

Personal Finance Education Curriculum for 18-35 year olds

Curriculum written by Kate Nixon Anania

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For use in conjunction with *Twenties in Your Pocket: A twenty-something's guide to money management*, by Kate Nixon Anania

Available on [Amazon](#).

Class 6: Checking Credit Reports

Note to instructors: If you have safe computing, you can have your students check their credit report during class time. Note that sensitive information (including social security numbers) is required, so if you have any concerns please err on the side of caution and use the “dummy” resources provided to talk through the process instead of having your students check their credit during class. Note that you must be 18 to check your credit, so if your students are minors you can talk through credit reports, but they cannot check their credit.

Assigned reading: Chapter 11 of *Twenties in Your Pocket: A twenty-something's guide to money management* by Kate Nixon Anania (note: this chapter is about salary negotiation and is not related to the day's lesson, but it is important for students to read and be aware of, even if they are not looking for employment).

Refresher: What is a credit report?

It's a history of your finances. It can impact your credit score, whether you can take out a loan, get an apartment or even get a job.

When people talk about “identity theft” they mean that people use your identity to take out loans (and if they don't pay them back, it will look like you owe the money), which will show up on your credit report.

Requirements for checking credit reports

- Must be over 18
- Need SSN and an idea of your past addresses
- If you have never taken out a loan or credit card or had utilities in your name, you might have a blank credit report. This is fine, but it's smart to start building your credit! Look into a secured credit card to get started (see class 4 for details).

Note to students: be careful about sharing this information.

Annualcreditreport.com is the federally endorsed site to check your credit report (not score) through Equifax, Experian or Trans Union. Banks are starting to offer this service too.

- The three reporting services might say different things but you don't need to check them all unless you think you've been involved in a data breach.
- Checking once/year is fine unless you're about to make a big purchase

- If you find an error, call or report to the credit agency. You don't need to pay for their tracking service.
- This is free. Your credit score may not be, but if they are asking you to pay for your credit report you went to the wrong website.

Walk through an example credit report together.

Sample from Experian found at:

http://www.experian.com/credit_report_basics/pdf/samplecreditreport.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0iCKcpHEy4K4SbTvSxfVpMiaFthrgwFZSmRMZIetmTfnV-BFEFpit1ois

Additional resources and handouts can be found and ordered in bulk for free from the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau:

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/pdf-0032-building-a-better-credit-report.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0DxVqnm7hTiaeHPbJxQ5tWWEXKbccGKrcEmR1FRtcfbL-a0VLFUqIk>

https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201409_cfpb_check-your-credit-score.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3MT983ejChKjvqv8mNyc2xDpTcMZRjLOBZ0px95iURE33CaI6Vu33Rdl4