

Living at Home and Abroad Project

The purpose of this project is to allow students to calculate their net and gross salary and living expenses in both Canada and a foreign country. The project is divided into three parts – calculating salary, calculating living expenses, and comparing the two. The teacher may choose to do only some of the parts depending on time and interest.

This project will cover topics in the following outcomes: WA 10.10 Apply proportional reasoning to solve problems involving unit pricing and currency exchange; and WA 10.11 Demonstrate understanding of income.

Students will need the following background skills:

- How to research and write a bibliography
- Familiarity with the concept of gross income, deductions and net income
- Familiarity with the concept of exchange rates

Options for teachers:

1. Work groups: You may wish to have students work independently or with a partner
2. Assessment: There are several ways you could have your students present their work:
 - a. Presentation to the class
 - b. Presentation to the teacher alone
 - c. Creation of a visual product (ex. Poster)
 - d. Written submission

Part I – Comparing Salaries at Home and Abroad

1. Introduce the project to the students. Discuss that they will be comparing salaries and expenses both in Canada and abroad.
Option: You could do this project without the foreign currency comparison and have them do the objectives below without the foreign country element.
2. Students will first need to pick a career to explore the salary for. Brainstorm with the students a list of possible careers that they may want to pursue. After brainstorming a list, students will need to pick one that they are interested in.
3. Students will need to pick a foreign country for comparison. This could be done by either having students each pick their own country they are interested in, or brainstorming a list of countries with the students and having them pick one from that list.
4. Students will then need to research the average gross annual salary in Canada for that occupation. (Students will be expected to keep track of their sources and cite them in a bibliography).
5. Students will then need to research the average gross annual salary in the foreign country for that occupation.
6. Students will then calculate the monthly gross and monthly net salary for that occupation in Canada and the foreign country.
Option: You could have the students write a pay stub for a monthly salary of the career they have chosen.

Part II – Comparing Salaries, Taxes and Deductions

1. Students will also research will compare how the salaries and taxes in the two countries.
2. Students will compare how the salaries relate when put into the same currency.
3. Students will compare how the payroll deductions compare in the two countries and how government services compare in regards to the taxes paid. What do countries prioritize and do the countries with higher taxes provide more government services?
4. Students will compare the Big Mac index in the Canada and the researched country to see how salary considerations can go beyond merely how the two currency values compare but also look at how the cost of goods and services in the countries compare.

Part III – Extension

1. There are many ways teachers could expand this assignment based on class interest. Budgeting and standards of living are not in the WAM curriculum, but could be used as extensions to this assignment.