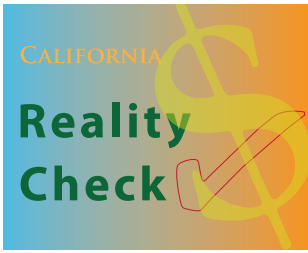




California Reality Check Workbook

www.CaliforniaRealityCheck.org



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California Reality Check is a popular, online budgeting exercise that offers a fun, but serious glimpse into the costs of living on your own as well as which occupation, education and training choices will afford the lifestyle you desire.

Using various categories, including: housing, utilities, food, transportation, and more; an annual salary summarizes what you must earn in order to achieve that lifestyle. After acquiring the annual salary you can begin exploring occupations based on the desired educational level you want to have. The educational levels range from high school diploma up to a professional degree.

This workbook will help guide you through the website as well as provide a place for you to detail your lifestyle choices, and career exploration discoveries.

This workbook is separated out by the three different methods of use: **Get a Reality Check**, **Future Salary**, and **Occupation Direct**. If this is your first time using California Reality Check, it is recommended that you start by using Get a Reality Check. After you have experienced Get a Reality Check your experience with Future Salary and Occupation Direct will be more effective.

Workbook Table of Contents:

Pages 3 and 4: Get a Reality Check — This activity lets you imagine what kind of lifestyle you want to have when you are an adult. Occupations that support that lifestyle are provided based on the educational level you decide to achieve.

Page 5: Future Salary — This activity lets you skip the lifestyle choices and explore occupations based on the salary you think you will need to have the lifestyle you want, and the educational level you decide to achieve.

Pages 6 and 7: Occupation Direct — If you are curious what a specific occupation pays and the lifestyle it will provide, this activity allows you to choose an occupation then work through the budgeting activity only spending the money that it earns.

Get a Reality Check

This activity lets you imagine what kind of lifestyle you want to have when you are an adult. You can choose to have a lavish lifestyle, a penny-pincher budget, and everything in between. This is your opportunity to make decisions without having to suffer the consequences. At the end of the activity you will have an opportunity to determine how much education you would like to get, and occupational results will come up that fit the education and lifestyle you have created. Clicking on any of the occupations will take you to a detailed description of the occupation.

So, let's begin:

Step 1: Go to Get a Reality Check and click the red arrow next to it.

Step 2: Choose a City that you would like to create your lifestyle in. The cities listed range from having a very expensive cost of living to an affordable cost of living. Keep in mind where the city is located as well as what sort of attractions it is near that may interest you.

What city did you choose? _____

What made you decide to choose this city? _____

Step 3: Start choosing your lifestyle. After choosing something(s) from each category click on the red "next" button at the bottom right-hand corner of each page. As you go along, you will notice that the "Expenses" box on the left adds up your total expenses for that category, the "Running Balance" box on the right keeps a tally of all the expenses you have chosen in all the categories you have visited.

Below you can write down the information from the "Total Expenses" page or as you move along in the program:

Expense	Type Chosen	Cost
Housing		
Utilities		
Food		
Transportation		
Clothes		
Health Care		
Entertainment		
Personal		
Miscellaneous		
Savings		
Total Monthly Expenses		
Annual Expenses		
Taxes		
Annual Salary Needed		

Get a Reality Check (continued)

Step 4: (optional): Find out the additional monthly expenses of having a family. Click on the purple button to the left of the summary. A new box will open up with many scenarios to choose from.

Scenario 1: Choose the yellow button- "Married, Spouse will not work outside of home". At the bottom right-hand corner of the page you will find how much your monthly and annual expenses will increase.

Family Plan Monthly Expense: _____

Family Plan Yearly Expense: _____

Add the Family Plan Yearly Expense to your Annual Salary Needed from the summary page.

Total Annual Salary Needed if you are married and your spouse does not work: _____

Scenario 2: Create your own. Now create your own family scenario using the "Family Plan" box. Detail what you chose below as well as any increased costs. **Note:** If you have a spouse that works outside of the home, be sure to subtract the additional expense incurred from their stated income indicated in their educational selection. (i.e. spouse has an associates degree; their income is \$45,000 annually. The additional expense is \$25,186. $45,000 - 25,186 = \$19,814$ additional income).

Step 5: Find occupations that match this annual salary. Click on the red button to the right of the summary.

Education: Click on one of the educational levels indicated, or click on "I don't know, include all educational levels".

Occupational Category: Click on one of the occupational categories indicated, or click on "I don't know, include all occupational categories".

Click the red button "Find Occupations" on the bottom right-hand corner of the page.

Depending on what education and/or occupational category you chose there may be many occupations to explore, or none at all. To get different results, click on the green "Back" button and change your selection.

What occupations came up that interested you?

Future Salary

This activity lets you explore occupations based on the salary you would like to earn in the future.

Step 1: In the white box next to Future Salary type in how much money you want to earn. Click the green arrow when you are done typing it in.

Step 2: Indicate what level of education and occupational category you would like to explore.

Education: Click on one of the educational levels indicated, or click on "I don't know, include all educational levels".

Occupational Category: Click on one of the occupational categories indicated, or click on "I don't know, include all occupational categories."

Click the red button "Find Occupations" on the bottom right-hand corner of the page.

Depending on what education and/or occupational category you chose there may be many occupations to explore, or none at all. To get different results, click on the green "Back" button and change your selection.

What occupations came up that interested you?

Occupation Direct

This activity lets you start with selecting an occupation and work backwards creating a lifestyle that the annual salary for that occupation affords.

Step 1: Click on the purple button next to Occupation Direct.

Step 2: Choose an occupation from the list provided.

What occupation did you choose? _____

What is the Annual Salary for that occupation? _____

What is the Tax amount for that occupation? _____

What is the Remaining Annual Income for that occupation? _____

What is the Monthly Income for that occupation? _____

Step 3: Click on the red button “How much can you purchase with this monthly salary?”

Choose a City that you would like to create your lifestyle in. The cities listed range from having a very expensive cost of living to an affordable cost of living. Keep in mind where the city is located as well as what sort of attractions it is near that may interest you.

What city did you choose? _____

What made you decide to choose this city? _____

Step 4: Start choosing your lifestyle. After choosing something(s) from each category click on the red “next” button at the bottom right-hand corner of each page. As you go along, you will notice that the “Expenses” box on the left adds up your total expenses for that category, the “Running Balance” box on the right keeps a tally of how much money you have left from your monthly salary.

Below you can write down the information from the “Total Expenses” page or as you move along in the program:

Expense	Type Chosen	Cost
Savings		
Housing		
Utilities		
Food		
Transportation		
Clothes		
Health Care		
Entertainment		
Personal		
Miscellaneous		
Remaining Balance		

Occupation Direct (continued)

What surprises you about the lifestyle the occupation you chose provides for? _____

How does it affect your choice for occupation? (Doesn't matter?) _____

Step 5: (optional) Find out the additional monthly expenses of having a family. Click on the purple button to the left of the summary. A new box will open up with many scenarios to choose from.

Scenario 1: Choose the yellow button "Married, Spouse will not work outside of home". At the bottom right-hand corner of the page you will find how much your monthly and annual expenses will increase.

Family Plan Monthly Expense: _____

Family Plan Yearly Expense: _____

Add the Family Plan Yearly Expense to your Annual Salary Needed from the summary page.

Total Annual Salary Needed if you are married and your spouse does not work: _____

Can you afford to have a spouse that doesn't work out of the home, based on the occupation you chose and the lifestyle you want?

Scenario 2: Create your own. Now create your own family scenario using the "Family Plan" box. Detail what you chose below as well as any increased costs.

Note: If you have a spouse that works outside of the home, be sure to subtract the additional expense incurred from their stated income indicated in their educational selection. (i.e. spouse has an associates degree; their income is \$45,000 annually. The additional expense is \$25,186. $45,000 - 25,186 = \$19,814$ additional income).



State of California

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