Generation Wealth

Help Students Map Their Post-High School Journey

July 23, 2025

Council for Economic Education

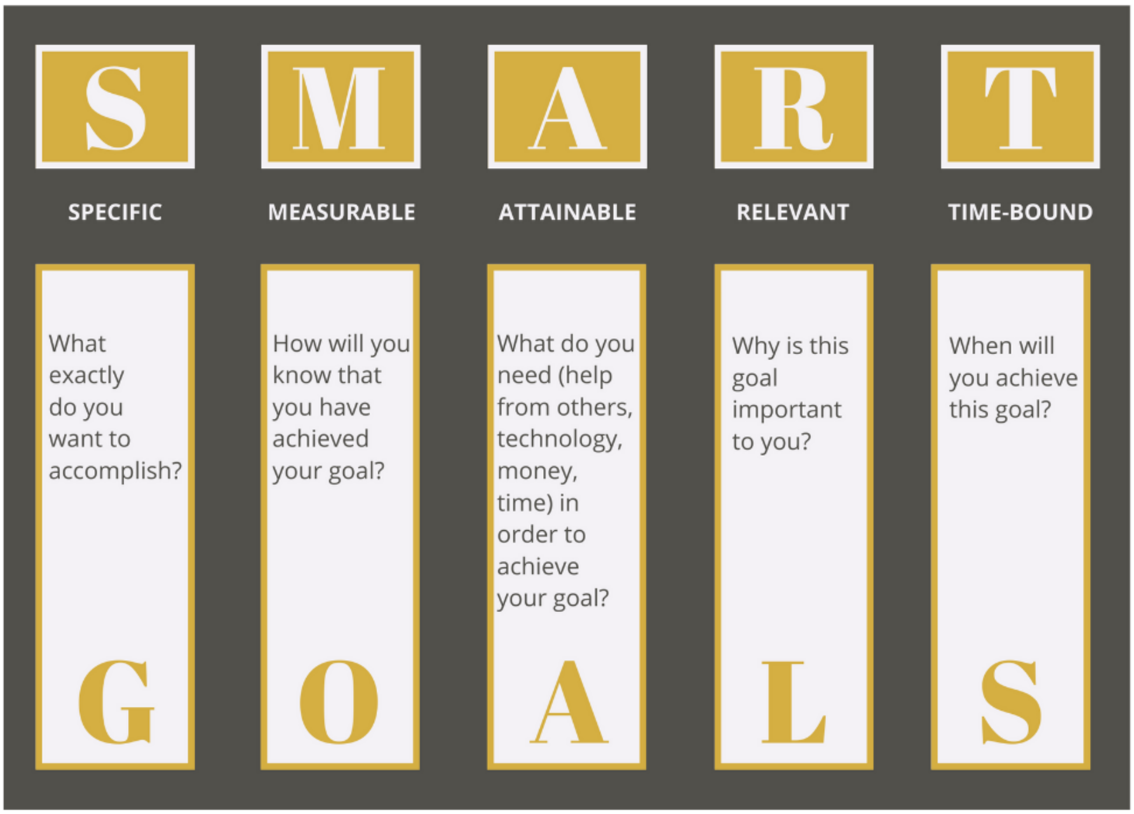
Agenda

5 minutes	Introduction & Context Setting
30 minutes	What are SMART goals and how can they help us achieve our financial dreams faster?
20 minutes	How can we use the 20-70-10 strategy to budget our money for saving, spending and sharing?
10 minutes	Break
20 minutes	How can we use the Rule of 72 to leverage the power of compound interest?
20 minutes	What financing options are available to pay for continuing education?
10 minutes	What's the difference between subsidized, unsubsidized and private loans?
5 minutes	Reflection & Closing

Permission

What are SMART goals and how can they help us achieve our financial dreams faster?

A **goal** is a desired result that you envision, plan and commit to achieving. If you want to increase your chances of actually achieving your goal, you need to set SMART goals. SMART goals include a plan of how you will achieve your objective. The image below shows what each letter in the acronym SMART represents as well as questions that you can ask yourself for each part of the acronym when creating your own goals.



When you set goals it is important to make them as manageable as possible, especially if they are goals that you plan to achieve over a long period of time. Goals that will take you one year or more to accomplish is a long term goal. Think of your long term goal as a mountain top goal. When you decide to climb to the top of a mountain, it takes time. You get to the top by taking one small step after another. In order to achieve your mountain top goal, you will have to set small goals that will help you get to the top of the mountain. Think of these small goals as SMART steps. When you achieve one SMART step after the other, then you will eventually achieve your mountain top goal!

Financial Goal Setting Example

Mountain Top Financial Dream:

Brian will pay off $115,000 in debt in five years (60 months) so that he can be free from the burden of debt.*

*Brian's monthly expenses are $4,000 per month and his net income is $5000 per month.

Small Step SMART Goal #1

Brian will use the debt-snowball approach to eliminate his debt by paying an extra $1,000 per month to his outstanding debt for the next 60 months ($60,000).

Small Step SMART Goal #2

Brian will increase his understanding of what it takes to eliminate and stay out of debt by listening to at least one podcast per month and reading one book per quarter by personal finance experts during the first year.

Small Step SMART Goal #3

Brian will find a side hustle that pays him at least $1,000 per month after taxes. He will apply all of this extra income towards eliminating his debt over the next 60 months. ($60,000)

Small Step SMART Goal #4

Any extra money that Brian makes from his side hustle over $1000 per month will go towards his debt-free celebration vacation to Cancun, Mexico that he will take when he finishes paying off all of his debt.

S SPECIFIC	M MEASURABLE	A ATTAINABLE	R RELEVANT	T TIME-BOUND
What exactly does Brian want to accomplish?	**How will Brian know that he has achieved his goal?**	**What does Brian need in order to achieve his goal?**	**Why is this goal important to Brian?**	**When will Brian achieve this goal?**
He wants to pay off his debt.	He will have paid off $115,000 plus interest within 5 years (60 months).	He needs to apply his extra income toward his debt. He needs to learn how to stay out of debt. He needs a side hustle so that he can pay down more money on the debt to reach his goal.	He wants to be free from the burden of debt.	Brian will achieve his goal in five years.

Mountain Top Goal:

Samantha will start her journey to financial independence by turning her hobby into a passive income business by selling $300 per month of her handmade jewelry online within one year.

Small Step SMART Goal #1

Samantha will learn about how to start a successful online business by interviewing 5 successful business owners who sell products online. She will conduct these interviews over the course of 2 months.

Small Step SMART Goal #2

Samantha will share her goal with her mom as well as what she learned from the interviews so that she can help Samantha open a bank account and an Etsy seller account immediately after she finishes conducting her final interview.

Small Step SMART Goal #3

Samantha will post photos of at least 10 handmade pieces for sale on Etsy each month.

Small Step SMART Goal #4

Samantha will create a budget so that she invests some of the money she makes each month into growing her business.

S SPECIFIC	M MEASURABLE	A ATTAINABLE	R RELEVANT	T TIME-BOUND
What exactly does Samantha want to accomplish?	How will Samantha know that she has achieved this goal?	What does Samantha need in order to achieve her goal?	Why is this goal important to Samantha?	When will Samantha achieve this goal?

Application Activity: Use the blank templates on pages 8-9 to create your own financial goal. Remember to use the SMART questions to help you develop your mountain top and SMART step goals.

Financial Goal Setting Template

Mountain Top Financial Dream:

Small Step SMART Goal #1

Small Step SMART Goal #2

Small Step SMART Goal #3

Small Step SMART Goal #4

SMART Goal Setting Template

S SPECIFIC	M MEASURABLE	A ATTAINABLE	R RELEVANT	T TIME-BOUND
What exactly do you want to accomplish?	How will you know that you have achieved this goal?	What do you need in order to achieve your goal?	Why is this goal important to you?	When will you achieve this goal?

How can we use the Rule of 72 to leverage the power of compound interest?

Directions: Use *The Rule of 72* chart to answer questions 1-3 below.

The Rule of 72 Chart	
Annual Interest Rate	**Years to Double**
1%	72 years
2%	36 years
3%	24 years
4%	18 years
5%	14 years and 4 months
10%	7 years and 2 months
20%	3 years and 6 months
30%	2 years and 4 months

1. Robert invested $5,000 at a 5 percent interest rate. How long will it take for his money to double?

2. Brianna invested $25,000 for her son Brian when he was born because she wanted the money to double in value by his eighteenth birthday. How much interest did this investment gain every year?

3. Santos is 15 years old and has $500 to invest. How much money will he have if he receives a 20% interest rate and allows his money to double five times? How old will Santos be after his money doubles five times?

<u>Processing Questions</u>

1. How could you incorporate the Rule of 72 into your instructional practice?

2. Consider the role that time plays in how money grows. How could you use this concept to help families understand the importance of saving early for their child's future?

Financing Options for Continuing Education

1. **529 College Savings Plan**: This savings plan allows families to allocate funds specifically for higher education savings. The contributions grow tax free and you won't pay taxes when you withdraw money to pay for eligible education expenses. Qualified education expenses include tuition fees, room and board, books and supplies. The savings in this account are not limited to just 4 year colleges, it can be used on community colleges, technical schools as well as vocational and certificate programs. **The earlier you start investing in a 529 College Savings Plan the more time it has to compound.**

2. **Scholarships and Grants**: There are millions of dollars in free money that is available for young people who want to pursue higher education. There are scholarships and grants available to individuals based on academic merit, financial need, athletic ability and other extracurricular activities to name a few. It will take some leg work on you and your child's part to find scholarships that they qualify for, and it will take time to complete the application, but if you end up receiving the award it will be worth the time it took to find it because you don't have to pay this money back. It's free money! One of the easiest steps you can take to determine your qualification for federal grants is to fill out the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) form. The information that is collected from this form will determine how much federal and state grants you are eligible for.

3. **Advanced Placement or Dual Enrollment**: If your child is still in high school they may have an opportunity to earn college credits through advanced placement classes or dual enrollment at a local community college. Advanced placement classes are an acceptable option if they are a good test taker because their score on the exam will determine if they receive the college credit or not. If they are not a good test taker, speak with the guidance or college counselor at the school to find out if they have a partnership with a local college where your child can take select courses for free and receive the credits if they pass the classes. Their passing grade will be determined by class participation, attendance and performance on class assignments . When they do get accepted into college they can transfer these credits, which will decrease the amount of money you have to pay in overall tuition.

4. **Start at a Community College**: If it's difficult for your child to qualify for scholarships due to their grades or if you cannot afford to pay for four years at a private college or university, then your child may want to consider starting at a community college and applying to a four year college towards the end of their second year. This

option will give you more time to save money and for your child to improve their grades so that they can qualify for more scholarships and college-funded student aid.

5. **Employer Tuition Assistance**: If your child has to work while going to school, there are many companies that offer tuition assistance. The tuition assistance can range from a few thousand dollars each year to one hundred percent of tuition costs! Some companies that offer tuition assistance include, but are not limited to, Apple, McDonalds, Target, Walmart, UPS, Chipotle and Amazon.

   Joining the **Armed Forces** is also a great way for your child to learn while they earn. As a service member they will receive many benefits including tuition assistance of up to one hundred percent of their tuition and fees. This option is not for everyone but it is a great and honorable post-secondary path for those who desire to serve their country in this unique way.

6. **Work Study**: Working while in school can be a good source of income to help pay tuition and everyday living expenses. Work can take on many different forms, such as work-study, a part-time job or a side hustle. If you and your child choose this option they'll need to determine how many hours they can work while still being able to meet their responsibilities as a student. Remember, your child's first priority should be passing all of their classes so that they do not have to pay to take them over again.

7. **Live Off Campus**: On-campus housing and food can be extremely expensive. Depending on where your child goes to school, it may be cheaper to rent an apartment or room off-campus where they prepare their own food, or if they attend school nearby, live at home. Choosing this option could save you tens of thousands of dollars over four or more years of school.

8. **Last Resort-Student Loans**: Finally, there are student loans. This should be your **absolute last resort** when it comes to deciding how to pay for continuing education. If possible this option should be avoided at all cost because student loans provide money that you must pay back, with interest. According to the U.S. Department of Education, it can take the average American somewhere between 10-30 years to pay off their student loans. Sometimes, it can take even longer. If you are considering taking out student loans, make sure you and your child have a clear plan of how to repay these loans as quickly as possible after graduation!

What’s the difference between subsidized, unsubsidized and private loans?

When applying for loans there are three types that student borrowers can qualify for: subsidized, unsubsidized and private. A **subsidized loan** is one where the lenders pay the interest charges during certain periods. The federal government pays all interest on subsidized federal student loans while the borrower is in school and during periods of deferment. These loans are only available to undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need. If the borrower can qualify for this type of loan, it would be a good option because at least they will get some help with the interest payments while they’re in school. They can also defer payments interest-free on subsidized federal student loans if they become unemployed, go through an economic hardship, join the military or pursue further education.

An **unsubsidized loan** is money that is borrowed from the federal government that requires the borrower to pay interest on the loan as soon as it is funded. The recipient does not receive any grace period where they can access the money without paying interest. This type of loan is not based on financial need but on the actual cost of school and other aid that the borrower receives. If they don’t qualify for a subsidized loan, then this is the next best option. If they take out this type of loan, it will cost them more to borrow the money and they cannot defer the interest charges.

The final option would be a **private loan**. A private loan is one that is provided by a bank or financial institution. Although almost anyone can qualify for this type of loan, the interest rates on them tend to be higher than federal loans and, like unsubsidized loans, the interest charges cannot deferred. These loans would not qualify for federal government loan forgiveness programs, because the loan is issued through a private institution. If possible a borrower should avoid taking out these loans as it will cost more to borrow over the lifetime of the loan.

Finally, if a student borower gets approved for any of these three types of loans, they do not have to accept the entire loan amount. They should only borrow what they absolutely need.

Directions: Use the chart below to record the features of subsidized, unsubsidized and private loans.

	Subsidized Loan	Unsubsidized Loan	Private Loan
Who is the lender?			
Who can qualify for this type of loan?			
Who is responsible for the interest while your child is in school?			
Can interest charges be deferred?			
Can this type of loan qualify for federal loan forgiveness?			

How does the Generation Wealth curriculum prepare students for financial independence?

Financial Independence Digital Curriculum: All teachers that facilitate the learning for students in this program will have full access to the digital curriculum that is available for middle and high schools. This simple and easy-to-use program includes the following:
Standards-aligned curriculum: The curriculum for this financial independence program is aligned to three sets of standards that assess content, process, and dispositional skills: T*he National Financial Literacy Standards, The Next Generation Learning Standards,* and *the Habits of Mind Dispositional Standards*.

- Easy to follow pacing calendar: The pacing calendar provides you with a quick overview of the essential information that you need when planning such as the timing, learning objectives, and materials needed for each lesson.

- Differentiated lessons: Each lesson includes suggestions to differentiate your facilitation based on learner needs. There are also opportunities in each lesson to use formative assessment data to plan focused review sessions so that learners get multiple opportunities to practice new skills.

- Diversified assessment experiences: This curriculum includes both pre and post-assessment surveys. There are formative assessments embedded in each lesson and summative assessment tasks that engage learners in applying what they've learned with an authentic audience beyond the classroom.

Virtual Coaching Sessions: During these sessions, a Generation Wealth consultant works with teachers facilitating the curriculum at their school. The consultant guides educators through reflective learning experiences that align with each of the four parts of the curriculum so that they are best prepared to facilitate learning with their students.

Financial Independence Student Handbook: This handbook is designed with the young investor in mind where learners embark on an exciting journey to financial independence! They learn everything from developing a wealth mindset to applying simple steps to invest in stocks, real estate, and crypto assets! This handbook is the only one of its kind that pairs engaging personal finance lessons with interactive learning experiences like video teachings and fun activities in every chapter! The digital curriculum is designed to be used with this student handbook. These books are available for middle and high school students.

Scan the QR code below to access more information about our school-based services

Session Reflection

Help Students Map Their Post-High School Journey

https://bit.ly/GWReflectSurvey