

SAVING AND FINANCIAL CHOICES

Savings Goal Ladder

Detailed practice, calculation, judgment, and assessment

GRADES 9-12	TIME 2 x 42 min	GROUPING I / pairs / whole	PRODUCT Three-level savings plan
YOUR CHALLENGE Turn three wishes into coordinated short-, intermediate-, and long-term savings goals. Calculate recurring deposits, test feasibility, rank competing goals, and build a plan that can recover when income or costs change.			

Learning Goals

- Write goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound.
- Calculate weekly or monthly savings from target amount, current savings, and time.
- Coordinate several goals without counting the same dollar twice.
- Create milestones, automation rules, and adjustment triggers.

Planning term	Meaning
Target cost	Best current estimate of the total amount needed.
Funding gap	Target cost minus money already saved for that goal.
Recurring deposit	Funding gap divided by the number of saving periods.
Milestone	A dated checkpoint that shows whether the plan is on pace.
Priority	The order in which limited dollars are assigned.
Adjustment trigger	A condition that causes the plan to be recalculated.

Part 1 - From Wish to SMART Goal

Wish		Example stronger goal			
I want emergency money.		Save \$600 in a starter emergency fund within 6 months by depositing \$100 monthly.			
I want a laptop.		Save \$900 within 10 months; \$150 is already saved, so deposit \$75 monthly.			
I want money after graduation.		Save \$3,600 within 36 months by depositing \$100 monthly.			
Goal	Specific	Measurable	Achievable evidence	Relevant	Time bound
Emergency fund					
Laptop					
After-graduation fund					

Revise one example so it reflects a different realistic amount or deadline. Explain what made it more achievable.

Part 2 - Build the Goal Ladder

Case profile: Jordan can currently set aside \$140 per month. Use the three example goals. The emergency and laptop goals begin now. The after-graduation goal can receive any amount not assigned to higher priorities.

Level	Goal	Target	Already saved	Gap	Months	Required per month
Short	Emergency	\$600	\$0		6	
Intermediate	Laptop	\$900	\$150		10	
Long	After graduation	\$3,600	\$0		36	

Show each funding-gap and monthly-deposit calculation.

Can Jordan fully fund all three required monthly deposits from \$140? Calculate the monthly shortfall.

Part 3 - Choose a Funding Strategy

Strategy		Starting allocation		
Equal split		\$46.67 to each goal monthly.		
Deadline first		\$100 emergency; \$40 laptop; \$0 graduation until emergency goal is complete.		
Minimum progress		\$90 emergency; \$40 laptop; \$10 graduation; extend deadlines as needed.		
Custom		Design a plan that totals exactly \$140.		
Month	Emergency deposit / balance	Laptop deposit / balance	Graduation deposit / balance	Total deposited
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

Select or design a strategy. Use the table to project balances. No monthly row may exceed \$140 total.

Part 4 - Milestones and Setbacks

Change	Recalculate: new balance, gap, deadline, or deposit
Month 3: Jordan earns an extra \$80.	
Month 4: Laptop price rises by \$120.	
Month 5: Jordan must use \$150 of the emergency fund.	
Month 7: Monthly saving capacity rises from \$140 to \$170.	

Recovery Rule

Write a rule for handling windfalls and a rule for recovering after a withdrawal. Your rules must identify priority order and when to recalculate.

Three Milestones

Goal	Milestone date	Target balance	Actual balance	On pace? action
Emergency				
Laptop				
After graduation				

Part 5 - Your Savings Goal Ladder

PRIVACY OPTION You may use a fictional profile. Do not include account numbers, family income, or other private information.

Level	Goal and reason	Target / saved / gap	Deadline / periods	Deposit per period	First action
Short term					
Intermediate					
Long term					

Feasibility check: total planned deposit per month ____; amount available ____; difference ____.
If the difference is negative, change an amount, deadline, or priority and document the revision.

Write a 90-day implementation plan with automation/transfer timing, three milestones, one support/resource, and one adjustment trigger.

FINAL CHECK Every goal has a dollar target, current amount, funding gap, deadline, recurring deposit, priority, milestone, and recovery rule.