

General Financial Literacy

Exam Information	Description
Exam number 4501 Items 52 National Career Cluster 21st Century Skills Certification available Yes	The General Financial Literacy (GFL) industry certification exam assesses learners' knowledge of basic financial and economic reasoning. This exam will assess resource management, decision-making skills, and strategies on how to manage and protect the money they earn, keep, and spend. Learners will demonstrate the knowledge required to become financially responsible and conscientious members of society as they contribute to their own financial well-being.

Exam Blueprint and Performance Skills

Standard	Percentage of exam score
1. Concepts And Critical Thinking	8%
2. Personal Financial Priorities	11%
3. Income And Career Preparation	15%
4. Saving And Investment Methods	33%
5. Personal Money Management	33%

*Includes performance skill evaluation

Standard 1 - Concepts And Critical Thinking

Students will understand basic economic concepts and develop economic thinking critical to making personal financial choices.

Objective 1 Understand how basic economic principles affect personal financial choices.

1. Describe the role different participants play in the economy, such as households, businesses, and government.
2. Define gross domestic product (GDP) and explain why it is important.
3. Define inflation and explain its impact on economic and financial choices.
4. Compare and contrast: expansion, recession, and depression.
5. Discuss the role of the federal government in fiscal policy and the role of the federal reserve in monetary policy.
6. Explain the law of supply and demand.
7. Analyze how the larger economy develops from individual participants' rational economic choices.
8. Explain how scarcity of financial resources affects rational economic choices.
9. Define factors of production, resources, macroeconomics, and microeconomics.
10. Apply economic reasoning skills to make informed personal financial decisions, including opportunity cost (tradeoffs) and their role in decision-making.

Objective 2 Analyze different economic systems and how they impact personal financial choice, wealth generation, and economic freedom.

1. Understand the different ideologies behind economic systems, including: Capitalism, Laissez-Faire, Social Market, Neo-Capitalism, Socialism, Fascism, and Communism.
2. Discuss historic and current examples of traditional, market, command, and mixed economic systems and their effects on economic growth.
3. Discuss how free market systems and property rights correlate with economic prosperity.

Standard 2 - Personal Financial Priorities

Students will understand the factors that influence personal financial priorities and learn how to make rational decisions.

Objective 1 Analyze the role of emotional, cultural, and social influences on financial behavior.

1. Understand the benefits of personal financial planning on intra- and interpersonal relationships, such as less relational stress, less worry in times of economic uncertainty, self-reliance, wealth building, personal ownership, giving gifts and/or inheritance.\
2. Discuss the principles of financial management that promote individual financial stability, such as minimizing debt.
 - a. Evaluate the role of emotions, attitudes, and habits in making financial decisions. Understand how culture and values influence financial decisions and goals.
 - b. Discuss examples as well as the pros and cons of charitable giving, such as assistance to those in need, tax benefits, religious worship, and excess production.
 - c. Give examples of how marketing strategies, social media, and social pressure can influence purchasing decisions.
 - d. Emphasize the importance of comparison shopping, buying strategies, and negotiation in purchasing.

Objective 2 Define a rational decision-making process.

1. Recognize that individuals are responsible for their own financial decisions and for subsequent positive and negative consequences.
2. Describe cost-benefit analysis as a rational decision-making process.
3. Understand the differences between saving, investing, speculation, and gambling. Compare instant satisfaction with delayed gratification, such as impulse buying versus planned expenditures.

Standard 3 - Income And Career Preparation

Students will understand sources of income and the relationship between career preparation and lifetime earning power.

Objective 1 Identify sources of income and specific employability skills.

1. Identify sources of income, such as salary, wages, commissions, and tips.
2. Evaluate and compare career opportunities based on individual interests, skills, and educational requirements, the value of work to the market, and income potential. Compare the risks and rewards of entrepreneurship/self-employment.
3. Compare income to the cost of living in various geographical areas and the impact it has on purchasing power.
4. Understand the effects of FICA (Social Security and Medicare), state, local, and federal taxes and voluntary deductions on wages and income, and the similarities and differences between wages and income.
5. Contrast the differences between gross income, net income, and taxable income. Understand the effects of state (Form TC-40) and federal (Form 1040) taxes and the requirement to file, including income, filing status and dependency tax law, and adjustments.
6. Understand basic employment forms and processes, including W-2, W-4, and I-9.

Objective 2 Understand and begin preparation for post-secondary training and career.

1. Recognize and explore the correlation between education, training, and potential lifetime income.

2. Discuss types of post-secondary training available to students and scholarship/grant opportunities.
3. Calculate the costs of post-secondary training options and analyze the return on investment (ROI) based on career choices.
4. Understand the cost differences between public and private and between nonprofit and for-profit higher education and/or professional training.
5. Identify components to be included on a resume and/or electronic professional profile, such as appropriate contact information, experience [educational, work, and volunteer], skills, certificates obtained, accomplishments, interests, and references.
6. Identify sources and strategies for finding employment, as well as the benefits of networking.
7. Identify soft skills [communication, teamwork, time management, problem-solving, punctuality] that increase employability, retention, and earning power.

Standard 4 - Saving And Investment Methods

Students will evaluate saving methods and investment strategies.

Objective 1 Describe and discuss financial institutions and demonstrate how to manage personal financial accounts.

1. Explain the role of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and the National Credit Union Association (NCUA).
2. Compare the roles of financial institutions and their services, such as banks and credit unions, and the importance of banking.
3. Demonstrate how to monitor and manage checking/debit and saving accounts. Describe available consumer banking technologies, such as online deposits, bill pay, and peer-to-peer transfers.
4. Explain the potential consequences of checking account mismanagement, such as nonsufficient funds (NSF) handling and overdraft processing.

Objective 2 Discuss the pros and cons of saving.

1. Explain how paying yourself first (PYF) early often influences positive progress toward long-term financial goals.
2. Identify and understand basic saving options, such as savings accounts and Certificates of Deposit.
3. Discuss how over-savings can be eroded by inflation.
4. Understand that savings are designed to preserve principal.

Objective 3 Discuss the risks and returns of investing.

1. Identify and understand investment options, including retirement planning, long and short-term investments, and dividend reinvestment plans.
2. Identify types of long-term retirement accounts, such as IRA, Roth IRA, 401(k), and Roth 401(k).
3. Compare and contrast the basic types of investment products, including stocks, mutual funds, real estate, commodities, collectibles, and bonds.
4. Discuss the reasons to invest, the fees associated with investing, and strategies to reduce fees.
5. Discuss the relationship between risk and return.

6. Demonstrate the time value of money using a compound interest calculator.

Objective 4 Understand the role of risk management in asset protection.

1. Discuss risk management strategies, including acceptance, transfer, and reduction.
2. Discuss the purposes of insurance/risk management.
3. Define common insurance products and their purposes, such as automobile, health, homeowner/renter, whole/term life, and disability.
4. Define the terms of a basic insurance policy, such as contract, limits of coverage, premium, deductible, grace period, and lifetime limit.
5. Discuss insurance needs at different stages of life.
6. Understand the identification and designation of beneficiaries.

Standard 5 - Personal Money Management

Students will understand the principles of personal money management, including budgeting and managing accounts, and the role and impact of credit on personal finance.

Objective 1 Identify and explain the process of budgeting based on projected income and expenses.

1. Define the elements of a financial plan and describe the benefits of financial planning. Include: a. Identify short- and long-term financial goals and the impact they have on one's financial plan. b. Develop a budget that includes the following categories: spending/debt, savings, investing, and charitable contributions (such as the 70-20-10 rule). c. Define fixed, variable, and periodic budget categories. d. Emphasize the importance of a goals-based budget, including priorities, such as paying yourself first, emergency/opportunity fund, insurance, and charitable or other voluntary contributions. e. Compare tools for tracking a budget, income, and expenditures, such as paper and digital tracking.

Objective 2 Describe and discuss the impact of credit and debt on personal money management.

1. Discuss the purpose and role of credit. Explain the value of building and maintaining a healthy credit rating, including elements of creditworthiness: character, capacity, capital, collateral, and conditions.
2. Explore and discuss the pros and cons of basic types of credit, including unsecured vs. secured credit, credit cards, installment loans, revolving credit, student loans, mortgages, and payday/predatory lenders. Evaluate the costs and risks of each type.
3. Define and understand the terms associated with credit, including APR, grace period, late fees, finance charges, default rates, interest, and closing costs.
4. Explain the purpose of co-signers and collateral when applying for a loan.
5. Understand and demonstrate simple interest calculations.
6. Calculate how long it takes to repay debt by making minimum payments on installment loans or revolving accounts.
7. Describe the personal and societal effects of bankruptcy and identify circumstances that lead to bankruptcy, such as uninsured medical costs, family break-ups, divorce, or loss of job.

Objective 3 Explain and understand credit reports and the significance of credit scores.

1. Identify the three major credit bureaus.
2. Understand the legal right to a free annual credit report (AnnualCreditReport.com).
3. Evaluate and identify components of a credit report, including derogatory remarks, and the warning signs of credit abuse, such as late fees, missed payments, collection notices, and bounced checks.
4. Evaluate the impact a credit score has on personal finance.

Objective 4 Understand the importance and complications of the three big expenses: housing, cars, and education.

1. Identify the process, rights, and responsibilities related to renting, leasing, and purchasing a home.
2. Understand the primary homeownership qualification factors, such as debt-to-income and loan-to-value ratios, and the roles of the professionals involved in the home-buying process.
3. Understand the similarities and differences between principal and interest on an amortization schedule.
4. Compare the pros and cons of buying or leasing a new or used vehicle, and identify the costs associated with each option.
5. Identify sources of funding to assist in post-high school education opportunities and the cost of repayment, including scholarships, grants, loans, savings, tuition reimbursement, work-study, and gifts.
6. Understand the use and advantages of 529 plans and the benefit of planning early to pay for the cost of post-secondary education and training.
7. Understand the financial benefits of pursuing higher education opportunities while in high school.
8. Understand the process for and benefits of FAFSA completion. [Seek guidance from school counselors/college awareness counselors.]

Objective 5 Define the rights and responsibilities of buyers and sellers under consumer protection laws.

1. Understand financial contracts tied to consumer purchases, such as cell phone, subscription fees, and membership fees.
2. Discuss the negative impacts of predatory lending practices and explore: title loans, payday loans, and pawn loans.
3. Identify ways to avoid identity theft and fraud, including securing sensitive financial data, using care when participating in online commerce, avoiding phishing and pharming, and properly disposing of sensitive documents.
4. Understand the challenges and responsibilities of those who are victims of fraud or identity theft.
5. Discuss common financial scams and schemes and ways to avoid them.
6. Identify the pros and cons of online commerce, including how to conduct transactions safely, such as using credit cards versus debit cards for online purchases.
7. Understand the role of the government in protecting the consumer and explain the features of consumer protection laws.
8. Identify federal and state entities that exist to protect consumers from forms of fraud and abuse.

