

Syllabus

Introduction to Accounting

Course Overview

This one-semester elective course is intended as a practical, hands-on guide to help you understand the world of accounting.

This course is structured into lessons and Course Activities as follows:

- The first six lessons deal with the fundamental principles of accounting and why they are needed in the business world. They take you through the accounting cycle and ways of classifying firms. The idea of an “account head” is made clear at this stage.
- The next four lessons walk you through the key steps of the accounting cycle. You will learn the mechanics of accounting (“book-keeping” and beyond).
- The next two lessons deal with the cash statement, the bank statement, and payroll accounts, which are critical for effective business operations. Although they are not part of the fundamental accounting cycle, these statements help firms keep track of key data. Payroll accounting, in particular, is a key job skill that you’ll need in an accounting career.
- The next three lessons of the course help you to assess both statements and firms. They will help you answer questions such as “How is the business doing?” “Are we benchmarking ourselves against the industry?” “Are we safeguarded against malpractice and fraud?” Ethics in accounting has become an increasingly important topic in recent years. In this group of lessons, you will learn about key legislation in accounting.

You will submit the Course Activity documents to your teacher, and you will grade your work in the Lesson Activities by comparing them with sample responses. Each lesson also has a multiple-choice mastery test. A multiple-choice end-of-semester test completes the course.

The Course Activities (submitted to the teacher) and the Lesson Activities (self-checked) are major components of this course. They will guide your learning as you work through this course. In particular, the last of the eight course activities will help you identify possible career paths and key skills required for a career in accounting.

Course Goals

By the end of this course, you will have done the following:

- learned to use accounting as a business tool
- explored the scope and limitations of accounting
- understood how to use accounting concepts to evaluate businesses
- learned about the key government regulations in accounting
- explored various career options in accounting
- familiarized yourself with (and practiced) key accounting tasks such as book keeping and payroll accounting

Prerequisite Skills

Introduction to Accounting is a beginning class that does not have specific prerequisites. Nevertheless, these fundamental skills will be helpful:

- ability to do quick mental math
- general familiarity with the writing process

General Skills

To participate in this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Complete basic operations with word processing software, such as Microsoft Word and with spreadsheets, such as Microsoft Excel.
- Perform online research using various search engines and library databases.
- Communicate through email and participate in discussion boards.

For a complete list of general skills that are required for participation in online courses, refer to the Prerequisites section of the Plato Student Orientation document, found at the beginning of this course.

Credit Value

Introduction to Accounting is a 0.5-credit course.

Course Materials

- Notebook
- Presentation software
- Computer with Internet connection and speakers or headphones
- Microsoft Word or equivalent
- Microsoft Excel or equivalent

Course Pacing Guide

This course description and pacing guide is intended to help you stay on schedule with your work. Note that your course instructor may modify the schedule to meet the specific needs of your class.

Day	Activity / Objective	Type
1 day: 1	Course Orientation <i>Review the Plato Student Orientation and Course Syllabus at the beginning of this course.</i>	
3 days: 2-4	What Is Accounting? <i>Define the scope and nature of accounting as a science.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 5-7	Accounting Principles <i>Apply fundamental accounting principles.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 8-10	The Fundamental Accounting Equation <i>Apply the fundamental accounting equation to various types of firms.</i>	Lesson
2 days: 11-12	Trading Versus Service Business <i>Distinguish between accounting heads as required by trading and services firms.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 13-17	Basics of Financial Accounting	Course Activity
1 day: 18	Accounting Principles	Course Discussion
1 day: 19	Game	Activity
3 days: 20-22	Account Types <i>Classify accounting heads as assets, liabilities, income, and expenses.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 23-25	The Accounting Cycle <i>Explain the fundamental accounting cycle.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 26-29	Debits and Credits in Accounting	Course Activity
1 day: 30	More on Methods of Valuation	Course Discussion
2 days: 31-32	The Journal <i>Apply accounting principles to record common accounting transactions.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 33-35	The Ledger and the Trial Balance <i>Prepare a ledger and a trial balance on the basis of a given journal.</i>	Lesson

5 days: 36-40	Use of Ledger and Trial Balance	Course Activity
1 day: 41	Errors in a Trial Balance	Course Discussion
1 day: 42	Game	Activity
3 days: 43-45	The Income Statement <i>Create an income statement on the basis of a given trial balance and other relevant entries.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 46-48	The Balance Sheet <i>Create a balance sheet for a given firm's data.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 49-53	Income Statement and Balance Sheet	Course Activity
1 day: 54	Balance Sheet Elements	Course Discussion
1 day: 55	Game	Activity
3 days: 56-58	Cash and Bank Statements <i>Prepare cash and bank statements.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 59-61	Payroll Accounting <i>Create a payroll for a given set of enterprise data.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 62-66	Cash Flows and Payroll Accounting	Course Activity
1 day: 67	Reconciling Balances	Course Discussion
1 day: 68	Game	Activity
2 days: 69-70	The Balance Sheet and Income Statement Revisited <i>Analyze balance sheets to compare the financial situations of firms.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 71-73	Financial Ratios <i>Apply various financial ratios to assess a firm's financial health.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 74-77	Analysis of Financial Statements	Course Activity
1 day: 78	Financial Ratios	Course Discussion
3 days: 79-81	Cost Accounting <i>Allocate costs to various products in a manufacturing unit.</i>	Lesson

5 days: 82-86	Internal Controls in Accounting	Course Activity
1 day: 87	Controls in Accounting	Course Discussion
1 day: 88	Game	Activity
1 day: 89	Course Review	
1 day: 90	End of Course	Assessment