

Young Adult Finance Lab lesson pack

Ages 16-18+ - 20 minutes - Best for first payslips, tax wrappers, debt choices, and the long-term decisions that start to matter quickly.

Lesson overview

Lesson aim	Help the learner explain why gross and net pay differ, choose the right wrapper for one goal, and defend one longer-term money decision.
You will need	The Ages 16-18 worksheet and, ideally, one real example such as an ISA page, a pension explainer, or a debt comparison.
Success looks like	The learner can compare flexibility, bonuses, and trade-offs instead of treating every option as interchangeable.

Suggested run order

1. Warm-up

Ask which feels more useful right now: flexibility, a government bonus, or money locked for much longer.

2. Play focus

Use Payslip Decoder, LISA versus ISA versus Pension, and one long-term choice game like FIRE or debt payoff.

3. Talk it through

Ask which option feels most flexible, which one feels most restrictive, and why those trade-offs might still be worth it.

4. Offline extension

Compare a real savings product, LISA page, or pension explainer and decide which one suits a first-home goal best.

Teaching notes

1. Talk prompts

- Why is take-home pay smaller than gross pay?
- When is flexibility worth more than a bonus?
- What should happen before investing if debt is expensive?

2. Helpful teaching note

This pack is less about one perfect answer and more about whether the learner can justify a trade-off clearly and realistically.

3. Stretch idea

Ask the learner to build a "first year after school" plan with pay, saving, one goal, and one risk they want to avoid.

Answer key and teaching notes

1. Worksheet answers

- First payslip reality check: strong answers mention tax, National Insurance, pension contributions, or student loans affecting take-home pay.
- LISA, ISA, or pension: a LISA is often the strongest answer for a first-home saver because of the 25 percent bonus, but the reasoning matters.

- Long-term choice: there is no single answer. Strong reasoning often prioritises high-interest debt first or explains a thoughtful split.

2. What to listen for

- The learner compares flexibility, access, and bonuses rather than repeating slogans.
- They understand that some wrappers fit one goal but not another.
- They can explain why time changes the size of some decisions.

3. If they struggle

Reduce it to one goal at a time. Ask "best for a first home?" or "best for retirement?" before comparing every product at once.