TEACHING THE COVER STORY

BIG IMPACT

The COVID-19 pandemic is changing lives in many ways. Read about how it is affecting the U.S. economy.

FINANCIAL-LITERACY STANDARDS

I. Earning Income
II. Buying Goods and Services

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

RI.1, RI.3, W.2

Students are learning from home, so this guide has been adjusted accordingly. Your methods may need to be adjusted to meet the needs of your remote-learning classroom.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR FINANCIAL-LITERACY STANDARDS

Standard I. Benchmark 2: How are businesses and individuals making money right now?
Standard II. Benchmark 1: What is the difference between an essential business and a nonessential one?

Before Reading the Text

● Before reading this issue, have students write down or share some of the ways their lives have changed because of COVID-19.
● You might ask them to respond to this in a blog post where they can discuss some of stores and restaurants they usually go to that are still open and some that are closed. Encourage students to comment on one another’s posts. Or open this up to class-based or family discussion.

While Reading the Text

● While students read the magazine, encourage them to stop after each question (before reading the response) and think about what they already know on the subject. Have them write down what they know. As they read each response, have them make note of what they’ve learned.
● You might also ask students to reflect in a journal on what resonates with them as they read pages 2 through 4.

Below are some essential questions you might wish post to guide their writing:

● Do you know someone who has been furloughed? Are your parents’ workplaces closed? Is your family spending less money? Do you remember a global health emergency in the past?

After Reading

● Use the writing lesson on page 2 of this guide to have students connect the pandemic with their lives.
● The lesson asks students to “research” a local business that has been affected by COVID-19. Students may conduct their research on the Internet, from watching the local news, by talking to their family and friends, or by making phone calls to local businesses.
● If students do not have access to quotes, they may use fictitious ones or quote family members as customers of a store or restaurant.

WITHIN THIS GUIDE

● Page 1: Find tips for teaching the cover story.
● Page 2: Jean Chatzky talks to a clinical psychologist about how to answer your kid’s questions.

Use a writing lesson to prompt students to create a newspaper article about a local business that has been impacted by COVID-19.

Our paired-text lesson connects the cover story to “TFK Explains: The Government Shutdown.”

● Page 3: Students can use this reproducible to gather information for their newspaper article.
● Page 4: Students can use this reproducible as a template students for their newspaper article.
Dear Teachers,

Money’s always a tough topic to discuss with children. But right now—with so much uncertainty and so many Americans struggling—it’s tougher than ever. I reached out to clinical psychologist Melanie Katzman, PhD, to ask for some guidance on how to proceed.

Before beginning to answer children’s questions, she suggests listening to ascertain what they’re really worried about. “Let them ask the first, second, and third question,” she says. “Are they asking: ‘Are we going to have a home? Is mommy or daddy going to have a job? Are we going to have to move?’” Then you know where to target your reassurance. “We’re together. We have enough food.’ Look at the things that are going right so they can see that the family is working through it.”

If you lose a job or a business, she suggests finessing when you tell your children, so you can do it calmly (perhaps, once you’ve made a game plan). Then address it factually, without too much detail. Say something like: “There’ve been some changes in our family. Like many people, I’ve lost my job. But we’re going to find a way through this, and I’m going to figure it out.”

Above all, be calm. “If you’re flipping out,” your kid will read that. “But if you’re saying ‘I’ve lost my job, but when we reemerge, there will be all kinds of new jobs,” that will have a better impact.

Jean

EXPLANATORY WRITING

ISSUE: BIG IMPACT

After students have read the issue, ask them to respond to the following questions: Why are businesses closing? What type of businesses are being impacted most during the COVID-19 pandemic? How is the pandemic affecting business owners and workers? What steps is the government taking to help people who are struggling financially? What other solutions might help businesses or individuals struggling financially?

Next, tell students they’ll be writing a newspaper article informing readers about the economic impact COVID-19 has had in their town or city. For this assignment, students will explain what is happening to a local business and how people are adjusting to these changes. The article should include a quote from a store owner, someone who has been furloughed, and/or a consumer. Articles should discuss the challenges that businesses are facing and hopes for the future. They should also include an illustration depicting the current situation. Students can use the questions from “Reporter Research” to gather information and then may use the template “Local Effects of COVID-19” to complete their final draft.

A NOTE FROM JEAN

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Jean

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

councilforeconed.org/standards
Visit for free teaching resources and to download the K–12 national standards for financial literacy.

BBB Tip: How to Support Small Businesses During Coronavirus (bit.ly/3aZlrth)
This article from the Better Business Bureau explains how you can support small businesses from home.

PAIRED TEXT

DISCUSS A SIMILAR TOPIC WITH TFK
• Once students have read this month’s cover story, send them to timeforkids.com to read “TFK Explains: The Government Shutdown” (01/11/19). This story describes how federal workers were furloughed during last year’s government shutdown.
• After students have read the two articles, engage them in a discussion about how and why people’s jobs have been affected by government orders now and in the past.
REPORTER RESEARCH

Use the questions below to gather information about how COVID-19 has affected businesses in your area. Then use the information to write a newspaper article.

1. Name one business in your hometown that has been affected by COVID-19. ____________________________

2. What type of business or industry is it? ____________________________

3. In what way has it been affected? (Is it out of business? Temporarily closed? Operating with restrictions?) ____________________________

4. What, if anything, is the business doing to support itself at this time? (Is it taking orders online? Offering gift cards? Asking for donations?) ____________________________

5. What is one quote you found in your research about how a business owner, employee, or customer is coping at this time? ____________________________

6. What would you recommend readers do to support businesses in their town? ____________________________

7. What is a headline that will grab a reader’s attention? Is there a compelling photo you can include? ____________________________

Common Core State Standards: W.5.2, W.6.2

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LOCAL EFFECTS OF COVID-19

After reading the issue Big Impact (May 2020), write a newspaper article about the economic impact COVID-19 has had in your town or city. Be sure to write a headline and include an image.

THE DAILY ECONOMIST

By: _______________________

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