

Writing about giving

Students discuss giving to a charitable organization, research local groups, and write a persuasive letter about that organization.

Learning goals

Big idea

Donating to a charity provides funding for important causes, but it's a good idea to research an organization before you give.

Essential questions

- What are some ways people can give to charities?
- What kind of giving is right for me?

Objectives

- Reflect on causes you may want to support
- Identify and research local charitable organizations

What students will do



- Conduct online research to identify local charitable organizations.
- Write a persuasive letter to a friend or family member about the charitable organization they identified.

NOTE

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:

-  Financial habits and norms
-  Financial knowledge and decision-making skills

Grade level: Middle school (6-8), High school (9-12)

Age range: 11-14, 13-19

Topic: Spend (Giving to others)

School subject: English or language arts, Social studies or history

Teaching strategy: Direct instruction

Bloom's Taxonomy level: Apply, Analyze

Activity duration: 45-60 minutes

National Standards for Personal Financial Education, 2021

Spending: 8-1, 8-2, 8-3, 12-1, 12-2, 12-7, 12-8, 12-9

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 "[Bouncing ball money choices](#)" activity first may make this one more meaningful.
- Visit the Combined Federal Campaign website at <https://cfcgiving.opm.gov/offerings> to become familiar with the site and with charitable organizations in your area.
- Print copies of all student materials for each student, or prepare for students to access them electronically.
- Secure computers or tablets with web access so students can conduct research.

What you'll need

THIS TEACHER GUIDE

- **Writing about giving** (guide)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_writing-about-giving_guide.pdf](#)

STUDENT MATERIALS

- **Writing about giving** (worksheet)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_writing-about-giving_worksheet.pdf](#)
- **Computers or tablets with web access**

Exploring key financial concepts

Many people choose to donate to groups that provide services for their community. You can donate property, like a car; gently used household items; or money. You can also donate your time and talent by volunteering for an organization. Some people choose organizations based on their personal beliefs or priorities. For example, a dog lover may choose to volunteer their time or their talent to an animal rescue. A sports fan may give money to a group that provides equipment for children who can't afford it. No matter how a person chooses to give, it's important to do some research before selecting an organization to donate to. It's a good idea to know how much of your donation goes to the cause the organization supports or know whether the group has a good reputation. Doing some homework on an organization can help you avoid a scam—a trick used to cheat you out of your money—and make sure your donation is being used for the cause you want to support.

TIP

Because practices related to giving can change, students should be encouraged to always look for the most up-to-date information.

Teaching this activity

Whole-class introduction

- Ask students to share examples of people donating to charitable organizations.
 - Examples could include giving money to a food bank or volunteering to pick up litter in a park.
- Explain that four common forms of giving are donating your time, talent, money, or property.
- Tell students that before people decide to donate to an organization, it's a good idea to research the group to make sure it's reputable and not a scam.
- Be sure students understand key vocabulary:
 - **Charitable organization or charity:** A private, nonprofit organization operated exclusively for religious, health and welfare, scientific, testing for public safety, literary, educational, or other specified purposes.
 - **Scam:** A dishonest trick used to cheat somebody out of something important, like money. Scams can happen in-person, through social media, or by phone, email, postal mail, or text.

TIP

Visit CFPB's financial education glossary at consumerfinance.gov/financial-education-glossary/.

Individual work

- Tell students that they'll do research on a federal government website to find a local charitable organization and then write a letter to a friend or family member about that organization.
 - Explain that the Combined Federal Campaign is a program run by the federal government to provide a cost-effective way for people who work for the government to donate to charitable organizations.
- Give students the "Writing about giving" worksheet and computers or tablets with web access.
- Students will complete the worksheet independently.
- Students will read the worksheet's "Research charitable organizations" section and then research local charitable organizations.
- They'll use the worksheet's "Organize your letter" section to outline their letters.
- Students will write their letters.
- Students will then answer the reflection question.

Wrap-up

- Ask for volunteers to read their letters to the class.
- Ask for volunteers to share their answers to the reflection question.

Suggested next steps

Consider searching for other CFPB activities that address the topic of spending, including giving to others. Suggested activities include “Including giving in your budget” for grades 9–12 and “Figuring out how much to tip” for grades 6–8.

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, as there may not be only one right answer.** The important thing is for students to have reasonable justification for their answers.