

# Puzzling out your savings future

Using an origami children's puzzle, students will choose an item, a time frame, and a dollar amount to determine how long they need to save before they can buy that item.

## Learning goals

### Big idea

The more money we save, the faster we can reach our goals.

### Essential questions

- Why is it important to have a savings goal?
- How does having a plan help you reach your savings goal?

### Objectives

- Understand the importance of having a savings goal
- Understand how a plan can help people meet savings goals

### What students will do

- Create an origami puzzle and play with a partner to determine a savings goal.
- Calculate monthly savings amounts needed to meet the goal.

### NOTE

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Please remember to consider your students' accommodations and special needs to ensure that all students are able to participate in a meaningful way.

### KEY INFORMATION

**Building block:**



**Grade level:** Elementary school (4-5)

**Age range:** 9-11

**Topic:** Save and invest (Saving for long-term goals, Saving for short-term goals)

**School subject:** Fine arts and performing arts, Math

**Teaching strategy:** Gamification

**Bloom's Taxonomy level:** Understand, Apply, Create

**Activity duration:** 45-60 minutes

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**National Standards for Personal Financial Education, 2021**

Saving: 4-2, 8-1

These standards are cumulative, and topics are not repeated in each grade level. This activity may include information students need to understand before exploring this topic in more detail.

## Preparing for this activity

- While it's not necessary, completing the "Starting small and saving up" activity first may make this one more meaningful.
- Print copies of student materials for each student.
  - Print a single-sided copy of the "Origami puzzle" page in this guide for each student.
  - Print a copy of the puzzle folding instructions in this guide for each student or each group of students. You can also display it electronically.
- Print, cut out, and fold a sample puzzle to show the class.
- Obtain scissors for students to use to cut out their puzzles.
  - If you want students to color their puzzles, obtain crayons, colored pencils, or markers.
- Make sure students have access to calculators if you want the class to use them.

### What you'll need

#### THIS TEACHER GUIDE

- **Puzzling out your savings future** (guide)  
[cfpb\\_building\\_block\\_puzzling-out-your-savings-future\\_guide.pdf](cfpb_building_block_puzzling-out-your-savings-future_guide.pdf)

#### STUDENT MATERIALS

- **Puzzling out your savings future** (worksheet)  
[cfpb\\_building\\_block\\_puzzling-out-your-savings-future\\_worksheet.pdf](cfpb_building_block_puzzling-out-your-savings-future_worksheet.pdf)
- "Origami puzzle" page (in this guide)
- **Puzzle folding instructions** (in this guide)
- Scissors
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers (optional)
- Calculators (optional)

## Exploring key financial concepts

Saving money doesn't have to be overwhelming or difficult. In fact, there are lots of easy things people can do to build their savings, even if it's only a little at a time.

One thing that can be helpful is to know exactly what you're saving for. This is called your savings goal. It can also be helpful to have a plan for how much money you're going to save each month. Having a plan can make it easier to reach your savings goal.

Every person or family has a different idea of things they want in life. What do you want for yourself in the next few years? What do you want 10 years from now? Often, we need to save money to make our hopes, wants, and dreams for our futures come to life. Sometimes people feel like they don't have enough money to save. But not planning for or saving for these things may mean that they don't happen.

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## TIP

Because savings products, terms, and laws change, students should be encouraged to always look for the most up-to-date information.

## Teaching this activity

### Whole-class introduction

- Ask students if they've ever saved money for something special.
  - Ask for volunteers to share about times they or someone they know has saved money for something.
  - Explain that when we save money, it's helpful to have a savings goal, or something specific we're saving money for.
  - Explain that having a plan for how much money we want to save each month can help us reach our savings goal.
- Tell students that they'll play a game during which they'll make an origami puzzle.
  - They'll use the puzzle to choose an item they want to buy, the number of months they'll save for, and the dollar amount they need to save.
  - Then they'll calculate how much money they'd need to save each month to meet their savings goal.
- Be sure students understand key vocabulary:
  - **Save:** Setting something, like money, aside to use in the future.
  - **Savings goal:** The amount of money you plan to put aside for a specific purpose.

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## TIP

Visit CFPB's financial education glossary at [consumerfinance.gov/financial-education-glossary/](https://consumerfinance.gov/financial-education-glossary/).

## Individual and group work

- Distribute the "Puzzling out your savings future" worksheet and the "Origami puzzle" page to each student.
- Students will make their puzzles individually.
- Students can work individually, in pairs, or in small groups to use the puzzle to fill in the table on the worksheet.
- Distribute the puzzle folding instructions to each student or group, or display them on the board.
- Tell students to follow the directions on the puzzle page and the folding instructions to cut out and fold the origami puzzle.
  - Note: You can also allow students some extra time to color their puzzles.
- Students will choose one of the items listed on the outside of the puzzle: Mountain bike, video game, headphones, or tablet computer.
  - They'll then write their choice in the "Item" column of the table on the worksheet.
  - Students will spell out the item, opening the puzzle back and forth each time they say a letter out loud.
  - Next, they'll choose a number from inside the puzzle.
    - They'll write that number in the table's "Months" column.
    - Then they'll open the puzzle back and forth that number of times.
  - Students will choose another number from inside the puzzle.
    - They'll unfold the puzzle flap under that number to find the dollar amount.
    - They'll write the dollar amount in the table's "Price" column.
    - Explain to students that the prices on the puzzle are only examples for this activity and that the items' actual costs may be higher or lower.
- Students will calculate the monthly savings amount by dividing the dollar amount by the number of months.
  - If they're working in pairs or groups, each student will take a turn completing the steps above.
    - Students will repeat the steps until each one has filled out all the rows on the table.
    - Tell students to make different choices for each row in their table.
- Students will answer the reflection questions independently.

## Wrap-up

- Bring students back together.
- Ask for volunteers to share their answers to the reflection questions.

## Suggested next steps

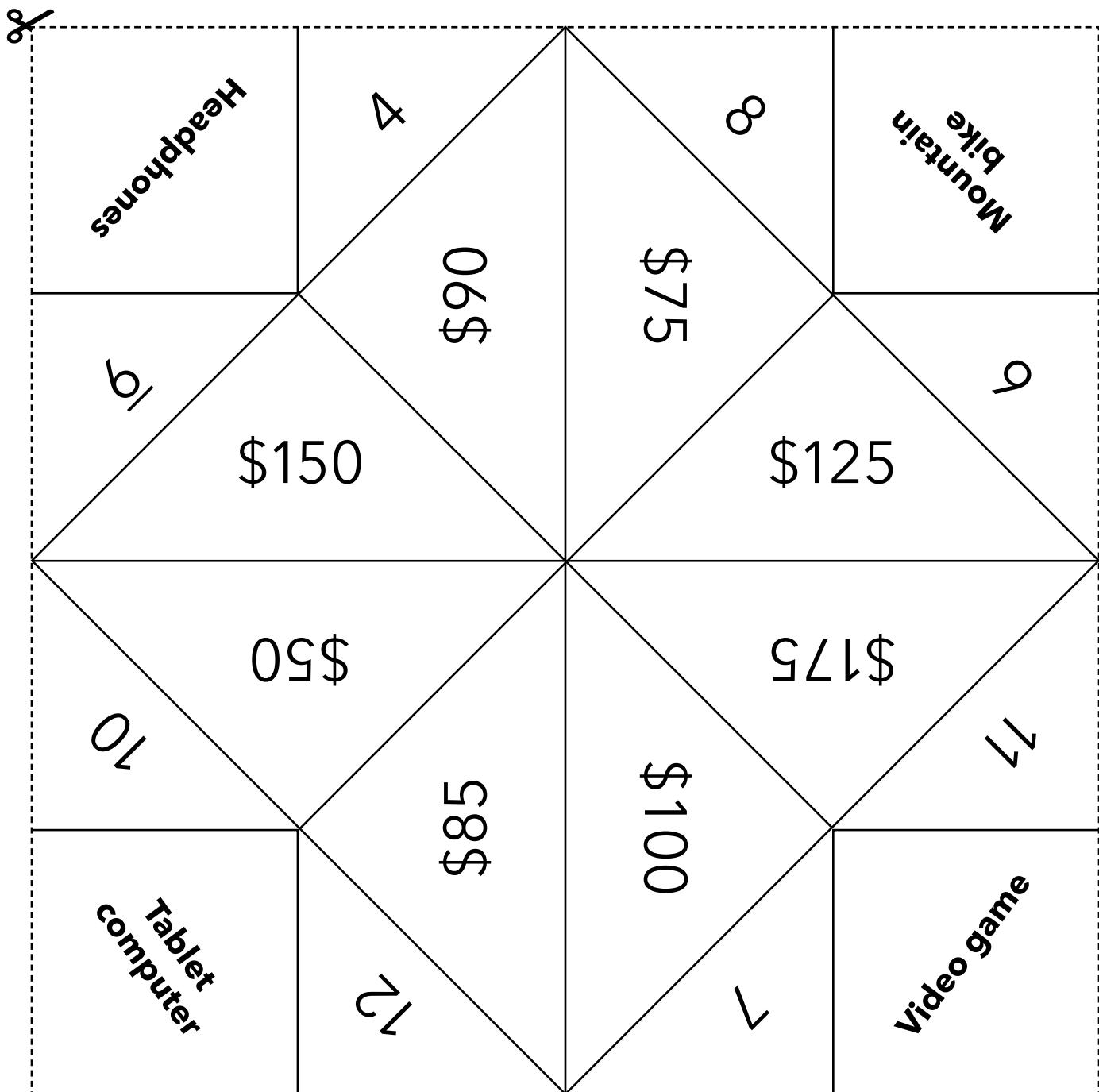
Consider searching for other CFPB activities that address the topic of saving, including saving for long-term goals and saving for short-term goals. Suggested activities include "Meeting your future self" and "Writing about saving."

## Measuring student learning

Students' answers on their worksheets and during discussion can give you a sense of their understanding. **Keep in mind that students' answers may vary.** The important thing is for students to have reasonable justification for their answers.

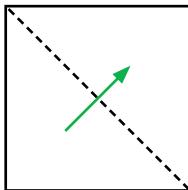
# Origami puzzle

Cut along the dotted lines. Follow the puzzle folding instructions to create the puzzle.

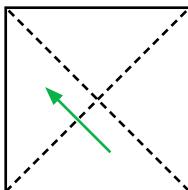


# Puzzle folding instructions

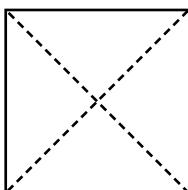
1. With your "Origami puzzle" paper face down, fold it from corner to corner, making a triangle.



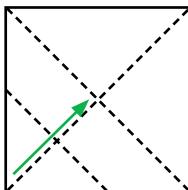
2. Keeping your paper face down, open it and fold it from corner to corner in the opposite direction.



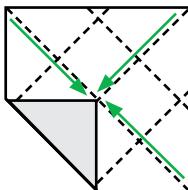
3. Unfold your paper. The fold lines will look like an X.



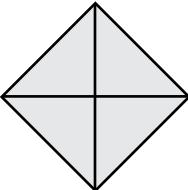
4. Fold one corner to the middle of the X.



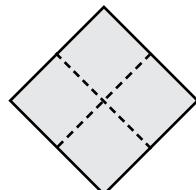
5. Repeat that step with the other corners.



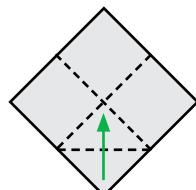
6. Your paper will look like this:



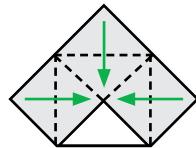
7. Turn your paper over.



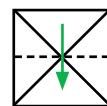
8. Fold one corner to the middle of your paper.



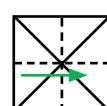
9. Repeat that step with the other corners.



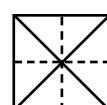
10. Fold your paper in half horizontally and then unfold it.



11. Fold your paper in half vertically and then unfold it.



12. Your fold lines will look like this:



13. Turn your puzzle over. Slide your fingers under the flaps and use your fingers to push the outer corners to the middle.

