

Independent Living

Understanding the Workplace

EREM5254

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A TEACHING RESOURCE FROM



©2021

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REMEDIA PUBLICATIONS, INC.
SCOTTSDALE, AZ



This product utilizes innovative strategies and proven methods to improve student learning. The product is based upon reliable research and effective practices that have been replicated in classrooms across the United States.

INTRODUCTION

The *Independent Living Series* was developed to help students prepare for the real-life challenges of working and living on their own. Students step into an unfamiliar environment when they start working. The workplace has its own culture and rules. *Understanding the Workplace* can be used as a road map to help students successfully negotiate the twists and turns of life as an employee.

Making a good first impression is key to future relationships with co-workers and supervisors. Tips on how to learn several different types of jobs gives students an idea of what might be expected of them. Getting your first paycheck can be both exciting and disappointing. This book helps students understand “where the money went.” There are several examples of earnings statements that explain required and optional deductions. Targeted activities show students how you get from “gross pay” to “net pay.”

How to be a good employee and get along with co-workers is covered in detail. Students will learn how to break a bad habit, deal with criticism, gain confidence and impress the boss. To do a good job, students will learn how to work successfully with all types of people.

Follow-up activities include practical application math and basic comprehension questions to reinforce understanding. Some questions ask students to think about the information given and express their opinions and ideas.

The vocabulary section includes a glossary of words and phrases students may not be familiar with plus activities to test understanding of the new words and phrases.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GETTING STARTED	1-6
LEARNING THE JOB	7-20
UNDERSTANDING YOUR PAYCHECK	21-29
BEING A GOOD EMPLOYEE.....	30-46
CO-WORKERS	47-54
GLOSSARY AND GLOSSARY ACTIVITIES.....	55-60
ANSWER KEY.....	61-62



It's your first day on a new job. You're excited and nervous. You want everything to go well. Your first meeting will most likely be with someone from Human Resources. Or with the person responsible for payroll. You will fill out lots of paperwork. There will probably be forms to sign up for health insurance and any other benefits the company offers. You will also need to make some decisions about the taxes taken out of your paycheck.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

You might be given an employee handbook or manual on your first day. This handbook will tell you what you need to know about your job and the workplace. It may tell you about the company mission or why they are in business. Sometimes employee handbooks are available online.

When you start a new job, you have a lot of questions. An employee handbook should answer many of those questions. It usually covers a company's policies and procedures. It will let you know what the company expects from their employees. It may say how you should treat customers and co-workers.

The Basics:

- The employee handbook should tell you how to report the hours that you work. Do you fill out a time sheet? Do you punch a time clock?
- The handbook may tell how often you get paid and when to expect your first paycheck.
- There will most likely be information about overtime, sick days, vacations, holidays, and work schedules.
- If there is a dress code, it will be stated in the handbook. This is something to pay careful attention to. It's important to dress correctly for your job.



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK (cont.)

Performance Reviews

- The employee handbook should have information on performance reviews. Most companies review their employees job performance at least once a year. Your supervisor will tell you what they think about how you are doing your job. If you are doing a great job, you may get a raise or a promotion. If you are not doing a good job, you may get a warning.
- The handbook should also clearly state what kinds of things might get you fired – being late too often, being rude to customers or co-workers, stealing from the company, etc.



Job Safety

- Most employers are concerned about safety on the job. Each type of job has different safety issues. Some workplaces have signs that warn about accidents that might happen. You should know how to stay safe on your job. And what to do in case of an on-the-job emergency.

Reporting Complaints

- If you have a complaint, it's important to know how report it. The handbook should let you know the procedure for filing a complaint. Your complaint may be about a poor work environment. It could be about something that is broken. Or someone who is not doing their job.



- Harassment is a specific kind of complaint. Being harassed means being constantly bothered or bullied by someone at work. Maybe someone is always yelling at you or making fun of you. Maybe someone is making you feel uncomfortable. They might be touching you or asking personal questions. You should be able to feel safe at work. If you don't, follow procedures and report it!

Name _____

Use information from pages 1 and 2 to answer the questions.

1. Who will you most likely meet with your first day on the job?

2. What are two ways to report the hours that you work?

3. What is the purpose of an employee handbook?

4. Why do you think it's important to dress correctly for your job?

5. What happens during a performance review?

6. Name some things you might file a complaint about at work.

NURSING ASSISTANT

Libby thinks she'd like to be a nurse. But she's not sure if it's right for her. She is starting off as a nursing assistant. That way she can find out about the job. And see if she likes it. Libby just got hired at St. John's hospital. She will be working in the cancer ward. An experienced nurse will be training her to help patients who are getting chemotherapy.

Libby's On-The-Job Training

- First Libby is introduced to the patient, Marjorie. Libby learns about Marjorie's illness and about her treatment plan. She learns to check Marjorie's blood pressure and take her temperature. Libby is now part of Marjorie's care team.



- Libby learns how to help Marjorie out of bed and into a wheelchair. Then she takes her to the treatment room and helps her get settled. The nurse gets the IV going to start Marjorie's chemo treatment.



- Libby checks in on Marjorie during her treatment to make sure everything is going well. She checks her IV. She talks with Marjorie and tries to keep her spirits up. She will write down any of Marjorie's concerns and give them to the nurse.

- The nurse shows Libby where the supplies are kept. If Marjorie needs a blanket, pillow, magazines or a snack, Libby can get it for her.

- When Marjorie's treatment is complete, Libby will go over notes from the doctor and the nurse.



LEARNING THE JOB

Name _____

Use information from page 17 to answer the questions.

1. Why is Libby starting off as a nursing assistant?

2. What does Libby learn about her first patient, Marjorie?

3. What kind of supplies can Libby get Marjorie if she needs them?

4. Why do you think Libby is trying to keep Marjorie's spirits up?

5. Where, at St. John's hospital, will Libby be working?

6. After Marjorie's treatment is complete, what will Libby do?

You have been at your new job for two weeks. Your first paycheck was just directly deposited into your bank account. Your excitement quickly turns to disappointment. The amount of your check is much less than you expected. Where did all that money go?



DEDUCTIONS

To deduct is to subtract or take something away. Deductions from a paycheck are amounts of money taken away. This money is used to pay for other things. Deductions can also be called withholdings. Deductions are subtracted from your “gross pay.” Gross pay is the total amount that you actually earn before anything is subtracted. The amount after the deductions are subtracted is called “net pay.” This is the amount that is on your paycheck. It is also called “take home pay.”

Some deductions are required. Required deductions have to be taken out of your gross pay. Some deductions are optional. Optional deductions are things you choose to have taken out of your gross pay.

REQUIRED DEDUCTIONS

Federal Income Tax: The amount of income tax that you pay is based on a percentage of your annual income. This tax money pays for important government services. The military, veteran’s benefits, national law enforcement, social, health, and education programs all depend on federal taxes. National programs for the environment, natural resources, energy, transportation, housing, space, and technology also benefit from income taxes.

2021 Federal Income Tax Rates (for a single person with no children)			
Tax Rate	Annual Income	Tax Rate	Annual Income
10%	Up to \$9,950	24%	\$86,376 to \$164,925
12%	\$9,951 to \$40,525	32%	\$164,926 to 209,425
22%	\$40,526 to \$86,375	35%	\$209,426 to \$523,600

UNDERSTANDING YOUR PAYCHECK

REQUIRED DEDUCTIONS cont.

FICA: FICA stands for Federal Insurance Contribution Act. This tax goes to a fund that pays for Social Security and Medicare. The fund also pays for programs that help people with disabilities and people living in poverty. The employer and the employee split paying for this tax. Each pay 7.65% of the employee's gross pay. You will receive money from Social Security when you retire. You will also be able to use Medicare for healthcare costs.

State Income Taxes: Many states have an income tax. The tax rate varies by state. The money collected for this tax stays in your state. It pays for things like public education, police and fire departments, public transportation, and parks and recreation.

Union Dues: Some jobs require that you belong to a union. Union dues are deducted monthly from your paycheck. Unions help protect worker's rights and improve their working conditions. Unions make sure workers are paid well and have good benefits.



OPTIONAL DEDUCTIONS

Savings: You can choose to have a certain amount of money taken out of your wages and put into savings. People often have 10% or more taken out of their gross pay. This is a great way to save money for a special occasion. Or a special item.



Health and Dental Insurance: Most employers offer health and dental insurance. But the employee usually has to pay part of the cost. If you want health insurance, this amount is taken out of your wages.

Charities: Many people like to support charities. You can have a certain amount of money deducted from your wages that goes to a charity of your choice.

Name _____

Use information from pages 21 and 22 to answer the questions.

1. What does it mean to take deductions from a paycheck?

2. What does federal income tax pay for?

3. If your annual pay is \$56,780, what is your federal income tax rate?
How much do you have to make to pay a 32% federal tax rate?

4. Which tax pays for Social Security and Medicare?

5. What kinds of things do state taxes pay for?

6. What percentage of the employee's gross wages do the employer and employee each have to pay for FICA?

UNDERSTANDING YOUR PAYCHECK

Some companies give their employees paper checks. But many companies offer direct deposit. This allows your paychecks to be automatically deposited into your checking account. You don't have to take your check to the bank to deposit it.

An earnings statement is included with each paycheck whichever way you're paid. These statements show your gross pay for a certain "pay period." A pay period may be one week, two weeks or a month. The statements also show all of your deductions for that pay period. You should check your earning statements to make sure everything is correct. Most earning statement also include "year-to-date" (YTD) totals. Year-to-date means a total for the year up to the current date. Either for how much you have made or how much your deductions have been.

SAMPLE EARNINGS STATEMENT

JASON LYDON

ACE ELECTRONICS

Pay Period: 12/13/2020 – 12/26/2020

Pay Type: Salary

Pay Date: 12/31/2020

EMPLOYEE GROSS EARNINGS

Description	Hours	Pay Period	YTD
Sick		\$0.00	\$1,404.70
Holiday	8	\$156.07	\$1,560.77
Vacation	8	\$156.08	\$1,716.86
Regular	64	\$1,248.62	\$37,458.47
Totals:	80	\$1,560.77	\$42,140.80

EMPLOYEE TAXES

	Pay Period	YTD
Federal Income Tax	\$200.21	\$5,405.67
FICA	\$113.59	\$3,067.00
State Tax	\$69.09	\$1,865.43
Totals:	\$382.89	\$10,388.10

EMPLOYEE DEDUCTIONS

	Pay Period	YTD
Health Ins.	\$75.90	\$2,049.30
Totals:	\$75.90	\$2,049.30

CHECK TOTALS

	Pay Period	YTD
Gross Pay	\$1,560.77	\$42,140.80
Total Deductions	- \$75.90	- \$2,049.30
Total Taxes	- \$382.89	- \$10,388.10

TOTAL NET PAY \$1,101.98 \$29,753.40

allergic	having a condition that causes a person to sneeze or get rashes from certain things
appropriate	something that is proper or correct
assign	to give someone a task
assistant	a person who helps
benefits	things that help a person
blueprints	a detailed drawing that shows how a building should be made
charity	a group that gives help to those that need it
communication	information given by speaking or writing
confidence	being sure about yourself and your abilities
criticism	saying what is good or bad about something
depend	to rely on or trust
dispatcher	a person who gets messages and then sends out people and vehicles
enhanced	added to, made greater
first-responder	someone trained to help in an emergency
guidance	showing the way, advising or directing
harassment	to put pressure on someone, to treat them badly
human resources	the part of a business that deals with employee issues

Name _____

**Choose the word or phrase from the word box that matches each definition.
Write it on the blank line.**

blueprints	enhanced	suspicious	first-responder	
memorize	strict	confidence	dispatcher	assign

1. someone trained to help in an emergency _____
2. added to, made greater _____
3. to give someone a task _____
4. detailed drawings that show how a building should be made _____
5. following a rule very carefully _____
6. to learn something by heart _____
7. a person that gets messages then sends out people and vehicles _____
8. not trusting someone or something _____
9. being sure about yourself and your abilities _____