

WHAT A DEAL!

Directions: Imagine that you are furnishing your first apartment. Kitchen appliances are provided, but you need to buy furniture for a kitchen, small living room, and bedroom. You do not have much money to spend. By yourself or with a classmate, list five items of furniture you will need for these three rooms in the first column of the chart below.

Once you have decided what furniture items you need to buy, estimate what you will have to pay for them, both new and used. Put this information in the appropriate columns. Now arrange to go to a store that sells *new* furniture at a quality and price young adults would be likely to choose. If such a trip is impossible, use catalogs or sales fliers for the *New Price* column. Also price *used* furniture. Some possible sources are the Salvation Army, Goodwill, used furniture stores, garage sales, and classified ads. If such a trip is not possible, check classified ads in a newspaper for prices. Complete the chart with the information you gather. Then answer the following questions on separate paper:

Furniture Needed	Estimated New Price	New Price	Estimated Used Price	Used Price
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

1. Subtract the total used price from the total new price to get the savings realized by buying used furniture rather than new. What would your savings be?
2. In general, how would you compare the quality of the new and used furniture you priced?
3. What surprised you the most about your introduction to furniture shopping?
4. What factors other than price and quality would you consider in choosing furniture?

◇ Chapter 21
On Your Own

Enrichment Activities

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

As children, we learn many things by trial and error — how to ride a bike, tie our shoes, and walk. It is a part of life to learn from experience. If we're lucky, learning from experience won't cost us too much — physically, emotionally, or financially. But sometimes, looking back, we wish we had done things differently. The lessons were perhaps a little harder than we anticipated. Here are some people who were honest enough to talk about things they wish they had done differently.

Desmond, age 42: "Looking back, I wish I'd started saving and investing money in my twenties. Even a small amount could have had a nice opportunity to grow. When you're young, though, you don't think that far ahead. It's too easy to only think about paying your bills and having fun."

Mason, age 23: "When I first moved out, I had no idea how much everything would cost. My part-time job paid pretty well, so I figured I could easily support myself while I was in school. I hadn't thought of things like utilities, furniture, car insurance, and long-distance phone calls. I'm back living with my parents now, temporarily. I wish I had made a budget and planned more realistically. If I had, I probably wouldn't have moved out until I'd saved more money."

Maya, age 30: "I wish I had learned more about insurance when I left home. When I turned twenty-one, I wasn't covered on my father's policy anymore. I just assumed my health would be okay. When I got sick, the expenses wiped out all my savings. I could have saved myself a lot of money and problems if I had known more about insurance."

Helene, age 36: "I really wish I'd stayed in school a little longer. Not only could I have gotten a much more interesting job that pays a lot better, but I could also have learned so much more about the world, about history, art, literature. I think about going back to school sometimes, but it's a lot harder when you're trying to support a family."

Focus In

What can you do now to prepare yourself for successful independent living? What piece of advice can you take with you from each person quoted above? Put the advice in the form of a chart so that you can remind yourself to plan realistically for your move out on your own.

1. What do you think is the most common mistake young people make when they move out on their own?

2. Why do you think many young people underestimate or are unaware of the financial expense of independent living?
