

## Chapter 1 Project Teacher Notes: Checks and Balances

### About the Project

The project gives students an opportunity to learn how to use equations to model a personal budget. Students write equations to model budget plans. They also develop spreadsheets to analyze their spending and saving habits. Students will display and present their budgets using circle graphs.

### Introducing the Project

- Ask students to work with partners or in small groups. Ask groups to list important or expensive items that any group member bought recently.
- Now ask groups to list items they would buy if they could spend \$150. Have each group list possible ways to find out costs.
- Ask each student to select one item from the list as his or her goal.

### Activity 1: Researching

Ask groups of students to think of several items that they would like to buy for less than \$150 a piece. Have each group price the items they select using ads or by visiting stores. Each group then selects one item as a goal.

### Activity 2: Modeling

Ask students to write and to solve equations to discover how much they need to save each week to make their purchases.

### Activity 3: Organizing

Ask students to make spreadsheets to help organize and analyze their budget plans.

### Activity 4: Graphing

Ask students to make circle graphs for the budgets they created.

### Finishing the Project

You may wish to plan a project day on which students share their completed projects. Encourage groups to explain their processes as well as their results.

- Have students review the equations, graphs, and explanations that they needed for the project.
- Ask groups to share their insights that resulted from completing the project, such as any shortcuts they found for making circle graphs or spreadsheets, or ways to manage their own money.