

*Group or Individual Lesson  
1 class period (with extension)*

*A People's Guide to the Federal Budget  
Chapter 5 & 6*

## **Your Tax Dollars**

**Objective:**

Students will be able to understand graphically where their tax dollars go.

### **Description:**

1. Students will brainstorm a list of up to three careers or jobs they are interested in pursuing after high school or college.
2. Students will then research the starting salaries for their choices. There are various on-line sites to help students find this information. Salary.com is one.
3. After researching their potential incomes, students will use NPP's on-line tax estimator (<http://nationalpriorities.org/en/interactive-data/taxday/>) to calculate a rough estimate of the amount of federal income taxes they will potentially owe each year.
4. Using the Tax Chart on NPP's website (<http://nationalpriorities.org/en/interactive-data/taxday/>) students will see what their tax dollars would fund. (Note: enter their estimated annual federal income taxes and have the choice of seeing it visualized as either a bar chart or a receipt.)
5. Use the following questions to help the students process their findings in a discussion or in writing:
  - ⤴ What stands out the most about what you just learned?
  - ⤴ Where did the most/the least of your tax dollars go?
  - ⤴ Would you have allocated your tax dollars differently? Why or why not?
  - ⤴ What did this make you think about?
  - ⤴ What questions do you have?
  - ⤴ What portion of the taxes spent would have an impact on you?
  - ⤴ Are taxes worth it?
6. **Extension Activity:** Ask the students to engage their parent(s)/guardians/family members in creating their own federal income tax receipt and have a discussion using the questions outlined in #5. Students can summarize their discussion with their family and share with the class, if interested.