

## **Making Finance Personal: Project-Based Learning for the Personal Finance Classroom**

### **Project 4: Income Taxes**

#### **Lesson Author**

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#### **Activity Description**

We spend a large part of our work year earning money to pay taxes. We are taxed when we work and often taxed when we make purchases. Besides federal income taxes, we have state taxes, personal property taxes, sales taxes, capital gains taxes, and more.

#### **Objectives**

In this lesson, students will:

- Define taxes as compulsory charges imposed by government on its citizens and their property to pay for expenses
- Identify the most common IRS forms (W2 and 1099)
- Complete a Federal 1040 form
- Identify appropriate strategies to avoid overpayment of income taxes

#### **Essential Question**

What can I do to avoid overpayment of income taxes?

#### **Assignment Materials**

Students will need access to the internet to complete the in-class activity. They may use all resources at their disposal to complete the take-home assignment.

#### **Assignment Length**

One week

#### **Author's Notes**

- Students are typically intimidated by the thought of doing their own taxes. Many would prefer to pay a service to complete a 1040 form. Others have friends or family members complete the forms. This activity is designed to build the students' coactivity confidence to complete tax forms themselves.
- We spend time in class discussing tax credits that are available for students. I also discuss tax- deferred savings and investing and how being strategic in contributions to 401k or IRAs can help you keep more of your money.
- For more information on tax credits and deductions for students, I have found this link helpful: [www.irs.gov/uac/Tax-Benefits-for-Education-Information-Center](http://www.irs.gov/uac/Tax-Benefits-for-Education-Information-Center).
- Students will need to access Khan Academy's Taxes site at <https://www.khanacademy.org/college-careers-more/personal-finance/pf-taxes>. They should spend time reviewing the Personal taxes overview section. Once they have reviewed the modules, they will be ready to complete a 1040 form.

- One of the problems I had in pulling together this project was finding documents that were current. As I explain to the students, tax law changes every year. Most websites are not using current-year data. I use the IRS website for forms and publications (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1040.pdf>) for up-to-date 1040 forms, tax tables, and instructions.
- I know that there are websites that do much of the calculating automatically, but I have my students do it the old-fashioned way. They must use the tax tables in the back of the handout packet to determine their refunds. I feel that it's important for students to have experience working with the tables, and we don't always have access to our computer lab. I let them use any format (online or electronic) when they complete their project-based piece.
- If I teach this class during the spring semester, I typically give the students a choice to either complete their personal income tax form or use the 1040 scenario. If this class is taught in the fall, I will have all of the students complete the 1040 assignment. The object is to make them feel comfortable enough with the process that they don't pay someone to complete their tax return for them.

**Project 4 Assessment: Income Taxes Rubric**

This project has a total value of 20 points.

<p>The student did not follow directions. (minus 2)</p>	
<p>The student completed the tax form. (plus 10)</p> <p>The student attempted to complete the form but they were not thorough. (plus 5)</p> <p>The student did not attempt. (0 points)</p>	
<p>The essay was well written. The essay displays clear facility in the use of grammar, mechanics, usage and spelling. The essay is generally free from errors. (plus 6)</p> <p>The essay contained a few mistakes. The essay displays facility in the use of grammar, mechanics, usage, and spelling, though it may contain errors. However, these errors do not overly detract from the overall success of the message. (plus 4)</p> <p>The essay contained many mistakes. The essay displays serious deficiencies in the use of grammar, mechanics, usage, and spelling. The essay contains an accumulation of serious errors in any and/or all these areas. (plus 2)</p>	
<p>The essay answered all questions thoughtfully. The essay contains details that support the author’s responses. (plus 4)</p> <p>The essay answered most questions but lacked detail. (plus 3) The essay was vague and lacked detail. (plus 1)</p>	
<p><b>Total</b></p>	

**Project 4 Resources: Completed 1040—Answer Key**

Form **1040** Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service (99) | **2019** | OMB No. 1545-0074 | IRS Use Only—Do not write or staple in this space.

**Filing Status**  Single  Married filing jointly  Married filing separately (MFS)  Head of household (HOH)  Qualifying widow(er) (QW)  
Check only one box. If you checked the MFS box, enter the name of spouse. If you checked the HOH or QW box, enter the child's name if the qualifying person is a child but not your dependent. ▶

Your first name and middle initial <b>TASHA R.</b>	Last name <b>MILLER</b>	<b>Your social security number</b> 2 2 2   0 0   2 2 2 2
If joint return, spouse's first name and middle initial	Last name	<b>Spouse's social security number</b>

Home address (number and street). If you have a P.O. box, see instructions. Apt. no. **Presidential Election Campaign**  
Check here if you, or your spouse if filing jointly, want \$3 to go to this fund. Checking a box below will not change your tax or refund.  You  Spouse

City, town or post office, state, and ZIP code. If you have a foreign address, also complete spaces below (see instructions).

Foreign country name Foreign province/state/country Foreign postal code If more than four dependents, see instructions and ✓ here ▶

**Standard Deduction** **Someone can claim:**  You as a dependent  Your spouse as a dependent  Spouse itemizes on a separate return or you were a dual-status alien

**Age/Blindness** **You:**  Were born before January 2, 1955  Are blind **Spouse:**  Was born before January 2, 1955  Is blind

Dependents (see instructions):		(2) Social security number	(3) Relationship to you	(4) ✓ if qualifies for (see instructions):	
(1) First name	Last name			Child tax credit	Credit for other dependents
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1</b> Wages, salaries, tips, etc. Attach Form(s) W-2 . . . . .	<b>1</b>	36,206
<b>2a</b> Tax-exempt interest . . . . .	<b>2a</b>	
<b>3a</b> Qualified dividends . . . . .	<b>3a</b>	
<b>4a</b> IRA distributions . . . . .	<b>4a</b>	
<b>c</b> Pensions and annuities . . . . .	<b>4c</b>	
<b>5a</b> Social security benefits . . . . .	<b>5a</b>	
<b>b</b> Taxable interest. Attach Sch. B if required	<b>2b</b>	43
<b>b</b> Ordinary dividends. Attach Sch. B if required	<b>3b</b>	
<b>b</b> Taxable amount . . . . .	<b>4b</b>	
<b>d</b> Taxable amount . . . . .	<b>4d</b>	
<b>b</b> Taxable amount . . . . .	<b>5b</b>	
<b>6</b> Capital gain or (loss). Attach Schedule D if required. If not required, check here . . . . . ▶ <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>6</b>	
<b>7a</b> Other income from Schedule 1, line 9 . . . . .	<b>7a</b>	
<b>b</b> Add lines 1, 2b, 3b, 4b, 4d, 5b, 6, and 7a. This is your <b>total income</b> . . . . . ▶	<b>7b</b>	36,249
<b>8a</b> Adjustments to income from Schedule 1, line 22 . . . . .	<b>8a</b>	
<b>b</b> Subtract line 8a from line 7b. This is your <b>adjusted gross income</b> . . . . . ▶	<b>8b</b>	
<b>9</b> <b>Standard deduction or itemized deductions</b> (from Schedule A) . . . . .	<b>9</b>	12,200
<b>10</b> Qualified business income deduction. Attach Form 8995 or Form 8995-A . . . . .	<b>10</b>	
<b>11a</b> Add lines 9 and 10 . . . . .	<b>11a</b>	12,200
<b>b</b> <b>Taxable income.</b> Subtract line 11a from line 8b. If zero or less, enter -0- . . . . .	<b>11b</b>	24,249

**Project 4 Resources: Completed 1040—Answer Key (Continued)**

Form 1040 (2019)	Page <b>2</b>				
	<b>12a Tax</b> (see inst.) Check if any from Form(s): 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 8814 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 4972 3 <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>12a</b>	2689		
	<b>b</b> Add Schedule 2, line 3, and line 12a and enter the total			<b>12b</b>	2689
	<b>13a</b> Child tax credit or credit for other dependents	<b>13a</b>			
	<b>b</b> Add Schedule 3, line 7, and line 13a and enter the total			<b>13b</b>	
	<b>14</b> Subtract line 13b from line 12b. If zero or less, enter -0-			<b>14</b>	2689
	<b>15</b> Other taxes, including self-employment tax, from Schedule 2, line 10			<b>15</b>	
	<b>16</b> Add lines 14 and 15. This is your <b>total tax</b>			<b>16</b>	2689
	<b>17</b> Federal income tax withheld from Forms W-2 and 1099			<b>17</b>	4452
	<b>18</b> Other payments and refundable credits:				
	<b>a</b> Earned income credit (EIC)	<b>18a</b>			
	<b>b</b> Additional child tax credit. Attach Schedule 8812	<b>18b</b>			
	<b>c</b> American opportunity credit from Form 8863, line 8	<b>18c</b>			
	<b>d</b> Schedule 3, line 14	<b>18d</b>			
	<b>e</b> Add lines 18a through 18d. These are your <b>total other payments and refundable credits</b>			<b>18e</b>	
	<b>19</b> Add lines 17 and 18e. These are your <b>total payments</b>			<b>19</b>	4452
	<b>20</b> If line 19 is more than line 16, subtract line 16 from line 19. This is the amount you <b>overpaid</b>			<b>20</b>	1763
	<b>21a</b> Amount of line 20 you want <b>refunded to you</b> . If Form 8888 is attached, check here <input type="checkbox"/>			<b>21a</b>	1763
Direct deposit? See instructions.	<b>b</b> Routing number <input type="text" value="123456789"/> <b>c</b> Type: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Checking <input type="checkbox"/> Savings				
	<b>d</b> Account number <input type="text" value="11000123456"/>				
	<b>22</b> Amount of line 20 you want <b>applied to your 2020 estimated tax</b>	<b>22</b>			
	<b>23</b> <b>Amount you owe</b> . Subtract line 19 from line 16. For details on how to pay, see instructions			<b>23</b>	
	<b>24</b> Estimated tax penalty (see instructions)	<b>24</b>			
	Do you want to allow another person (other than your paid preparer) to discuss this return with the IRS? See instructions. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. Complete below. <input type="checkbox"/> No				
(Other than paid preparer)	Designee's name <input type="text"/>	Phone no. <input type="text"/>	Personal identification number (PIN) <input type="text"/>		
<b>Sign Here</b>	Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this return and accompanying schedules and statements, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, they are true, correct, and complete. Declaration of preparer (other than taxpayer) is based on all information of which preparer has any knowledge.				
Joint return? See instructions. Keep a copy for your records.	Your signature <i>Tasha Miller</i>	Date 04-15-19	Your occupation CLERICAL	If the IRS sent you an Identity Protection PIN, enter it here (see inst.) <input type="text"/>	
	Spouse's signature. If a joint return, <b>both</b> must sign.	Date	Spouse's occupation	If the IRS sent your spouse an Identity Protection PIN, enter it here (see inst.) <input type="text"/>	
	Phone no.	Email address			
<b>Paid Preparer Use Only</b>	Preparer's name	Preparer's signature	Date	PTIN	Check if: <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd Party Designee <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed
	Firm's name	Phone no.			
	Firm's address	Firm's EIN			

**Making Finance Personal: Project 4: Income Taxes (Updated 2020)**

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## Project 4 Overview: Income Taxes

### Handout 4A: What Can I Do to Avoid Overpayment of Income Taxes?

We spend a large part of our work year earning money to pay taxes. We are taxed when we work and often taxed when we make a purchase. Besides federal income taxes, we have state taxes, personal property taxes, sales taxes, capital gains taxes, and more. In this lesson, you will:

- Define taxes as compulsory charges imposed by government on its citizens and their property to pay for expenses
- Identify the most common IRS forms (W2 and 1099)
- Complete a Federal 1040 form
- Identify appropriate strategies to avoid overpayment of income taxes

### Assignment Instructions

For our classroom assignment, you will need to access the internet. Your assignment is located in the Khan Academy course on Taxes and Tax Forms <https://www.khanacademy.org/college-careers-more/personal-finance/pf-taxes>. You will need to review:

- Personal Tax Overview – (We no longer use the 1040EZ, but there is still good information in the video.)
- Tax Forms
- Protecting your personal information

## **Project 4 Activity: Income Taxes**

### **Handout 4B: Income Taxes: Take-Home Assignment**

For your project-based learning assignment, you will have a choice as to how you would like to demonstrate you have mastered filing income taxes.

#### **Choice A**

If you plan to file your personal taxes, you may show me your completed return for the 10-point assignment credit. Please recall that if you are uncomfortable with sharing personal information, you may make a copy and black out anything you don't want to share. I will not review the return for accuracy. I will simply make sure you have completed the form and filed a copy in your project binder.

#### **Choice B**

If you do not work or your parents claim you on their taxes and you don't plan to file a return, you will need to select and complete this option.

This is very similar to the simulation you worked on in class. Use the profile information below to complete the assignment.

#### **Profile Information**

Your name is Tasha R. Miller and you live at 285 Linden Avenue, Anywhere, USA, 00100. Your social security number is 222-00-2222.

**Employment:** Full-time

**Marital status:** Single

**Spouse's name (if any):** N/A

**Children:** None

**U.S. citizen:** Yes

**Other:** It's the end of the tax year. You receive your W-2 from your employer. You have earned \$36,206 from your job and \$43 in interest reflected on our 1099 form.

**Note:** Your employer is required to send your W-2 postmarked by January 31.

You have everything you need to file your taxes. Use the sample 1099 and W2 provided in this activity.

Go to <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1040.pdf> to download and print a 1040 form to use for this exercise.

Don't get tripped up:

- You choose to decline the Presidential Election Campaign box.
- Use your W2 handout to complete line 1 of the 1040 form. A W2 is a wage and tax statement sent to you by your employer. It provides documentation of income earned and taxes paid for the tax year.
- Use your 1099-INT form to complete line 2b. The 1099-INT form is documentation of how much interest you earned on a specific account.
- Total lines 1 and 2b on line 7b and again on 8b to reflect your adjusted gross income.
- Line 9 should reflect your standard deduction. Carry your standard deduction total to line 11a.
- Subtract 11a from 8b to determine your taxable income.



- You will now need to use your tax table to find your tax amount owed on your taxable income.
- That dollar amount should be reflected in line 12a, 12b, 14, and 16.
- For line 17, refer to your W2 to find the amount of Federal Income Tax withheld. Enter that number again on line 19.
- Subtract line 16 from 19 to the amount you overpaid or your refund.
- You would like the refund deposited into your checking account. Your checking account routing number is 12345678 and account number is 11000123456.
- When you have completed the tax assignment, you will then include either your actual tax forms or your sample tax forms in your binder.
- You do not want to allow a third party to discuss the return.
- Sign, date, indicate your occupation, and list your phone number. You do not have a spouse.
- You did not pay someone to prepare the return so leave the last boxes empty.
- Congratulations! You have completed your taxes.



**Project 4 Resources: Income Taxes**

**Handout 4B: Income Taxes: Take-Home Assignment—Blank 1040**

Go to: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1040.pdf>



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## Project 4 Resources: Income Taxes

### Handout 4C: Income Taxes: Take-Home Assignment—W-2 and 1099-Int

a Employee's social security number <b>222-00-2222</b>		Safe, accurate, FAST! Use		Visit the IRS website at <a href="http://www.irs.gov/efile">www.irs.gov/efile</a>	
b Employer identification number (EIN) <b>10-000003</b>		1 Wages, tips, other compensation <b>\$36,206.00</b>	2 Federal income tax withheld <b>\$4,452.00</b>		
c Employer's name, address, and ZIP code <b>JOB CENTER 30 ASH GROVE ANYTOWN, US 00100</b>		3 Social security wages <b>\$36,206.00</b>	4 Social security tax withheld <b>\$1,502.65</b>		
		5 Medicare wages and tips <b>\$36,206.00</b>	6 Medicare tax withheld <b>\$521.36</b>		
		7 Social security tips	8 Allocated tips		
d Control number		9	10 Dependent care benefits		
e Employee's first name and initial Last name Suff. <b>TASHA R. MILLER 285 LINDEN AVENUE ANYTOWN, US 00100</b>		11 Nonqualified plans		12a See instructions for box 12	
		13 Statutory employee <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement plan <input type="checkbox"/> Third-party sick pay <input type="checkbox"/>	12b		
		14 Other		12c	
f Employee's address and ZIP code		12d			
15 State US	Employer's state ID number 20-0000000	16 State wages, tips, etc. \$36,206.00	17 State income tax \$2,480.12	18 Local wages, tips, etc.	19 Local income tax
				20 Locality name	

**Form W-2 Wage and Tax Statement 2019** Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service

**Copy B—To Be Filed With Employee's FEDERAL Tax Return.**  
This information is being furnished to the Internal Revenue Service.

<input type="checkbox"/> CORRECTED (if checked)		PAYER'S name, street address, city or town, state or province, country, ZIP or foreign postal code, and telephone no. <b>YOUR BANK 123 SOME STREET ANYTOWN, USA 00123</b>		Payer's RTN (optional)	OMB No. 1545-0112	<b>2019</b> Form <b>1099-INT</b>	<b>Interest Income</b>
PAYER'S TIN <b>12-0000</b>		RECIPIENT'S TIN <b>***-**-2222</b>		1 Interest income \$ <b>43.00</b>	2 Early withdrawal penalty \$		
RECIPIENT'S name <b>TASHA R. MILLER</b> Street address (including apt. no.) <b>285 LINDEN AVENUE</b> City or town, state or province, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code <b>ANYWHERE, USA, 00100</b>		FATCA filing requirement <input type="checkbox"/>		4 Federal income tax withheld \$ <b>00</b>	5 Investment expenses \$	This is important tax information and is being furnished to the IRS. If you are required to file a return, a negligence penalty or other sanction may be imposed on you if this income is taxable and the IRS determines that it has not been reported.	
				6 Foreign tax paid \$	7 Foreign country or U.S. possession		
				8 Tax-exempt interest \$	9 Specified private activity bond interest \$		
				10 Market discount \$	11 Bond premium \$		
				12 Bond premium on Treasury obligations \$	13 Bond premium on tax-exempt bond \$		
Account number (see instructions) <b>*****1234</b>				14 Tax-exempt and tax credit bond CUSIP no.	15 State	16 State identification no.	17 State tax withheld \$ <b>00</b>

Form **1099-INT** (keep for your records) [www.irs.gov/Form1099INT](http://www.irs.gov/Form1099INT) Department of the Treasury - Internal Revenue Service

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Project 4 Resources: Income Taxes

Handout 4D: Income Taxes: Take-Home Assignment—Tax Table

Table with 18 columns and multiple rows, organized into 18 sections for tax brackets from 21,000 to 29,000. Each section contains a grid of taxable income ranges and corresponding tax amounts for different filing statuses.

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## **Project 4 Activity: Income Taxes**

### **Handout 4E: Income Taxes Essay**

In a one- to two-page reflective essay, typed and double-spaced, answer the following questions. Make sure you proof the essay for grammar and word usage mistakes.

- Have you filed taxes before? If so, did you complete the forms or did you have someone do it for you?
- What thoughts do you have on the process? Did you find it difficult?
- After reading the text and class discussion, what are some ways you can keep more of your income?
- After learning about taxes in class, will you complete your taxes in the future?