Chapter 29

Checking Accounts

Chapter Objectives

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

Section 29.1 The Basics of Checking Accounts
- Discuss the different types of checking accounts and how they work.
- Discuss other services and offerings that banks provide checking account holders.

Section 29.2 Account Records
- Describe how checking account holders manage their bank transactions.
- Describe the procedure for bringing your account into agreement with bank records.

Ask

STANDARD &POOR’S Checking Accounts: Budgeting

Q: How do I get started managing my finances?
A: Basically, budgeting is about managing the money coming in (income) and the money going out (expenditures). In the business world, this coming in and going out of money is known as cash flow. The goal is to create an overall positive cash flow. Before you decide how to manage your finances, spend a month or two keeping careful track of your cash flow. Assess how you spend your money and decide where possible cutbacks can be made, for example making coffee at home in the morning or cutting down on eating out. Discipline is the key to saving money. After making cutbacks, consider your options for investing the money you’ve saved. You may choose to invest in physical assets, such as a car or real estate, or in financial assets, including stocks, bonds, CDs, money markets, and traditional bank accounts.

Mathematics Edward is analyzing his finances. He has determined that in the month of May he spent $625 on rent and utilities, $293 on food, $216 on gas, $254 on his car payment, and $422 on entertainment. He made only $1,595 freelancing and $50 on investments. Will Edward need to cut back on his entertainment expenditures in order to have positive cash flow?

CONCEPT Adding and Subtracting Multiple Numbers When you are adding or subtracting more than two numbers, do one operation at a time. First, line up all of the addends vertically. Add up the columns from right to left. Finally, make the necessary subtractions.
Bank Services  You can withdraw money from a bank account several different ways. Why is it a good idea to keep printed copies of all banking receipts and records?
Section 29.1

The Basics of Checking Accounts

Read to Learn
• Discuss the different types of checking accounts and how they work.
• Discuss other services and offerings that banks provide checking account holders.

The Main Idea
Checking accounts are tools that many people use to make payments. A checking account provides a way for consumers to manage their spending, make payments easily, and keep track of their funds. When they have a checking account, customers can access information online through the bank’s Web site.

Key Concepts
• How Checking Accounts Work
• Account Services and Other Offerings

Vocabulary

Key Terms
- check
- direct deposit
- interest-bearing account
- signature card
- overdraft protection
- stop payment
- debit card

Academic Vocabulary
You will find these words in your reading and on your tests. Make sure you know their meanings.
- demand
- common
- designed
- compare

Graphic Organizer
In a figure like the one below, describe ways you will use traditional checking services and the additional services banks now provide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Checking Services</th>
<th>Additional Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Go to the Introduction to Business Online Learning Center through glencoe.com for a printable graphic organizer.

Academic Standards

English Language Arts
NCTE 1 Read texts to acquire new information
NCTE 4 Use written language to communicate effectively

Mathematics

Number and Operations Compute fluently and make reasonable estimates
How Checking Accounts Work

It is hard to imagine how businesses and people would function without checks. A **check** is a written order directing a bank or other financial institution to pay money on **demand** to the person or company named on it. Checks are a **common** medium of exchange, or way to make payments for goods and services.

A customer opens a checking account by depositing money into a bank. The bank provides paper checks, which can then be used to pay for goods and services. The check is paid to the payee, the business or person to whom the check was written. The payee can either deposit the check or cash it. Once the money is paid, the check writer's bank voids, or cancels, the check. **Figure 29.1** shows both sides of a canceled check.

**Reading Check**  
**Explain** What is a check?

**Figure 29.1**  
**Writing and Cashing a Check**

Explain What is a check?

**Why is it sometimes a good idea to write a check instead of spending cash?**

**Section 29.1**  
The Basics of Checking Accounts 515
Types of Accounts

Most banks offer several types of checking accounts. Customer service representatives at financial institutions can answer questions about account services, fees, and charges. You might also want to ask other consumers about their experiences with different banks and accounts. Shop around and compare financial institutions and the services they have to offer.

Regular Checking Account

A regular checking account is designed for customers who write a few checks each month and do not keep a minimum amount of money in the account. Withdrawals from a checking account are made through checks that the account holder has written, automatic deductions (such as bill payments), and withdrawals from automated teller machines (ATMs). Direct deposit allows electronic transfers of payments directly from the payer’s account to the account of the person being paid.

Interest-Bearing Accounts

In addition to regular checking accounts, most banks offer interest-bearing accounts. An interest-bearing account is an account that earns interest on the balance for the depositor.

Joint Accounts

You might also open a joint account, an account that allows two people who are equally responsible for the account to write checks. These accounts are often used by married couples or businesses with more than one owner.

Checking Account Security

Once you decide what type of account you want, you must fill out a signature card at the financial institution. A signature card is a record of an account holder’s signature used to verify identity.
If someone takes a check that the account holder has written to him or her to the branch where the account was opened, the teller can verify the account holder's signature with the card. If the signature matches, then the check will be cashed. If it does not match, the check will not be cashed.

You must also provide your address, phone number, and the answer to a security question, such as your mother's maiden name. The bank then assigns you a checking account number and issues you a book of checks.

**Account Services and Other Offerings**

Banks offer various services for checking accounts. Some of these services are offered as protection to the consumer. Other services are designed to make banking more convenient.

When an account is **overdrawn**, it means that the account owner has written checks for more money than the balance in the account. An **overdraft** is the amount that is overdrawn. **Overdraft protection** is a line of credit for overdrawn checks.

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**BusinessWeek Reader and Case Study**

**The Check Cashed Around the World**

*It’s not here yet, but banks are expanding services for globe-trotting customers.*

Imagine being able to write a check in Madrid to send as a wedding gift to a friend in Taipei—and she can easily cash it at a local bank. Or having your checking and credit-card accounts open and waiting for you in New York City the day you arrive from your former home in Shanghai.

Banks don’t typically provide such services to every retail customer, even as the industry globalizes amid a series of cross-border mergers. But some banks have been rolling out checking account services in recent years that better address the needs of globe-trotting consumers.

It’s happening as multinationals and banks continue broadening their global reach. One recent example: National Bank of Greece announced plans in early April 2006 to buy a 46% stake in Turkey’s Finansbank for €2.3 billion ($2.77 billion).

And speculation has been rampant this month about what—or where—global banking pioneer Citigroup will buy next, now that the Federal Reserve has lifted its prohibition against the New York financial services company’s pursuit of acquisitions.

**Case Study** Go to the Introduction to Business Online Learning Center through glencoe.com for the BusinessWeek Reader Case Study.

**Active Learning**

Many people carry traveler’s checks when they go on vacation. Research traveler’s checks and alternatives to using them. Write an e-mail to your teacher about changes that make it easier to buy souvenirs while you are traveling.
If you have overdraft protection and write a check for more than you have in the account, the bank will cover the check up to a certain amount. You may pay a service fee and interest for overdraft protection. A **stop payment** is an order for a bank not to cash a particular check. It also usually requires a fee. A **debit card** is a bank card that immediately takes money from a checking account when it is used. It is used like a credit card.

**Online Banking**

Technology allows consumers to handle many banking transactions over the Internet. Online banking allows consumers to check their account balances, transfer money, or pay bills at any time. With online banking, your checking account information is available to you from your home computer 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Online banking also allows you to save time and money. Banks offer the option of scheduling automatic payment of bills from the checking account, too.

You can use an Internet browser on your computer to handle online banking. With personal finance software, you can store information about your transactions for your records.

### Section 29.1

**Review Key Concepts**

1. How does a checking account work?
2. What are the three main types of checking accounts?
3. Discuss some additional services and offerings that banks provide checking account holders.

**Academic Skills**

4. **Mathematics** Vinita has a checking account at a local bank. This account pays 0.5% interest if she maintains an average balance of at least $1,500 during a month. In February, Vinita’s average monthly balance was $1,120 more than the minimum. How much interest did she earn in February?

**Concent** **Percents Less Than One** To convert a percent to a decimal, multiply it by 100 by moving the decimal point two places to the left. Therefore, $0.5\% = 0.005$.

**Math** For math help, go to the Math Appendix.

Go to the *Introduction to Business* Online Learning Center through glencoe.com to check your answers.
Account Records

Reading Guide

Before You Read
Think about some ways you would manage a checking account effectively.

Read to Learn
• Describe how checking account holders manage their bank transactions.
• Describe the procedure for bringing your account into agreement with bank records.

The Main Idea
You must manage your checking account so that you have an accurate picture of your finances. A bank provides you with a bank statement showing all transactions. You should check your checkbook records against that statement regularly.

Key Concepts
• Keeping Track of Financial Transactions
• Reconciling Your Account Records

Vocabulary

Key Terms
- check register
- canceled checks
- endorsement
- bank statement
- outstanding checks

Academic Vocabulary
- route
- valid
- traces
- alteration

Graphic Organizer
In a figure like the one below, write a check to Tina’s Hair Salon for $25.00.

First Last 1234
4321 My Street Date ______
Seattle, WA 98111

PAY TO THE ORDER OF: $ ______

____________________ DOLLARS

My Bank
1234 Street
Seattle, WA 98111

Memo:

:322345692: 1234567890 1234

Academic Standards

English Language Arts
- NCTE 1 Read texts to acquire new information
- NCTE 5 Use different writing process elements to communicate effectively
- NCTE 7 Conduct research and gather, evaluate, and synthesize data to communicate discoveries

Science
- Content Standard F Students should develop understanding of science and technology in local, national, and global challenges
Keeping Track of Financial Transactions

An advantage of checking accounts is that they enable consumers to keep records of their financial transactions. The different elements of a check provide information that can be used in financial record keeping. Financial institutions also provide forms and reports (see Figure 29.2 for an example of a checking account statement) that consumers can use to keep their checking account in order. With these records, account holders can keep track of their income and expenses.

The Parts of a Check

There are usually three people, or parties, named on a check. The payee is the party to whom the check is written, or who is cashing the check. The drawer is the party who wrote the check and is paying the money, or drawing it from an account. The third party is the drawee, the financial institution where the drawer has an account.

Banks and other companies use the information printed on checks to route a check to your account for payment. A check must include an account number and a bank route number, which traces the check back to the account on which it was written. A check includes the name and location of the drawer’s bank, a check number, and security features. A check presented for payment must include a valid date, the drawer’s signature, the payee’s name, and matching numerical and written amounts.

The Check 21 Act

The Check Clearing for the 21st Century Act, or Check 21 Act, authorizes recipients of a check to convert it to a digital form and then transmit it to the Federal Reserve Bank for credit, as if it were an actual check. It was advocated as the start of electronic exchange and the end of paper. Yet it has progressed at a relatively slow rate of acceptance. Why do you suppose Check 21 has been slow to gain acceptance?

Biometrics

With identity fraud becoming more prevalent, authorities and organizations have started looking for new ways to protect the consumer. One of the more promising technologies involves using biometrics to grant account access to consumers. Many parts of the body form patterns that are unique to each individual. The patterns formed by fingerprints, DNA, and characteristics of the eye form patterns that can last throughout a person’s life. In the future, these technologies are likely to be easy to use and a highly accurate way of verifying customers’ identities.

WebQuest

Go to the Introduction to Business Online Learning Center through glencoe.com for links to Web sites where you can research how biometric technologies may change the security industry. Write a paragraph describing other applications of biometrics.
Writing a Check

When you write a check, record the check number, the amount of the check, the date, and the name of the payee in a check register. A check register is a checkbook log in which an account holder records checking account transactions. If you do not record the check immediately, you might forget some of the information.

Identify Who are the three parties or people named on a check?

Making Deposits

To deposit cash or a check in your account, fill out a deposit slip. The deposit slip lists the amount of cash and checks and the total amount of the deposit. You may deposit your check at a bank or through an ATM. You will usually receive a receipt for your transaction. After you make the deposit, record it in your check register.
To deposit or cash a check requires an endorsement, or the signature of the payee on the back of the check. Endorse the check on the back (on the lines printed for the endorsement). Sign your name exactly as it is written on the front of the check. Do not sign a check until you are ready to deposit or cash it. Then you have some protection in case it is lost or stolen. When making a deposit, write “For Deposit Only” as part of the endorsement so that it cannot be cashed if lost or stolen.

**Bank Statements**

Once a month, banks issue a bank statement, the bank’s record of all the transactions in a checking account. The statement includes a record of all withdrawals, deposits, interest, and fees. It also includes a record of all canceled checks, or checks that have been cashed. A canceled check is proof that the money has been paid to a payee.

**Handling Your Own Checks**

Checks should be handled carefully. Do not print or write your driver license, Social Security, telephone, or credit card numbers on them. Keep checks, canceled checks, deposit slips, and bank statements in a safe place. Never leave your checkbook in the open or in a car. Check your bank statements for anything unusual. Make sure your checks have security features to protect against counterfeiting and alteration. Unless needed for tax purposes, destroy old documents that have your account number on them. Never make a check payable to “Cash.” If “Cash” is written on the payee line, anyone who has the check can cash it.

**Balancing the Checkbook**

Michael and Conchetta Hamel received this bank statement. They need to reconcile the balance in the check register shown below with a bank balance of $830.89. The statement does not include check numbers 431 and 432. Also missing is a deposit in the amount of $27.85. The bank has charged a $6 service fee. How would you reconcile their records?

**Figure 29.3 — A Checkbook Register**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Payment</th>
<th>Deposit</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$624.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>429</td>
<td>10/01</td>
<td>Old Navy</td>
<td>22.95</td>
<td></td>
<td>601.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>430</td>
<td>10/01</td>
<td>Kroger</td>
<td>15.86</td>
<td></td>
<td>586.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>10/01</td>
<td>Paycheck</td>
<td></td>
<td>350.77</td>
<td>936.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>10/02</td>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>886.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>431</td>
<td>10/04</td>
<td>Olive Garden</td>
<td>46.27</td>
<td></td>
<td>840.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>432</td>
<td>10/04</td>
<td>Amazon.com</td>
<td>37.48</td>
<td></td>
<td>803.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>10/06</td>
<td>Sam’s check</td>
<td></td>
<td>27.85</td>
<td>830.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reconciling Your Account Records

Bank reconciliation is the process of seeing whether an account holder’s records agree with the bank’s records for the account. To reconcile is to bring into agreement, or balance. If the bank statement shows a different balance than your register, you should reconcile both records.

Balancing Your Checkbook

The first step to reconciling your account is to see whether the bank has processed all of your checks and deposits. With the bank statement and your check register, you can identify your outstanding checks, or checks that have been written but have not yet been cashed. The total dollar amount of outstanding checks should be subtracted from the balance shown on the bank statement. Figure 29.3 shows an example of a checkbook register that must be balanced.

If you have made any deposits or ATM withdrawals that have not been recorded on the bank statement, those transactions should be factored into the bank statement balance. If the bank charged any service fees, you may not have recorded them in your check register. Subtract the service fee from the balance in your check register. If your account earns interest, add the interest shown on the bank statement to your check register.

Once the balance on the bank statement and the balance in your check register are the same, you have reconciled your check register balance with the bank statement balance.

Finding Errors

If your balance differs from the bank’s balance after you reconcile your account, double check the amounts in your records and all your additions and subtractions. Then check the bank’s additions and subtractions. If you find a mistake, report it immediately. Why is it important to reconcile your bank account?

Section 29.2

Review Key Concepts

1. What kinds of financial records help people manage their checking accounts?
2. What are some guidelines to consider when ordering and handling personal checks?
3. Describe the purpose of reconciling a bank statement and a check register.

Academic Skills

4. English Language Arts Work with a group of four to plan and design storyboards for a documentary called “Travels of a Check” that describes a check’s life. Present your storyboards as visuals in an oral documentary.

5. English Language Arts Research how to balance a checking account using the monthly bank statement and check register. Write step-by-step instructions that are clear and concise describing the process.

Go to the Introduction to Business Online Learning Center through glencoe.com to check your answers.
The Basics of Checking Accounts

Banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions provide checking account services for individuals and businesses. Customers can write checks to transfer money easily to others. Banks offer a selection of checking accounts to meet their customers’ needs. Some accounts are designed for those who need to write only a few checks. Others are designed for those who need more extensive banking services. Many banks offer their checking account customers additional services, such as overdraft protection, stop-payment services, debit cards, and online banking.

Account Records

A checking account provides a way to keep track of financial transactions. There are usually three people, or parties, named on a check. There are specific steps that must be followed to write and deposit checks and to keep blank checks safe. A bank periodically sends each customer a record of all transactions recorded for the customer’s account. With those statements, customers can reconcile the bank’s records with their own records. This enables customers to find possible errors. It also helps them to manage their money and determine the correct information to start the next month.

Vocabulary Review

1. On a sheet of paper, use each of these key terms and academic vocabulary terms in a sentence.

   **Key Terms**
   - check
   - direct deposit
   - interest-bearing account
   - signature card
   - overdrawn
   - overdraft protection
   - stop payment

   **Academic Vocabulary**
   - debit card
   - check register
   - endorsement
   - bank statement
   - canceled checks
   - bank reconciliation

2. Discuss the different types of checking accounts and how they work.
3. Discuss other services and offerings that banks provide checking account holders.
4. Describe how checking account holders manage their bank transactions.
5. Describe the procedure for bringing your account into agreement with bank records.
Critical Thinking

6. Banks may disregard the date written on a check that has been postdated, that is, dated for a future date. Why do you think banks have this policy?

7. What types of personal information do you think banks need and for what purposes?

8. How would you answer a person who is concerned that banking online is risky?

9. Most banks offer overdraft protection to their customers, sometimes for a fee. Would you consider taking overdraft protection? Why or why not?

10. How long do you think checking account records should be kept? Explain your answer.

11. Why is overdrawing a checking account poor financial management?

12. What effect do you think customer deposits in checking accounts have on the economic system?

13. Do you think people who have a joint checking account should each have a checkbook, or should they share one? Give reasons for your opinion.

Write About It

14. In two or more paragraphs, discuss the factors to consider when deciding whether the fees associated with overdraft protection are worthwhile.

15. How would you endorse a check if your name is misspelled as the payee? How would you endorse a check if you wanted to send someone to the bank to deposit it for you? Write an example of an endorsement in each case.

16. Write a short article for your school newspaper on the precautions people should take when handling a checking account and keeping account records.

17. What effect do you think ATMs have had on customers’ use of banks? Write a brief essay on your observations.

18. Why should you shop around before opening a checking account? What are some features that would appeal to you? Write a brief explanation of your response.

19. Think about the differences and similarities between debit cards and credit cards. Discuss them in at least one page.

Technology Applications

Word-Processing Software

20. Use your local phone book, newspaper advertisements, bank Web sites, or brochures to prepare a report about banks. Include information such as the number of checking accounts offered, the minimum amount needed to open an account, interest rates offered on interest-bearing accounts, transaction fees charged, service fees, and other services offered with checking accounts.

Business Ethics

Is the Bank’s Loss Your Gain?

21. Suppose you have a regular checking account. One day you make a deposit at an ATM machine for $100. While your records show that you should have $500 in the account after the deposit, your ATM receipt shows a new balance of $5,000. You figure that the ATM has made a mistake and wonder what would happen if you did not tell the bank. What should you do?
Applying Academics to Business

English Language Arts
22. Credit cards and debit cards look alike, but they are very different when it comes to consumer protection. Find out more about the differences in how consumers are protected when they use the two types of cards. Write a few sentences informing others about these differences.

Mathematics
23. You and your friend Sal spend Saturday shopping. Sal uses checks to make purchases but needs help writing out the dollar amounts. Write the following dollar amounts as you would write them on a check: $36.45, $152.79, $16.14, and $1,311.35.

CONCEPT Writing Numbers When writing the name of a number in words, avoid using the word and except to signal the decimal point. For example, write the name in words for 1,034.5 as “one thousand thirty-four and five-tenths.”

English Language Arts
24. The following words have specific meanings in the context of banking and financial activity, but they have other meanings as well. Write a sentence for each word identifying its part of speech and describing at least two meanings.

interest draw account

Mathematics
25. Your bank statement shows an ending balance of $844.71. You have recorded in your checkbook register a deposit of $131.25 that does not appear on your statement, and two checks for $50 apiece that were not returned with the statement. What is your actual balance?

CONCEPT Credits and Debits Deposits are additions to your account, and checks written against the account are reductions.

Active Learning

Online Bill Paying
26. Work in teams. Survey people in your neighborhood or school about online bill paying. Ask them: Do you pay bills online? If not, why? Do you write fewer checks than you did three years ago? Will you write fewer checks in the future? What do you like most about online bill paying? What concerns you about it? Summarize your information in a short report.

Business in the Real World

Check Scanning
27. Some banks provide scanning services for businesses to make check deposits. A business can transmit customers’ check images from their business location to their bank. The process saves time and costs. Research check scanning by going online or calling some banks. You could also ask local businesspeople you know about it. Write a brief report of your findings, and share it with the class.
Role Play

USING THE RIGHT ACCOUNT

28. A routing transit number (RTN) is the nine-digit code on the bottom of checks that identifies which financial institution it is drawn upon. This code is also used to process direct deposits and other automated transfers. There are two other numbers on the bottom of every check. Research companies that print personal check blanks and fill out an order form so that the printer can print them with all of the parts of a standard check.

CAREERS

Cool Business CAREERS

FIND YOUR DREAM JOB

29. Go to the Introduction to Business Online Learning Center through glencoe.com for a link to the Occupational Outlook Handbook Web site. Click on the “OOH Search/ A-Z Index” link and enter the field of “banking.” Then write a one-page report about this type of occupation. Conclude your report with a list of things you could do now to prepare yourself to pursue the occupation.

Standardized Test Practice

Directions Choose the letter of the best answer. Write the letter for the answer on a separate piece of paper.

1. What is $2,952.11 rounded to the nearest hundred?
   A $2,900.00
   B $3,000.00
   C $2,952.00
   D $2,952.10

TEST-TAKING TIP Evaluate your test-taking savvy by answering these questions:
   • Do I use my time well during a test?
   • Does anxiety get in the way of doing my best on a test?
   • How can I prepare better for my next test?

Reading Go to the Introduction to Business Online Learning Center through glencoe.com for a list of outside reading suggestions.