

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

ACTIVITY

Maya's Postsecondary Pathways

What + Why: Investigate the real costs and outcomes of Maya's post-high-school path to see how early decisions can affect income, debt, and financial flexibility later.

You will analyze Maya's financial aid information, loan repayment details, story, and bank statement. Use the evidence provided to explain how Maya's post-high-school choices affected her life five years later.

Supporting Materials:

High School Flashbacks (Maya-Case Study)

Instructions:

1. Review Maya's FAFSA Summary and total borrowing.
2. Review Maya's story, loan repayment table, and bank statement.
3. You may wish to review Maya's High School Flashback in the case study materials as needed.
4. Use evidence from the materials to answer the questions below.

Questions:

1. What education costs did Maya have?
2. How is Maya repaying those costs now?

3. How did Maya's post-high-school choices affect income, debt, and financial flexibility?
4. What trade-offs is Maya managing?

Part 1: Maya's FAFSA Summary

Maya's Situation When She Applied:

- Maya lived with one parent, who helped cover basic living needs, but still struggled as a low-income family. Money was often tight, and Maya was aware that any choice involving school would likely mean taking on loans.
- Maya had a Student Aid Index (SAI) of 0, meaning she qualified for the maximum amount of federal need-based aid.

Maya's FAFSA Results (Per Year)

- Pell Grant: \$7,000
- Federal Work-Study: Eligible for \$2,000, but she chose not to use it because she already planned to freelance.
- Subsidized Federal Loan: \$3,500 (1st year), \$4,500 (2nd year), \$5,500 (3rd & 4th year)
- Unsubsidized Federal Loan: \$2,000 per year
- Total Federal Loans per Year: About \$5,500–7,500 depending on the year

NOTE:

grants = don't have to repay
loans = must be repaid

subsidized loans = interest starts after school
unsubsidized = interest starts right away

Maya's Total Borrowing Over Four Years

Year in College	Subsidized Loan	Unsubsidized Loan	Total Federal Loans	Pell Grant	Total Aid Package (not including work-study)
Year 1	\$3,500	\$2,000	\$5,500	\$7,000	\$12,500
Year 2	\$4,500	\$2,000	\$6,500	\$7,000	\$13,500
Year 3	\$5,500	\$2,000	\$7,500	\$7,000	\$14,500
Year 4	\$5,500	\$2,000	\$7,500	\$7,000	\$14,500

Total Federal Loans After 4 Years: \$27,000**Total Pell Grant Money Over 4 Years: \$28,000**

College's sticker price (total cost before aid) was higher than Maya's grants + federal loans covered. She needed private loans for:

- Dorm housing
- Food and supplies
- Textbooks and class fees
- Remaining tuition not covered by aid

Total Private Loans Over All 4 Years: \$18,000**Grand Total Maya Borrowed:**

Federal Loans: \$27,000

Private Loans: \$18,000

Total Loans Owed at Graduation: \$45,000

Part 2: Maya's Story (5 Years After Graduation)

It's five years after high school, and Maya is working full-time as a Marketing Assistant in a big city. She received her Bachelor's degree in Marketing at an in-state public university after four years, which required her to take out federal and private loans to cover tuition, dorm housing, and living expenses. She earns a steady monthly salary after taxes and deductions and also walks dogs on most weekends, though that income varies from month to month.

Maya shares a one-bedroom apartment with a roommate, splitting rent and basic bills like electricity, water, and internet. Most of her monthly expenses—streaming services, groceries, her transit pass, and her share of rent—come directly out of her checking account.

She uses autopay to pay her loans each month, which slightly reduces her interest rate and helps her not to miss payments. Her federal loans didn't require payments until six months after graduation, and at her current minimum plan, they will take 25 years to repay. Her private loans started right away after graduation and will take 15 years to repay at the minimum, with a higher interest rate adding extra pressure.

Even though balancing big-city living costs and student loans is stressful, Maya enjoys seeing steady progress. She tracks every payment in a spreadsheet and celebrates small wins, like months where her dog-walking work lets her pay a little extra—or just breathe easier. Her education opened doors for her career, but it also comes with long-term responsibilities she's learning to manage.

Maya had to choose a repayment plan for her federal loans:

Repayment Term	Monthly Payment
10 years	~\$293
20 years	~\$186
25 years	~\$166

Maya chose the 25-year federal repayment plan so her minimum payment stays affordable, with the hopes of paying more some months when she has the extra money to reduce any interest in the long run.

Total loan cost over time with the minimum monthly payments:

Loan Type	Principal	Total Paid	Total Interest
Federal	\$27,000	~\$49,800	~\$22,800
Private	\$18,000	~\$34,800	~\$16,800
TOTAL	\$45,000	~\$84,600	~\$39,600

Part 3: Maya's Bank Statement

Previous Balance at start of month: \$320.00

Date	Source / Description	Amount
Mar 1	Monthly Salary (Marketing Assistant)	+\$3,089.37
Mar 2	Coffee	-\$5.50
Mar 3	Groceries (supermarket)	-\$100.00
Mar 4	Streaming / subscriptions	-\$35.00
Mar 5	Rent (shared 1-bedroom apartment)	-\$1,700.00
Mar 5	Electricity / Water / Internet (split)	-\$170.00
Mar 6	Coffee	-\$4.75
Mar 7	Federal Student Loan (minimum payment)	-\$166.00
Mar 8	Grocery pickup	-\$80.00
Mar 9	Gym membership	-\$60.00
Mar 10	Transit Pass	-\$127.00
Mar 11	Coffee	-\$6.00
Mar 14	Dining out / personal expenses	-\$85.00
Mar 15	Credit Card Payment	-\$100.00
Mar 16	Coffee	-\$5.25
Mar 18	Groceries	-\$110.00
Mar 20	Private Student Loan (minimum payment)	-\$230.00
Mar 22	Transfer from digital payment platform (dog walking payments)	+\$450.00
Mar 25	Uber / rideshare	-\$45.00
Mar 28	Miscellaneous / coffee / snacks	-\$50.00
Mar 30	Groceries	-\$120.00
Mar 31	Dining out / weekend brunch	-\$80.00

Balance at end of month: \$441.00