investing differs from saving, balancing risk against potential return, and using critical thinking to spot and avoid financial scams.

Objectives

Students will know:

- The definition of investing and how it differs from saving.
- The major types of investment assets, including stocks, bonds, real estate, mutual funds, ETFs, and alternative investments.
- Key investing terms such as: risk, return, liquidity, diversification, asset allocation, and compounding.

- Why individuals invest for growth, income, and financial security.
- The relationship between risk and reward in investment decisions.
- How the time value of money and compound growth affect long-term wealth accumulation.
- The importance of diversification and asset allocation in managing investment risk.
- How to calculate the effects of compound interest over different investment time horizons.
- How to classify investment options according to their risk, return potential, and liquidity.
- How to construct a simple diversified portfolio based on an investor's goals and risk tolerance.
- The similarities and differences between asset classes based on risk, return, liquidity, and investment horizon.
- How diversification reduces portfolio risk.
- How to examine investment scenarios to determine appropriate asset allocation strategies.
- The differences between legitimate investment opportunities and potential scams or fraudulent schemes.
- How to design a diversified investment portfolio that aligns with a specific investor profile.
- How to develop an investment plan that incorporates financial goals, time horizon, risk tolerance, and asset allocation.
- How to create a report recommending an investment strategy that reflects both financial objectives and social responsibility considerations.

Students will be skilled at:

- Defining investing and explaining how it differs from saving.
- Identifying the major types of investment assets, including stocks, bonds, real estate, mutual funds, ETFs, and alternative investments.
- Identifying key investing terms such as risk, return, liquidity, diversification, asset allocation, and compounding.
- Explaining why individuals invest for growth, income, and financial security.
- Describing the relationship between risk and reward in investment decisions.
- Summarizing how the time value of money and compound growth affect long-term wealth accumulation.
- Explaining the importance of diversification and asset allocation in managing investment risk.

- Calculating the effects of compound interest over different investment time horizons.
- Classifying investment options according to their risk, return potential, and liquidity.
- Constructing a simple diversified portfolio based on an investor's goals and risk tolerance.
- Comparing and contrasting different asset classes based on risk, return, liquidity, and investment horizon.
- Analyzing how diversification can reduce portfolio risk.
- Examining investment scenarios to determine appropriate asset allocation strategies.
- Differentiating between legitimate investment opportunities and potential scams or fraudulent schemes
- Designing a diversified investment portfolio that aligns with a specific investor profile.
- Developing an investment plan that incorporates financial goals, time horizon, risk tolerance, and asset allocation.
- Creating a report recommending an investment strategy that reflects both financial objectives and social responsibility considerations

Learning Plan

This learning plan includes but is not limited to the following learning strategies:

- Saving vs. Investing Analysis: Students will first define what they think investing means and what would count as an investment. Students will then review saving and compare their understanding to the definition created for investing. Students will then compare and contrast saving and investing through examination of an infographic, and explain how money “grows” more through investing than through saving. Students will also connect risk to investing compared to saving, as well as ways in which one can invest versus save.
- Analyzing the Risk Pyramid: Students will first define types of investments, and create a pyramid with what they consider to be the riskiest investments versus least risky. Students will then compare their guesses to the actual levels of risk and return associated with types of investments, and reflect on why some of the riskiest investments are credited with the highest returns and potential for loss. Students will then simulate the risk associated with different forms of investment through playing STAX, where they will practice investing in various forms of securities, and will reflect on the extent to which their risk/reward pyramid was accurate in their investing experience.
- Inequalities in Investing: Students will first define what a “wealth gap” means to them, and review how investing can contribute to a growth of wealth. Students will then analyze graphs related to investing demographics to assess how investing historically has not been accessible to all Americans, and how it has contributed to a gap in wealth. Students will consider ways in which to amend some of the inequalities they examine, and share findings.
- Impact of Inflation on Investments: Students will review their understanding of inflation. Students will

then calculate the difference between investing the same amount of money over a period of time to investing with the rate of inflation. Students will reflect on how investments grew when keeping up with the rate of inflation, and why it is important to continually increase investment rates to "beat inflation."

- Comparing Investment Funds: Students will be split into groups to examine one of the following types of investments: Actively Managed Mutual Funds, Passively Managed Index Funds, Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs), or Target Date Funds (TDFs). Students will then research their type of investment and consider the following: how the investment is managed, the length of time for the investment, growth of interest, level of risk, ease of purchase, how easy it is to sell or divest, and minimum amount of money required for investment. Students will then act as advertisers to create a pitch as to why their investment is the best for a client. Students should also consider the detriments to their investment, and compare findings with classmates. Students will then reflect which types of investments they would be most likely to utilize in their own future lives, and why it is beneficial to have a diverse investment portfolio.

- Investing Guess Who? Game: Students will create their own Guess Who board with the professionals and types of investments. Students will define the jobs and purposes of each professional and type of investment, and then work with a partner to "Guess who" is the best person for various investment scenarios.

- Stock Market Game: Students will investigate how the stock market works by participating in an online stock market game. Students will first practice researching stocks and analyzing their highs and lows for different time periods, and then practice investing in stocks. Students will reflect on how their stocks varied over time, considering the influence of political events, quarterly reports, company news, and more. Students will also consider the benefits to diversifying a portfolio, why people generally hold stocks over a longer period of time compared to as a short term investment, and how investing in indices rather than stocks can be beneficial.

- Dangers of Cryptocurrency: Students will share their current understanding of cryptocurrency and forms of crypto. Students will then examine the benefits and detriments to cryptocurrency, highlighting how it is not bank-insured, difficult to liquidate, and volatile in pricing. Students will then examine the recent fall of the crypto company FTX and examine how the company mishandled funds, as well as why it is important to invest safely.

- Analyzing Retirement Plans: Students will go over the definitions of varying forms of retirement funds, including Pensions, Social Security, 401ks, 403bs, IRAs and Roth IRAs. Students will compare and contrast the benefits and detriments to each type of plan, and examine how investments compound differently based on the type of retirement fund. Students will then consider which retirement fund they would most likely invest in and explain why.

- Celebrity Investment Portfolio Project: Students will work in groups to create an investment portfolio for a celebrity of their choosing. Students will research the "salary" of the celebrity they chose, and using the 50/30/20 rule, create an investment portfolio to maximize growth of wealth. Students will create a presentation of how they will best allocate funds for growth in retirement and other investments. Students will present findings to show how their money maximized growth and showed a balanced portfolio. Students with the strongest investment portfolio will be "chosen" as financial advisors.

Assessment

When taking a Business Management and Information Technology course, students demonstrate differentiated proficiency according to their ability to answer the essential questions through formative and summative assessments. Many of the performance tasks below can be implemented as formative and/or summative assessments. As teachers strive for students to demonstrate proficiency, they will need to create additional or alternative assessments based on demonstration or absence of skill.

Formative Assessments:

- Saving vs. Investing Analysis
- Analyzing the Risk Pyramid
- Inequalities in Investing
- Impact of Inflation on Investments
- Comparing Investment Funds
- Stock Market Game
- Dangers of Cryptocurrency
- Analyzing Retirement Plans

Summative Assessments:

- Investment Quiz
- Celebrity Investment Project- Create a Diverse Portfolio

Alternative Assessments:

- My Financial Future Portfolio:Students will build a personalized digital or physical blueprint that models how a high schooler should balance immediate cash savings with long-term investing goals. Next, they will evaluate three realistic asset profiles (a high-yield savings account, a diversified index fund, and an individual stock) to map out how risk and potential return change based on where money is placed.

Materials

The design of this course allows for the integration of a variety of instructional, supplemental, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available In addition to the materials below, the following link connects to district approved textbooks and resources utilized in this course: Core Book List.

The following are approved resources that teachers can include to further unit related objectives:

The following are approved resources that teachers can include to further unit related objectives:

Inequalities in Investing (Next Gen Personal Finance)

Infographic: A Simple Introduction to Investing (Visual Capitalist)

STAX Investing Game and Analysis (Next Gen Personal Finance)

Risk Pyramid

Reasons to Invest Reference (Next Gen Personal Finance)

The Power of Compounding (Next Gen Personal Finance)

Compound Interest Calculator (Investor.gov)

Compare: Types of Investment Funds (Next Gen Personal Finance)

Understanding Inflation (Next Gen Personal Finance)

Build Your Portfolio (Next Gen Personal Finance)

25 Things to Know about Investing by 25 (Business Insider)

Retirement Basics (Next Gen Personal Finance)

A Beginner's Guide to Cryptocurrency (Visual Capitalist)

Data Crunch: How Does Your Asset Mix Impact Your Return? (Next Gen Personal Finance)

The Collapse of FTX: What Went Wrong with the Crypto Exchange? (Investopedia)

What to Know about Cryptocurrency and Scams (FTC)

Any additional resources that are not included in this list will be presented to and reviewed by the supervisor before being included in lesson plans. This ensures resources are reviewed and vetted for relevance and appropriateness prior to implementation.

Integrated Accommodation and Modifications, Special Education students, English Language Learners, At-Risk students, Gifted and Talented students, Career Education, and those with 504s

This link includes content specific accommodations and modifications for all populations:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1g8M7CZ5VVwvFk2Ay9DZbjdewOYDyNOzpNeEBgSXPvr0/edit?usp=sharing

These additional strategies are helpful when learning Business Management and Information Systems content and skills:

- Highlighter for close reading and annotation strategies
- Bolded terms in directions
- Reading texts aloud for students to assist in comprehension and analysis
- Provide modeling (both visual and textual) for use of digital media, such as podcasting, video recording/editing, and creating a website.
- Providing opportunities for text-to-speech for written responses.