

GAME INSTRUCTIONS



Welcome! Thanks for downloading all the files needed to play **TXGU's Get a Life!** This guide will walk you through what each of the files you've downloaded actually is, how to set up and play the game, and how it'll be both fun and highly informative for your **TXGU** students. Ready to get started?

Suggested number of students: There are enough careers in the game for up to 112 players to play without doubling up any of the careers. Play with as many or as few players as you'd like! If you have more than 112 students interested in playing, simply print multiples of the **Get a Life** cards in the deck and hand them out to the extra students. Or use the blank template to create your own!

Suggested grade level: 7th-12th grade

Duration: 1-2 hours, depending on number of players

Location: Gym, cafeteria, or some other large, open space

Prep: All game materials downloaded from texasgearup.com will need to be printed by your local print shop ahead of time for use in the game. The playing space will also need to be set up with tables for each station ahead of time.

Real Jobs, Real Prices, Real Life

Keep in mind that this game is based entirely on real life. The jobs, salaries, houses, vehicles, and other expenses are all based on the real thing right here in Texas.

The goal of the game is to expose **TXGU** students to real life after high school and show them how important going to college truly is. Additionally, the game will teach them some important budget-making skills and help them have a better understanding of what their parents go through to support them right now.

The game takes place over the course of one fictional month in the players' lives after they graduate high school. Some of the players have decided to go to college and have careers that required a college degree. Others, though, have opted to skip college and take jobs that did not require a degree. Throughout the game, students will have to visit stations to complete requirements (like purchasing a house and vehicle,

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buying insurance, paying utilities, etc.) and deducting the monthly cost of each item from their starting monthly salary. Once all stations have been visited, students will be encouraged to discuss the outcome of the game, how much money they had left (if any), and how much easier it was for the students who had careers that required a degree.

Staff and Volunteers Needed

Since **TXGU's Get a Life** is based on real people and businesses, you're encouraged to recruit members of your community to increase the realism of the experience (i.e. a car salesman to work the vehicle station, a realtor to work the realty station, etc.).

The recommended number of workers for the game is as follows:

Station	Recommended Workers	Minimum Workers
Who Am I?	2	2
Sweet Rides Auto	3	2
Real World Realty	3	2
Buzzworthy Energy	1	1
Fingers Crossed Insurance	2	2
Guzzler's Gas Station	1	1
The Super Market	1	1
Eagle Shopping Plaza	2	1
Dr. Bucks, M.D.	1	1
The Green Reaper	1	1
TOTAL	17	14

The **Sweet Rides Auto**, **Real World Realty**, and **Eagle Shopping Plaza** stations have a higher number of recommended workers since that's where you can expect the most congestion during the game.

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Materials Needed

- **TXGU's Get a Life** file pack downloaded from **texasgearup.com**. All downloaded files are print-ready for your local print shop to print for you. *Contents of file pack are as follows:*
 - Game instructions (this document)
 - Banners for each of the nine stations
 - Station instructions for players
 - Station instructions for Administrators/Volunteers
 - Expense ledger/Checklist (each player will need one of these)
 - Who Am I? cards for college and non-college
 - Fingers Crossed Insurance cards
 - Real World Realty house list
 - Sweet Rides Auto vehicle list
 - Fingers Crossed Insurance station document
 - Buzzworthy Energy station document
 - The Super Market station document
 - Eagle Shopping Plaza station document
 - Dr. Bucks, M.D. station cards
 - Green Reaper cards
- Pens/pencils for players
- Calculators for players
- Nine tables (one for each station)
- Chairs for station workers

Basic Room Layout

Usually the best place to set up the game is in a gym or cafeteria. However, the game has been successfully adapted for conference rooms, libraries, hallways, and even a grade-wide version in which the stations were spread out among several different homerooms.

The important thing to remember is to have enough space in the room or area to be able to allow the students plenty of room to check out the available stations. Students are not required to visit the stations in any particular order, but the layout will suggest a basic order.

Each station will consist of a table with a vinyl banner displaying the name and logo of the station (see the files provided for you to have printed into banners).

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How To Play

At the beginning of the game, all of the students are given a blank expense ledger, a pen or pencil, and a calculator. Students are then divided up into two groups—which can be done by rolling a die, numbering off, spinning a wheel, whatever works best for you.

One group of students will be the group who has chosen to go to college and earn a degree. They'll each be given a Who am I? card from the “college” deck. The other group is students who decided not to go to college and instead chose to enter the workforce directly out of high school. They are each given a Who am I? card from the “no college” deck.

Who am I? Cards

Regardless of whether the card is from the “college” deck or the “no college” deck, these cards give the student the details of their “lives” within the game. Each card will have a career with a real-life salary on it. These careers and salaries are based on whether the student has opted to go to college. Obviously, the students in the college group should have an easier time getting through the game without going broke, since the salaries of their careers are significantly higher than the salaries in the “no college” deck.

Each Who am I? card contains the following game elements:

- Career title (Careers requiring college come directly from the TXGU Discover You section of **texasgearup.com**)
- Annual salary before taxes (Salaries based on Bureau of Labor and Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook - <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>)
- Job description
- Family description
- Number in family
- General family information
- Minimum number of bedrooms required when purchasing a house from the Real World Realty station
- Monthly deductions/allowances based on family status, based on factors like spouse's salary, child support, etc.
- Overall monthly salary (this is the amount of money players will begin the game with.)

C042 VIDEO GAME DESIGNER
Annual Salary Before Taxes: \$71,000

Job Description
Drawing on their experience with playing games and talking to other gamers, these designers create the inspiring stories, visuals, and puzzles for the games we play. Of course, they also use many of the skills that are built during school. For example, designers have to be well-organized in order to roll out new products on schedule. They have to present their ideas verbally and visually to a roomful of artists, animators, and programmers. And they must be good self-editors, using criticism from teammates to improve their designs.

NUMBER IN FAMILY: 3

Family Description
You and your spouse are divorced. Your former spouse has custody of your two children who come to visit you on the weekends. **You must pay \$1,480 in monthly child support and keep a dwelling with two extra bedrooms – one for each of your children.**

Minimum # of Bedrooms: 3	Monthly Deductions/Additions: -\$1,480
My Annual Salary: \$71,000	Spouse's Annual Salary: \$0
Household's Annual Salary: \$71,000	
Household's Monthly Salary: \$5,916.67	
Household's Monthly Salary After Deductions/Additions: \$4,436.67	

Monthly Salary: \$4,436.67

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Expense Ledger

Instead of using cash or credit cards, students keep track of their funds during the game with their expense ledger.

One side of the expense ledger shows a blank table. The game takes place during one month in the “real world.” After receiving their Who am I? cards, students will write their starting salary on the first blank line in their expense ledger—marked “Deposited Paychecks.” To simplify the game, this first amount will correspond to the “overall monthly salary” line on the Who am I? card, with any monthly deductions/allowances already taken into account.

The other side of the expense ledger has a checklist for students of things they must purchase in order to finish the game. *These items are:*

- Housing (with minimum number of bedrooms)
- Vehicle
- Car insurance
- Health insurance
- Fuel for car
- Groceries
- Electricity
- Gas for heat
- Water
- Sewage
- Trash
- Furniture (for number of bedrooms in purchased house)
- Stove
- Refrigerator
- Doctor visit

Texas GEAR UP Presents
Get a LIFE

CHECKLIST OF THINGS I HAVE TO HAVE

- Housing (With Minimum Number of Bedrooms) - *Real World Realty*
- Vehicle - *Sweet Rides Auto*
- Car Insurance (At Least State Minimum) - *Fingers Crossed Insurance*
- Health Insurance - *Fingers Crossed Insurance*
- Fuel for Car - *Guzzler's Gas Station*
- Groceries - *The Super Market*
- Electricity - *Buzzworthy Energy*
- Gas for Heat - *Buzzworthy Energy*
- Water - *Buzzworthy Energy*
- Sewage - *Buzzworthy Energy*
- Trash - *Buzzworthy Energy*
- Furniture for Minimum Number of Bedrooms - *Eagle Shopping Plaza*
- Stove - *Eagle Shopping Plaza*
- Refrigerator - *Eagle Shopping Plaza*
- Visit to the Doctor - *Dr. Bucks, M.D.*

ABOUT MY HOUSE

House # _____
Number of Bedrooms _____
Number of Bathrooms _____
Number of Stories _____

Location: Located close to downtown
 Located within city limits
 Located outside of town

ABOUT MY CAR

Car # _____
Type of Car _____

There are also two sections called **About My House** and **About My Car**, where the student will fill in the required information about the house and car they purchase. This information naturally informs other elements of the game, such as how much they pay for furniture or fuel.

Although some stations must be completed before others (i.e. a house must be purchased before furniture can be purchased), stations can be completed in any order.

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Real World Realty

The **Real World Realty** station is the place to go to have any and all housing needs met. This realty agency has house and apartment listings in all price ranges and will help students set up a 30-year mortgage or rental application for their chosen home. Just like the jobs and salaries are real, the houses on the list at **Real World Realty** are real houses with real prices available somewhere in Texas.

Students must buy a house or apartment that has enough bedrooms to fit their entire family (as listed on their Who am I? card). The location of their home—downtown, within city limits, or outside city limits—will affect how much they have to budget for gas for their car.

Good news: The student isn't responsible for paying the full price of the house, just their monthly mortgage payment.

Sweet Rides Auto

Offering up vehicles ranging from the newest sports car to a more economical sedan, **Sweet Rides Auto** is the go-to place to get into dream cars or super-practical transport.

Shoppers will choose a vehicle to buy, keeping in mind the price of the car and the mileage the car averages. The students will be responsible for paying the monthly payment for their selected vehicle.

Fingers Crossed Insurance

The **Fingers Crossed Insurance** station is where students will go to purchase insurance. *There are five types of insurance sold at this station:*

- Auto insurance (comprehensive and liability)
- Homeowner's/Renter's insurance
- Health insurance
- Dental insurance
- Vision insurance

Students can choose what insurance they'd like to purchase—but they're required to buy at least liability auto insurance and health insurance.

Once insurance is paid for, the student is given an insurance card. Stickers are placed on the card to denote the types of insurance purchased. For car insurance, an "L" or "C" is written in pen to indicate whether liability or comprehensive insurance has been purchased.

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Buzzworthy Energy

This station provides the students with the opportunity to buy required services like gas (for heat), water, sewage, trash, and electricity—as well as nonessential services like home and cell phone service, cable and satellite TV, and Internet.

The Super Market

At **The Super Market** station, students will deduct their monthly food costs based on their family size (as described on the handout for that station). Prices are slightly inflated to account for other essentials that aren't purchased on a weekly or monthly basis—like cleaning supplies for the house, toothbrushes and toothpaste, make-up, toilet paper, toiletries, etc.

Eagle Shopping Plaza

The **Eagle Shopping Plaza** gives students the centralized convenience of dozens of stores to provide for all their needs—from the luxurious to the mundane.

The Eagle Shopping Plaza has many items available for purchase, but the students are only required to buy the following from their checklist:

- A refrigerator
- A stove
- Enough furniture to accommodate the number of bedrooms in the house they bought

All of the other items for sale in the **Eagle Shopping Plaza** are luxury items that are optional for students to purchase.

Guzzler's Gas Station

Students must stop at this station to fill up their vehicles. Fuel calculations are made based on recent gas prices, where the students' houses are located, and the mileage of each individual vehicle.

Dr. Bucks, M.D.

Students must stop at the **Dr. Bucks, M.D.** station to get their free health check-up. At the station, students will flip over one of the provided cards to determine if any problems were found during the exam.

Then they'll have to complete the requirements on the card they flipped. It can be determined if they have the proper insurance coverage by looking at the insurance card that they got at the **Fingers Crossed Insurance** station.

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The Green Reaper

This is the embodiment of life's little surprises: the flat tire, the broken window, the leaky roof. It's the things that can't be planned for that pop up from time to time and cost money.

The Green Reaper is a teacher or volunteer who walks around the game handing out **Green Reaper** cards at random to students. Players will have to complete the requirements of any **Green Reaper** card they are handed.

Completion of Game

Once every player has completed all of the stations, the game is over. Students should total up how much money they had left at the end of the month (which is also the end of the game).

Students who were in the “college” group and given careers that required college will likely be left with more money at the end of the game—or have more luxury items or nicer/more expensive houses or vehicles than the students who were in the “no college” group.

The administrator of the game should open a post-play discussion with the students about how easy/difficult the game was depending on which group they started in—and what the implications are on real-life college decisions.

The **Get a Life** game is presented by:

