



## Scholarship Contest Winner

**Nolan Sanders**

**St. Johns High School**

**Essay Topic: If you could create a new course to teach in high schools, what would it be and why would it be beneficial to students?**

If I could create a new course to be taught in high schools, I would create a course about financial literacy. I think some of the most important things to learn about are how to manage the money you already have and make that money work for you. The lessons taught in this course will include budgeting, taxes, investing, and saving. By establishing this class in high school, students will be able to learn about different financial skills and how to put those skills into practice as soon as they start working their first jobs. They can use the skills they learn to maximize their paychecks and grow their accounts to better fund college, trade school, or whatever post-graduation plans they may have.

This new financial literacy course will help students to budget. By teaching students how to budget, they will learn how to make better financial decisions. The course will include smart budgeting advice about the percentage of earnings that should go to necessities. Students will learn the different nuances of the general expenses they can expect after graduation and how to balance wants and needs.

My course will also teach students how to file state and federal income taxes. Introducing students to this concept early will help them to understand the importance of taxes and why we must pay them. The class will teach students the terminology they need to know to fill out their tax forms without tax professionals.

Additionally, a major focus of the course will be investment strategies. The differences between short-term and long-term investments will be important takeaways from this lesson. Teaching about these different forms can show students the benefits and drawbacks of immediate gains versus long-term growth. Students will learn about the stock market and have pretend funds to invest to help them study trends, make investments, and then learn how to make better choices. The early start to portfolio management will give students skills to fund their futures.

We will teach students about interest such as how savings accounts grow and how debt can accumulate from loans or credit cards. These responsible money management skills will allow students to make more informed decisions. Part of the course will include different types of savings accounts, certificates of deposits, and savings bonds that will help students to gain higher interest rates. By instilling knowledge on saving early in a high schooler's career, students will know how to save for cars, education, housing, and even retirement. They can use their knowledge to pay for the current expenses they have and save for the future.

Overall, this course on financial literacy will provide students with the tools they need to manage their money wisely, set goals suited to themselves, achieve those goals, and maintain better financial stability. The skills taught in this course including budgeting, taxes, investing and saving will benefit students, allowing them to be more prepared for the occurrences in their lives, build their wealth, sharpen their decision making, and increase their confidence.

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