

Financial Independence Blueprint Project

Build a realistic first-year financial plan for life after high school

STUDENT PROJECT PACKET | Grades 9-12

Project Information	Details
Project Length	5 class periods + optional homework
Primary CFM Area	Financial Management - FM.1
Project Topic	Financial Goals & Decisions
Final Score	100 points

Project Challenge

Students create a detailed one-year financial independence plan based on a realistic post-high-school scenario. They calculate take-home income, housing and transportation choices, a monthly budget, emergency savings, credit strategy, insurance needs, and a response to a financial shock.

What You Will Produce

- Life scenario with income and location assumptions.
- Take-home pay estimate with clearly stated assumptions.
- Housing and transportation comparison with at least two alternatives each.
- Complete monthly budget with fixed, variable, periodic, savings, and discretionary categories.
- Emergency fund target and savings timeline.
- Credit-use plan and repayment rules.
- Insurance and risk-management checklist.
- Financial shock response plan.
- One-page executive summary and 3-5 minute defense.

Project Rules

- Use realistic evidence and clearly state every assumption. Never invent sources, prices, salaries, or survey results.
- Show calculations and label inputs.
- Keep drafts and evidence because you may be asked to defend your reasoning.
- Digital tools may support formatting and calculation, but your final reasoning must be your own.
- Professional quality, source information, and proofreading are part of the grade.

Project Roadmap

Day 1 - Income & Scenario Setup

Estimate gross monthly income and take-home pay and state assumptions.

Day 2 - Housing, Transportation & Core Costs

Compare realistic options using price and non-price tradeoffs.

Day 3 - Build the Monthly Budget

Create a balanced budget and calculate housing, transportation, savings, and margin ratios.

Day 4 - Credit, Emergency Fund & Risk

Build emergency-fund, credit-use, and risk-management rules.

Day 5 - Financial Shock & Defense

Respond to a \$1,200 expense or 10% income reduction, revise the budget, and defend tradeoffs.

Part 1 - Life Scenario & Income

Item	Amount / Decision	Evidence or Assumption
Career/job		
Gross annual income		
Gross monthly income		
Estimated monthly take-home pay		
Location		

Part 2 - Housing Comparison

Option	Monthly Cost	Up-Front Cost	Commute / Access	Advantages	Disadvantages
Option A					
Option B					

Part 3 - Transportation Comparison

Option	Monthly Cost	Up-Front Cost	Reliability	Advantages	Disadvantages
Option A					
Option B					

Part 4 - Monthly Budget

Category	Budgeted Amount	Basis	Fixed / Variable
Housing			
Utilities			
Transportation			
Food			
Phone/Internet			
Insurance			
Debt payments			
Emergency savings			
Long-term savings			
Health/personal			
Entertainment			
Other			

Calculate and show: housing ratio, transportation ratio, savings rate, and monthly margin.

Part 5 - Emergency Fund & Credit Rules

Planning Question	Your Decision / Calculation
Monthly essential expenses	
Emergency fund target	
Months needed to reach target	
Maximum credit-card balance rule	
Automatic payment strategy	
Credit utilization target	

Part 6 - Risk & Insurance Checklist

Risk	Potential Financial Impact	How You Will Reduce / Transfer It
Health expense		
Car accident / transportation failure		
Job/income loss		
Theft/property loss		
Identity theft/fraud		

Part 7 - Financial Shock

Your teacher will assign a \$1,200 unexpected expense OR a 10% income reduction. Explain exactly what you will change, what you will protect, and why.

Write a one-page summary defending why your plan is realistic, sustainable, and resilient.

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100-Point Project Rubric

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Developing	Beginning	Points
Income assumptions & calculations	Complete, accurate, insightful, and professionally presented.	Complete and accurate with minor gaps.	Partially complete or contains several errors.	Missing, inaccurate, or lacks required evidence.	15
Housing/ transportation analysis	Complete, accurate, insightful, and professionally presented.	Complete and accurate with minor gaps.	Partially complete or contains several errors.	Missing, inaccurate, or lacks required evidence.	15
Monthly budget accuracy	Complete, accurate, insightful, and professionally presented.	Complete and accurate with minor gaps.	Partially complete or contains several errors.	Missing, inaccurate, or lacks required evidence.	20
Savings & emergency planning	Complete, accurate, insightful, and professionally presented.	Complete and accurate with minor gaps.	Partially complete or contains several errors.	Missing, inaccurate, or lacks required evidence.	15
Credit & risk strategy	Complete, accurate, insightful, and professionally presented.	Complete and accurate with minor gaps.	Partially complete or contains several errors.	Missing, inaccurate, or lacks required evidence.	15
Financial shock response	Complete, accurate, insightful, and professionally presented.	Complete and accurate with minor gaps.	Partially complete or contains several errors.	Missing, inaccurate, or lacks required evidence.	10
Executive summary & presentation	Complete, accurate, insightful, and professionally presented.	Complete and accurate with minor gaps.	Partially complete or contains several errors.	Missing, inaccurate, or lacks required evidence.	10

Submission Checklist

- ☐ Life scenario with income and location assumptions.
- ☐ Take-home pay estimate with clearly stated assumptions.
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- ☐ Emergency fund target and savings timeline.
- ☐ Credit-use plan and repayment rules.
- ☐ Insurance and risk-management checklist.
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Student name / signature / date
