

BANKING FUNDAMENTALS

Bank Account Comparison

Detailed practice, calculation, judgment, and assessment

GRADES 9-12	TIME 2 x 42 min	GROUPING I / pairs / whole	PRODUCT Evidence-based account recommendation
YOUR CHALLENGE Compare three fictional checking accounts for a student profile. Calculate likely monthly and annual costs, weigh access and protection features, identify missing information, and defend a recommendation. The sample terms are instructional—not current offers.			

Learning Goals

- Read an account fee schedule and waiver rule.
- Separate opening-deposit requirements from balance requirements.
- Calculate scenario-based cost instead of choosing by advertising language.
- Verify disclosures before opening a real account.

Term	Working definition
Monthly fee	Recurring charge; may be waived only when stated conditions are met.
Minimum opening deposit	Amount required to open; not necessarily the balance needed to avoid fees.
Out-of-network ATM fee	Account provider charge; the ATM owner may charge another fee.
APY	Annual Percentage Yield: a standardized annual rate that includes compounding.
Overdraft	Account falls below \$0 after a transaction is paid.
Insufficient funds	Available money is too low; an item may be declined or returned.

Part 1 - Fictional Account Disclosures

Account	Monthly fee / waiver	Open	ATM in/out	APY	Shortfall treatment	Access
Metro Student Checking	\$0 while enrolled; then \$8	\$25	\$0 / \$3	No interest	Debit purchase normally declined when insufficient; checks/ACH handled under separate terms	24/7 app; 18,000 ATMs
Community Choice Checking	\$6; waived with \$500 monthly direct deposit	\$0	\$0 / \$2.50	0.05%	Optional linked-savings transfer: \$5 each; other items may be returned or paid under disclosure	Local branches; 35,000 ATMs
Digital Everyday Checking	\$0	\$0	\$0 / \$0	0.10%	No overdraft fee in sample; transaction treatment and eligibility restrictions must be verified	App only; cash deposit at partners may cost \$4.95
READ THE FINE PRINT “No overdraft fee” does not tell you whether a transaction will be declined, returned, delayed, covered from another account, or subject to eligibility rules. Obtain the actual account agreement and fee schedule.						

Notice-Question-Verify

Circle two terms that could change the cost for a specific user.

Write one question about ATM or cash-deposit access.

Write one question about negative-balance treatment.

Part 2 - Calculate Maya’s Likely Cost

Profile: Maya is enrolled for the next 10 months. She receives \$420 monthly by direct deposit. Each month she expects two out-of-network ATM withdrawals. She deposits cash once monthly. Average balance: \$350. Ignore ATM-owner surcharges and interest for this first calculation.

Account	Monthly fee	ATM fees	Cash-deposit fee	Estimated monthly cost	Estimated annual cost
Metro Student					
Community Choice					
Digital Everyday					

Show formulas for all three accounts.

What changes after Maya is no longer enrolled? Recalculate Metro for a month with the \$8 fee.

Part 3 - Interest and Break-Even Thinking

Use this classroom estimate: $\text{annual interest} \approx \text{average balance} \times \text{APY}$. Convert the percent to a decimal. Ignore taxes and changing balances.

Account	Average balance	APY decimal	Estimated annual interest	Annual fees from Part 2	Net annual value (interest - fees)
Metro Student	\$350				
Community Choice	\$350				
Digital Everyday	\$350				

How much average balance would earn about \$1 at 0.10% APY? Show the equation.

Why can a small fee matter more than a small APY difference for a low checking balance?

Part 4 - Match the Account to the User

Profile	Needs pattern	Best preliminary match	Evidence	Risk / missing fact
Maya	Student, direct deposit \$420, needs cash deposits monthly, 2 out-of-network ATM uses.			
Andre	Not a student, direct deposit \$900, uses local branch, no out-of-network ATM use.			
Lin	No direct deposit, app comfortable, never deposits cash, wants lowest predictable fee.			

Weighted Choice for Maya

Assign each factor a weight totaling 100. Score each account 1–5. Weighted points = weight × score. Use at least four factors, including total cost and access.

Factor	Weight	Metro score / points	Community score / points	Digital score / points
Total cost				
Cash access				
ATM access				
Shortfall treatment				
App/branch fit				
Other: _____				
TOTAL 100				

Part 5 - Verification and Final Recommendation

Claim to verify	Where to verify	Exact question	Why it could change decision
Monthly fee waiver			
ATM network and owner fees			
Cash deposit cost/limits			
Overdraft/returned-item treatment			
Account eligibility/end date			
Deposit insurance status and ownership category			

Write a 150–200 word recommendation for Maya. Include: one calculated cost comparison, two feature-fit reasons, one tradeoff, one missing fact, and the trigger that would make you switch recommendations.

REAL-WORLD CHECK Terms change. Compare the institution’s current account agreement, fee schedule, eligibility rules, ATM locator, and deposit-insurance information before acting.