

# NOVA FINANCIAL LAB



## EDUCATOR GUIDE

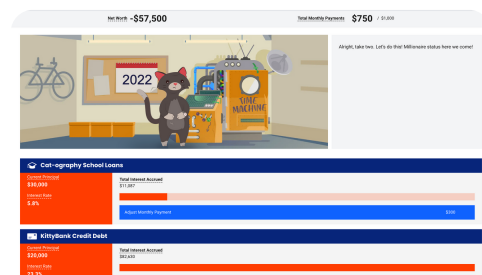
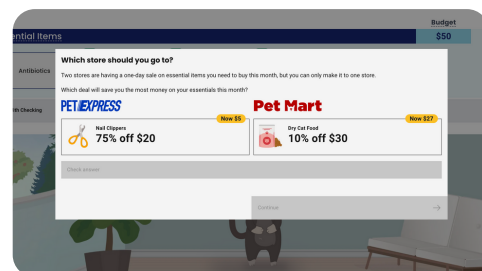
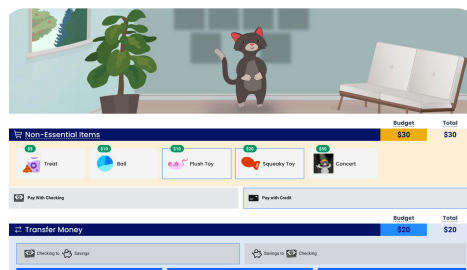
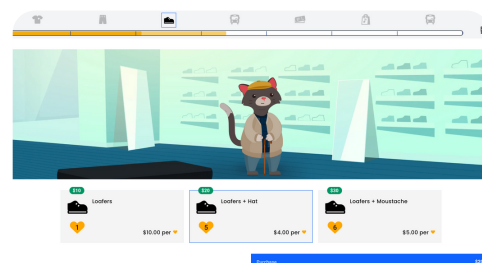
For our latest NOVA Lab, we've teamed up with the [Center for Advanced Hindsight at Duke University](#) on a game designed to help students (and adults!) understand how we humans make financial decisions, and how to develop habits to overcome the behavioral biases that often get in our way. Think of it as a fun, safe place to practice managing your spending, paying off debts, and investing in your future. Here's a quick preview of how the Financial Lab works:

Players begin by meeting the Lab's host, financial educator [Yanely Espinal](#), and exploring what we mean by **financial wellness**: "Basically, as long as you can pay for the things you need and some of the things you want, both today and in the future, then you've achieved it." Pausing along the way to ask players to reflect on their own experiences with money, she then explains why it can be so hard to follow up on our intentions when we're faced with financial decisions—because common behavioral biases tend to crop up when we think about money, whether we do it quickly and act on autopilot or deliberate more slowly over our choices.

Now, players are ready to play three mini-games we've designed to help them identify some key biases and practice strategies for overcoming them. After picking a pet that will come with them throughout the Lab, they'll be able to play the games multiple times and in any order. We recommend playing one mini-game per class period to provide time for multiple playthroughs, so students can try different strategies and develop better financial habits in the process.

Managing money is hard. There are many factors that are beyond our control, starting with the social and economic situations we are born into. But, when it comes to what you can control—your behavior—a little insight and practice overcoming the bad habits we have can really pay off.

So, what are you waiting for? Go play the Financial Lab and get to know your irrational side!



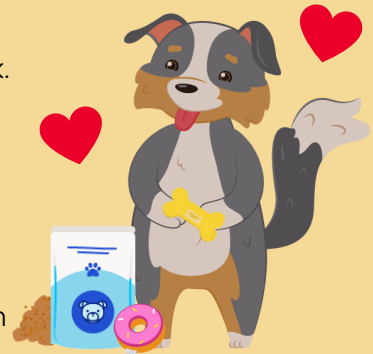
For lesson plans and additional resources for classroom use of the Financial Lab, visit the Financial Lab Collection on [PBS LearningMedia](#)

# GAME SUPPORT GUIDE

In the NOVA Financial Lab, students practice making financial decisions and overcoming common behavioral biases that make managing money hard for all of us by taking care of some very active pets through three challenging mini-games.

## For the best Financial Lab experience:

- Close all open tabs or apps on your desktop, laptop, or Chromebook. The Lab is also playable on smartphones and tablets.
- Ensure your web browser is current. All major browsers are supported—Internet Explorer is not supported.
- While you can play as a guest, it's recommended for students to create their own NOVA Labs account using either a Google or PBS login to save their progress. Students can create a free PBS login with an email address and password.



## Financial Lab Main Menu

Once you pick your pet, you have to take care of them by playing the three mini-games on this page. Each game explores different types of financial decision making.

**VIDEOS**  
Click here to watch all of the Lab videos and access transcripts at any time.

**TROPHIES**  
As you play games, you'll earn trophies. Click here to see the trophies on your shelf and find tips on applying financial strategies from the game to your life.

**AUDIO**  
Click this icon to turn game audio on or off.

**LOGIN**  
Click this icon to log in using a Google or PBS account. You can create a free PBS account with your email address and a password. You can also track your progress through the Lab here.

**RESEARCH**  
Click here to learn more about the behavioral science featured in the Lab.

**SCORES**  
Click here to see your most recent scores in each mini-game.

**NOVA FINANCIAL LAB**  
Click this icon to return to the Financial Lab main menu.

**GAMES**  
Click these three boxes to play the three mini-games.

**Play Shopportunity Cost**  
Consider costs as you shop for a night out with your pet.

**Play Budget Buster**  
Practice mental accounting by taking care of your new pet for six months.

**Play Exponential Potential**  
Help your pet achieve a better financial future by balancing debts and investments.

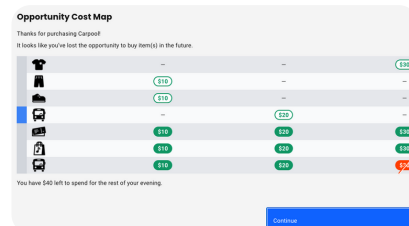
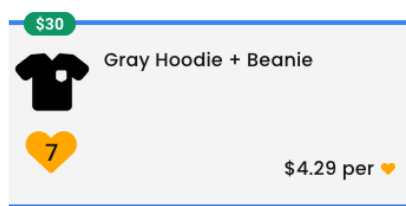
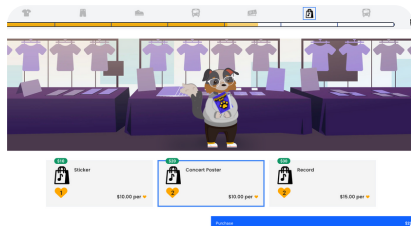
## Play for Research



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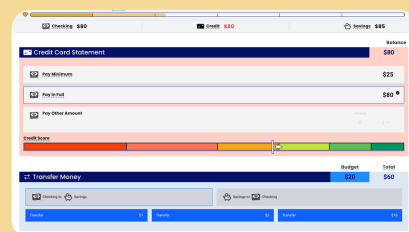
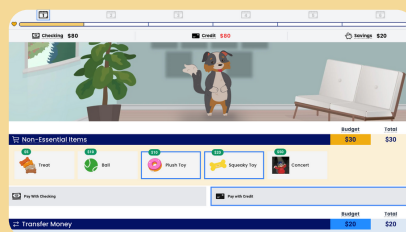
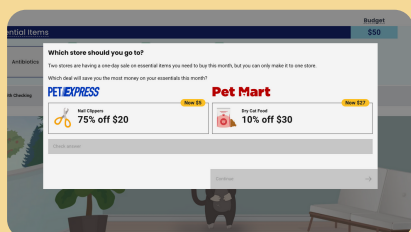
Want to participate in behavioral science research? You have the opportunity to opt-in to a survey which will measure financial behavior and learning outside of the Financial Lab. To learn more, click the **RESEARCH** tab on the Lab homepage before you play.

## Shoppportunity Cost



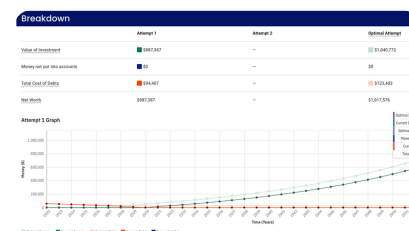
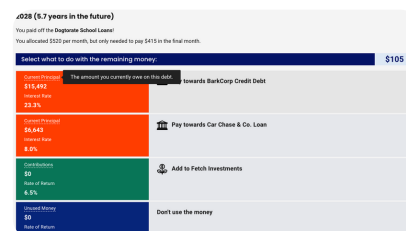
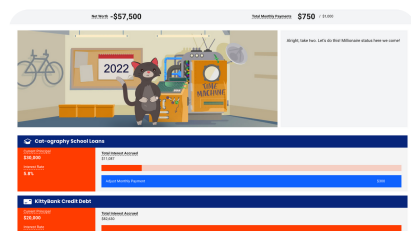
In **Shoppportunity Cost**, you're getting ready to go to a concert—with your pet! But in order to sneak them in, you'll need to make sure they pass as a human...which means you have some shopping to do. With each item you need to purchase comes a challenge: how to maximize your pet's happiness while sticking to your budget. Because of our tendency to focus on the choice right in front of us—without considering the items we could buy with that money later—it's harder than it sounds.

## Budget Buster



In **Budget Buster**, your job is to take care of your pet, seeing to both its basic needs and overall happiness, for six months. To do it well, you must learn how to break your expenses down into useful “buckets” to help organize, evaluate, and track your spending. But don't get too comfy: even the best plans should be adjusted when surprises, both good and bad, happen.

## Exponential Potential



In **Exponential Potential**, a game about longer term financial planning, your pet has taken a peek at the future and it's not looking very good. Luckily, they have you and a time machine to help them decide how to pay off debts and make investments in order to maximize their net worth. Your success depends on your ability to master compound interest—a concept we humans struggle to comprehend—and make it your friend, not your enemy.