

## LEARNING EXPERIENCE BRIEF

# JA BizTown®

■ Work and Career Readiness ■ Financial Literacy

*JA BizTown* provides educators with lessons and resources to effectively integrate financial literacy and work and career readiness into the elementary school classroom. The learning experience supports critical thinking skills and student engagement, and helps students connect the dots between what they learn in school and the real world.

## LEARNING EXPERIENCE OBJECTIVES

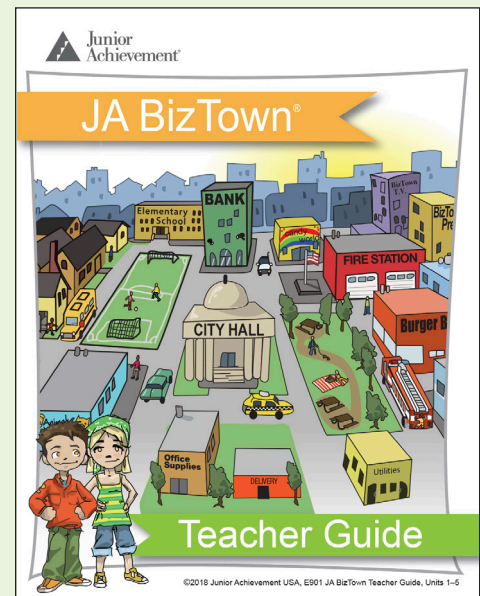
Following participation in the program, students will be able to:

- Discuss the roles they play as citizens, workers, and consumers in their community and relate those roles to the free enterprise system.
- Discuss the importance of citizen rights and responsibilities in a community.
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the free enterprise system.
- Build money management skills through a practical knowledge of economic concepts and banking practices.
- Develop an understanding of basic business practices and responsibilities.
- Display the soft skills necessary for successful participation in the world of work.



## LEARNING EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

*JA BizTown* consists of 12 in-class teacher-led sessions prior to the simulation and one in-class session following the simulation, with a culminating 4–5 hour visit to a hands-on simulated community.



## UNIT TITLES AND HIGHLIGHTS

### 1 Financial Literacy

This unit introduces students to bank services and practices that will help them be successful at *JA BizTown* and in life. Students begin to understand the basics of banking, including deposits and withdrawals, electronic transactions, bank cards, and checking.

#### Lesson One: Financial Services

Students are introduced to services provided by financial institutions and discover the connection between spending and having money in a bank. They apply for a bank account in preparation for their *JA BizTown* visit.

#### Lesson Two: Checking Accounts

Students learn how to endorse and deposit a check and how to manage a checking account register. They also learn the consequence of writing checks without sufficient funds. This lesson stresses making and recording deposits.

#### Lesson Three: Savings Accounts

Students practice check-writing skills and discover the benefits of using interest-earning savings accounts to save money. They play a saving and spending game to reinforce the concepts introduced.

#### Lesson Four: Debit Cards

Students discover ways to complete purchase transactions electronically. They explore the difference between a debit card and a credit card.

### 2 Community and Economy

Students are introduced to the concept of the circular flow of money and goods in an economy. They will define basic economic concepts and discuss the impact of taxes and philanthropy.

#### Lesson One: Circular Flow of Economics

Students discover the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a community and examine the flow of goods, services, money, and resources between people and businesses. Students take a pledge to become citizens of *JA BizTown*.

#### Lesson Two: Free Enterprise

Students experience an activity that illustrates the basics of free enterprise and allows them the opportunity to produce goods and services. Students begin to see how applying these concepts will help them participate in the *JA BizTown* simulation.

#### Lesson Three: Public Goods and Services

Students recognize that both businesses and individuals pay taxes. They discover the characteristics of public goods and services and identify familiar items that are supported by taxes, including libraries, schools, roads, fire and police services, and more.

## 3 Work and Career Readiness

In this unit, students learn how their interests and skills can lead to exciting jobs—including higher paying STEM jobs—and careers. They will assess their interests and skills, and have an opportunity to fill out a job application and experience the job interview process.

### Lesson One: Interests and Skills

Students learn how their interests and skills can be linked to various career alternatives. This lesson emphasizes STEM and high-demand careers. Students explore four interest-based career types and demonstrate appropriate workplace behaviors.

### Lesson Two: Applying for a Job

Students learn about the various steps required to apply for and obtain a job. In addition, they engage in hands-on activities, including the completion of a job application and participation in practice job interviews. These activities help prepare students for their *JA BizTown* jobs. Teacher guidance on how to effectively manage student job interviews and elections prior to the simulation is provided.

## 4 Business Management

This unit gives students time to work in their business teams and prepare for their *JA BizTown* visit. They will learn about operating a successful business, setting prices to achieve a profit, and using advertising to bring in revenue.

### Lesson One: Business Costs

Students learn about various factors associated with operating a business. In

preparation for their visit to *JA BizTown*, students work in business teams to determine the components of a successful business operation.

### Lesson Two: Setting Prices

Students recognize the importance of accurately setting the prices for goods and services to earn a profit. Through hands-on learning activities, they explore pricing and its connection to revenue and profit in *JA BizTown*.

### Lesson Three: Visit Preparation

Students learn about the importance of advertising as a method of marketing the goods and/or services offered by various businesses. Working in business teams, students develop advertisements to market their *JA BizTown* businesses and complete their final preparations for their on-site visit.

## 5 Visit and Debriefing

At a *JA BizTown* simulation, citizens will participate in a vibrant economy, run their businesses, receive their paychecks, make bank transactions, and go shopping.

### Lesson One: The Visit

Students participate in the *JA BizTown* simulation.

### Lesson Two: Debriefing

Students reflect on their *JA BizTown* experience and further identify the relevance of classroom learning to their future plans and goals.

# JA BizTown

Elementary school students are not old enough to drive, work, vote, or be the boss. But that does not stop them from operating banks, managing restaurants, writing checks, using debit cards, and voting for a mayor at *JA BizTown*, where students connect the dots between what they learn in school and the real world.



**1** **JA BizTown Teacher Guide**  
Provides lesson plans and teaching tips for the teachers and volunteer

**2** **JA BizTown Citizen Guide**  
An in-class and take-home reference tool for students to complete during each lesson

**3** **JA BizTown Checkbooks**  
Designed for the on-site simulation activities

**4** **Circular Flow Poster**  
Represents the community's circular flow of economic activity; also available as a digital asset

**5** **Check It Out! Poster**  
Demonstrates how to manage a checking account

**6** **Assorted Activity Cards**  
Feature workplace skills, rights, responsibilities, and resources

**7** **Family Newsletter**  
Includes activities for the students and their families to enjoy

**8** **Bingo Card Pads**  
Enable students to play bingo to learn about services offered by banks and credit unions

## JA'S TURNKEY VOLUNTEER SOLUTION

### **One-on-One Assistance**

During the simulation, volunteers guide and assist students as they operate one of the businesses at *JA BizTown*. JA works with you to ensure you teach at the location and grade level of your choice.

### **Comprehensive Training**

Before you begin *JA BizTown*, JA staff will provide training so you are comfortable with the simulation experience. You will become familiar with the daily schedule, the work expected of the students, and your roles and responsibilities. You also will be instructed on how to use the Volunteer Guide and Volunteer Checklist to help facilitate the experience.

### **Minimal Time Commitment**

The time commitment is minimal compared to the significant impact you make. The approximately six-hour day includes volunteer training and the five-hour simulation. Additional training, either in person or online, is scheduled with the local JA staff. You will be astonished by how much the students accomplish in such a short period of time.

### **JA Staff Follow-Up and Support**

Volunteers are key to the success of this program. JA staff will be available to answer your questions or make suggestions and will provide full support throughout the day of the simulation.

Join Junior Achievement's national network of volunteers and help students in your community connect the dots between what they learn in school and the "business of life"—work readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy.