

Lesson 2

Chapter 3: How to invest

Today's topic: Investing fees explained

Grade level: 9–12

Duration: 60 minutes

Learning objectives

- Identify and explain the common types of fees associated with DIY (do-it-yourself) investing platforms, including
 - commission fees
 - maintenance fees
 - withdrawal fees
 - inactivity fees
- Differentiate between the types of sales commissions charged by financial advisors, including
 - front-end load
 - back-end load (deferred sales charge)
 - level load fees
- Understand the management expense ratio (MER) in mutual funds and ETFs, including its key components.
- Recognize the role of brokers in both DIY and advisor-assisted investing, and compare brokerage fee structures (e.g., commission-based vs. commission-free platforms).
- Analyze key considerations when managing investment costs.
- Apply knowledge of fees and tax rules to make informed decisions that help maximize investment returns over time.



Cross-curricular connections

MATH/FINANCIAL LITERACY

- Understanding fees: Use algebraic operations to calculate percentages and costs (e.g., calculating MER, commissions, trailer loads, and taxes).
- Critical thinking: Evaluate financial strategies (e.g., fee-reduction strategies) to minimize costs and maximize returns over time.

LITERACY

- Communicate financial concepts clearly in written or oral presentations (e.g., worksheet, slideshow, etc.).
- Identify key ideas, infer fee impacts and distinguish between types of investment products.

CAREERS

- Financial decision making: Make informed decisions about personal finances, savings and investments using mathematical and financial knowledge.
- Career exploration: Understand the role of fees and taxes in the work of financial advisors, accountants and investors.
- Career pathways: Investigate careers in financial planning and investment management by applying skills learned in class (e.g., budgeting, financial analysis, investing).

ACCOUNTING

- Financial analysis: Identify and evaluate costs associated with various investment options (e.g., stock trading, mutual funds, RRSPs) and calculate their impact on long-term returns.
- Investment costs: Understand and calculate common investment fees and commissions and how they affect overall investment performance.
- Cost reduction strategies: Apply accounting knowledge to recommend strategies for reducing investment-related costs, such as switching funds or adjusting trading behaviour.

21st-century skills

COLLABORATION

- Working in groups to solve fee-related challenges.
- Sharing tasks and building a group presentation.

CRITICAL THINKING

- Analyzing investor profiles.
- Calculating hidden fees and financial impacts.
- Comparing fee structures and identifying better investment strategies.

COMMUNICATION

- Presenting findings clearly to the class.
- Explaining financial concepts in a way peers can understand.
- Engaging in discussion and defending recommendations.

Materials needed

- [Video](#) from Fidelity: "Investing fees explained."
- Projector.
- PowerPoint from Fidelity – to be used throughout lesson.
- Lesson 2 video handout (digital or printed) – one per student.
- Fee detective profiles (digital or printed) – split into teams of six or 12 depending on class size and desired group size.
- Chart paper and markers or devices for slideshow use.
- Calculators – one per team or per student.



MINDS ON

ACTIVITY: VIDEO HANDOUT

Video duration: 8:36

MATERIALS:

- Fidelity PowerPoint.
- Venn diagram handout (printed or digital) – one per student.
- Individual whiteboards (optional; one per student or group).

Total duration with take up: 15 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS:

Students are to watch the “Fees explained” video and complete the mind map as they watch. An answer key is provided (Lesson 2 handout answer key). The teacher can then engage students in the slideshow, which has multiple choice questions prior to each main concept. Students can either hold up individual whiteboards (per student or in groups) or vote on an answer by a show of hands.

MAIN LESSON

ACTIVITY: FEE OR FREE SCAVENGER HUNT

Duration: 40 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Scenario cards – 20 total, spread/hidden across the classroom prior to class period.
- Team worksheet – one per group.
- Calculators – one per group.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Place the scenario cards around the room or school (on desks, walls, etc.) prior to students entering the classroom. You can choose how many cards you would like to hide, preferably at least the same number of cards as there are student teams.
2. Split the class into groups of two to four students each.

3. Give each team a worksheet with a list of numbered clues (e.g., “Scenario #3”) and space to answer: Is this a fee or free? How much might it cost? Students must show their work!
4. Assign each team a different scenario number to start with. They must locate this card and answer its questions before moving on. After each card completion, students will come to the teacher to check their answers. If correct, the teacher will have the team find the next scenario card (subsequent number from the one they currently completed). If they are incorrect, they must go back and fix it before moving forward. If the teacher would like, they can give hints as to where the next card is located.
5. Students must locate the cards and respond to all the questions on their worksheet. The first team to complete their worksheet correctly wins!

CONSOLIDATION

ACTIVITY: PRESENTATION AND REFLECTION

Duration: 15 minutes (can be extended if another period is available for presentations)

MATERIALS:

- Students’ completed activity handout.
- Optional: chart paper, devices for slideshow making, etc., if choosing to create visual presentation.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Assign each group (evenly) scenarios to discuss and present to the class. This could be the starting scenario card they were assigned at the beginning of the scavenger hunt. If time permits, students can use chart paper to write down the summary, or they can present orally using their handout for guidance.
2. As a class, discuss
 - Which fees surprised you?
 - What strategies can we use to avoid or reduce fees?

Citations

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2023). *B1. Oral and non-verbal communication*. In *The Ontario curriculum: English, Grade 9 (ENL1W)*. Retrieved April 29, 2025, from <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/secondary-english/courses/enl1w/b/b1>

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2019). *The Ontario curriculum: Career studies, grade 10, open (GLC2O)*. <https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/career-studies-grade10.pdf>

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2007). *Business Studies, Grades 11 and 12: The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11-12* (revised). Ontario Ministry of Education. <https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/business1112currb.pdf>