THINK CRITICALLY
Handwrite your responses in the space below; 2 sentences each.

1. Explain how to save and invest using a systematic strategy.

2. Why is having a long-term saving and investment strategy important?

3. What is dollar-cost averaging? What is the advantage to using this investment strategy?

4. How does diversification lower investment risks?

5. What is an investment portfolio?

6. What types of investments should be the foundation of an investment portfolio?

7. What are some factors that will affect the types of investments a person may need in an investment portfolio?

8. How is a bull market different from a bear market?

9. When the economy is growing and stock prices are rising, why might an investor sell stocks? When the economy is slowing down and stock prices are falling, why might an investor buy stocks?

POWERPOINT: 6 SLIDES ON STOCK STRATEGIES

Summarize each of the strategies for stock selection in a PowerPoint (slides 1-5). Talk about the strategy, make sense of it, think of examples, etc. Your PowerPoint should be informative and creative. On your final slide, answer the five questions at the end (slide 6).

STRATEGIES FOR STOCK SELECTION

1 PETER LYNCH: BUY WHAT YOU KNOW

Go with what you know. That is the advice of Peter Lynch, former portfolio manager of Fidelity Magellan Fund. "During a lifetime of buying cars or cameras, you develop a sense of what's good, what's bad, what sells, and what doesn't. If it's not cars you know about, you know something about something else, and the most important part is, you know it before Wall Street knows it." Think about what you know. What product do you really like? What is popular among your friends? Who makes it? Do you think it will continue to be popular? The point Peter Lynch makes is that stock tips are all around us. Often, we might spot a good company before it is well known. He does caution, though, that you have to do your homework. If you can't explain what the company does, then you shouldn't buy it. In addition to knowing what the company does and whether it makes good products/services, you also need to know how the company is doing, the financial position of the company, and other important information.

2 MARKETS: CURRENT AND FUTURE

A product must have customers today and even more tomorrow or it isn't growing. When selecting a stock, you must consider the markets available for the product/service. Does almost everyone already own one? In the early phase of development, a company first puts a product or service on the market and its sales are expected to grow rapidly because not everyone has what it sells. In the late phase, a company's product or service has been on the market for a while, and its sales are no longer expected to grow rapidly. The stock of a rapidly growing company is more likely to increase in price, especially in the short term of the FS Stock Market Challenge. Global markets are important as well. Examine prospects for U.S. companies in foreign markets. U.S. companies moved into Mexican markets with NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement), Eastern Europe with the fall of communism, and into China and Russia with economic reform. McDonald's is a good example of a company that had saturated the U.S. market, and, as a result, its sales and growth were flat. It moved aggressively into foreign countries, developed new markets, and continues to grow. Remember that the product or service must be appealing to businesses or consumers in these countries. Demographics (population) also affects current and future markets. Will a large percentage of the population want this product? Imagine that your age group was the largest age group in the population. Companies that produced what you bought would do very well. In the 1950s and 1960s, the baby boomers were teenagers, and there were more of them than any other group. Record companies, fast-food restaurants, and other companies that targeted teenagers did very well. Because many products/services are targeted to a certain age group, you have to consider who will buy the product and the number of potential customers when you make a judgment on current and future markets.

3 ECONOMIC CYCLE

Is the economy booming or slowing down? The performance of many stocks will be affected by economic cycles. Buyers of stocks need to know which ones and why. When the economy is growing, most people who want to have jobs have them, and people and businesses are spending money. Individuals might decide to purchase a new car, and businesses might decide to buy some new machinery. When the economy slows down, more people than usual are out of work or worried about being out of work, and people and businesses cut back on their spending; they are not likely to spend money on items or services they do not absolutely need. They are not as likely to purchase a new car, build a house, take a trip to Hawaii, or - in the case of a business - build a new plant or buy new equipment. But even in bad economic times, people still buy some products. They brush their teeth, eat cereal for breakfast, take a pill for that awful cold, and heat their homes. They might be a little more careful about expenditures, but some items will be purchased despite the downturn.

POWERPOINT: 6 SLIDES ON STOCK STRATEGIES

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Understanding the economic cycle helps you make judgments about when to buy which stocks. During recessions, stocks in defensive industries (medicines, food, clothing, public utilities, etc.) generally decline less than stocks in other industries. During expansions, defensive stocks often show less growth and return. Companies in cyclical industries (high-priced consumer goods like cars and appliances; raw materials like aluminum, steel, and cement, and tools and equipment) are often highly affected by business cycle conditions. During recessions, stocks in cyclical industries generally decline as much as or more than stocks in defensive industries. During expansions, cyclical stocks offer much higher returns and growth potential.

4 AVOID THE OBVIOUS RISKS

Beware Front-Page Stories & the Year's Winners

Beware of front-page stories. Of the 20,000 stocks publicly traded, only two or three will be found on page one. This year's winners are unlikely to be next year's winners. Most stocks don't get headlines, and when they do, everyone else knows about it as well, including Wall Street. Stick with the boring stocks. You will have to work a little harder, but your chances of picking a good stock are much better.

Know About Current Industry Conditions

To what industry (group of companies that produce or sell the same kind of product or service) does your potential stock selection belong? Industry classification includes transportation, automotive, food and beverage, retail/apparel, health care, entertainment, communication, utilities, financial, and several others. Will current events in the United States or other nations affect businesses in a specific industry? Is that industry in trouble? For example, when the Clinton administration was developing a plan for government-sponsored health care in 1994, there was speculation that prices would be regulated for some medicines. As a result, the pharmaceutical companies experienced a sharp drop in their stock prices. Merck, a strong company with an excellent record of growth and income, dropped right along with the others. A given company might be a good company, but a given time might not be a good time for its stock. (Merck later recovered.)

5 DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Once you have a general idea about how your selection fares in each of these categories, it is time to use some common sense and do a little research. You should know what the company does and whether it makes good products/services. How is the company doing? What is the financial position of the company? What is the company debt (assets to liabilities ratio), earnings growth over the past five years, high and low prices for the year (stock tables)? What about dividend payments? Is the company in an early or late phase of development? Are new developments in progress? What other businesses does the company own? Is there diversity in the products it makes? Information can be found by writing to the company for an annual report, by looking at newspaper stock tables, by calling or visiting the business department at your city library, by calling an area broker, etc. The bottom line is that YOU have to do some thinking, some research, some more thinking, and then make a selection.

Even if the markets, industry, economic cycle, and technology angles all check out, stock buyers still have to check the specific stock situation. If a particular company is in trouble or could be in trouble, then it is not a good choice. For example, although the contact lens industry had been relatively strong and healthy, one of the companies, Bausch and Lomb, experienced significant problems when its management sought an unrealistic growth rate. The impact of this goal on production and distribution resulted in large unsold inventories and eventually a precipitous drop in profit and in the price of a stock. Bausch & Lomb stock would not have been a wise choice at that time.

Questions for Discussion

A. What is Peter Lynch's advice for picking stocks?
B. Give an example of a stock that you think has a growing market.
C. What is an example of a good stock to buy in a recession? Expansion?
D. Why should you beware of front-page stories?
E. Explain how changes in technology affect stock price.

Buy What You Know?

My Son Likes Video Games. Should He Invest In Them?

READ THE ARTICLE BELOW AND SUMMARIZE THE MAIN POINTS IN <u>10 BULLET POINTS</u>. YOU CAN TYPE YOUR RESPONSES IN AN EMAIL OR WORD.

Question: My teenage son has $3,000 in a savings account that we're thinking of investing in a stock or two. I've read that you should invest in things that you have an interest in, which in his case is video gaming. Any suggestions?

Answer: Yes, my suggestion is that you keep your son's video gaming and investing separate.

The "invest in things you have an interest in" -- or, more accurately, "invest in what you know" -- school of investing was popularized by legendary mutual fund manager Peter Lynch.

In his best-selling book One Up on Wall Street, Lynch wrote about buying Dunkin' Donuts stock because he liked the coffee and investing in Hanes because his wife wore the company's then new L'eggs line of pantyhose.

Investors worldwide have since taken this to mean that if you come across a product or service you really like or intrigues you, others will probably be drawn to it too, so chances are you can make money investing in the stock of the firm that manufactures the product or delivers the service.

Applying that principle to your son, and the idea is that he might want to invest in a company that makes popular video game systems, such as Nintendo (Wii) or a publisher of video games, such as Electronic Arts (Battlefield 2) or Activision Blizzard (Guitar Hero).

But as appealing as this concept may be, I don't think buy-what-you-know really cuts it as an investing strategy, and I don't recommend you and your son invest his three grand on that basis.

Why?

Well, for one thing, people who espouse this theory oversimplify what Peter Lynch actually said. After he talks in the book about Dunkin and Hanes, he goes on to say that "finding the promising company is only the first step. The next step is doing the research."

And knowing how to do that research and actually doing it is what made Peter Lynch a great investor, not his taste in coffee or panty hose (well, his wife's taste in panty hose).

The reason that the research is so important is that even if a company really does make a superior product, it doesn't necessarily mean its stock is a great buy.

The price per share might be blimpish relative to its future earnings prospects, limiting the potential for future gains. It may not have enough new products in the pipeline to stay competitive. Or it could be carrying crushing debt or just poorly run.

Sorting through such issues takes a bit of financial knowledge and expertise. I'm not saying that stock analysis is completely beyond the ken of an intelligent teen. But he would have to be as willing to devote himself to poring over balance sheets, income statements and financial projections as he is to thumbing his way around a video game controller.

And even if your son is OK with doing the necessary homework for investing in individual stocks, where would he be at the end of the process? He'd have all his money invested in a couple of stocks in one industry. He'd be vulnerable to "idiosyncratic" risk, which is a fancy way of saying that if, despite his best efforts, the stocks he chose blew up, he'd take a big hit because he concentrated his money in just a couple of picks.

In fact, even if the companies themselves had no major problems but the industry fell out of favor for some reason -- say, a backlash against the violence in some of these games -- he could suffer losses simply because he put all his eggs in one industry basket rather than spreading them around a variety of industries and sectors.

So unless your son sees himself as a Peter Lynch in the making and considers this basic training -- or you feel there's no other way to get your son's attention when it comes to investing -- I'd say you're better off helping him pick a broadly diversified stock mutual fund, like the total stock market index fund on our MONEY 70 list of recommended funds.

One more thing: If it's any consolation to him, by investing in the total stock market index fund he'll also indirectly own a piece of video game companies like Activision, Electronic Arts and Take Two, not to mention more than 3,000 other companies, which should cover any other interests he might have.