Financial Consumer Agency of Canada
Agence de la consommation en matière financière du Canada

Getting the Most from Your Credit Card

Understanding the Terms and Conditions

If you want to know…

- How to choose a credit card that meets your needs
- How to determine if the interest-free applies
- How to get the most from low introductory rates
- How to save money when you use your credit card

… then this booklet is for you!

Protecting Consumers Informing Canadians

Disponible en français

Canada

Contents

About FCAC

The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada (FCAC) is an agency of the Government of Canada. It was created to protect the rights of consumers and inform them about financial products and services.

How We Protect You

We make sure that financial institutions regulated by the Government of Canada follow the consumer protection measures set out in federal laws and regulations. We also see to it that they respect their own codes of conduct and their commitments to you, the consumer.

If you'd like to learn more about consumer protection and about the financial industry's codes of conduct, we'd be happy to hear from you.

How We Inform You

FCAC provides information, tips and tools to help you protect your rights and find the financial products or services you need. You can get this information by calling or writing to us, by visiting our Web site or through our free publications.

How You Can Reach Us

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Credit Cards and You explains the features and costs of credit cards. It comes in a multi-piece "kit" format containing this guide and other booklets, a glossary of key terms and a worksheet to help you choose a credit card. In addition, several comparison tables help you compare the characteristics of credit cards available in Canada, including the service fees related to certain credit card transactions.

Throughout these booklets you will find references to the "kit". If you have not received the full kit and would like to, please contact FCAC for your free copy.

The other documents available as part of the ***Credit Cards and You*** kit are as follows.

Getting the Most from Your Credit Card: Understanding the Terms and Conditions

Want to save money and avoid problems with your credit card? Understanding your credit card's benefits and risks, how your issuer calculates your interest charges and how you can benefit from introductory rates will help you make the most of your credit card. Read about this and more in ***Getting the Most from Your Credit Card***.

Your Rights and Responsibilities: The Cost of Borrowing with a Credit Card

It's important to know about the rights and responsibilities that come with a credit card. Doing so will save you time and money, and will help you stay out of financial trouble. ***Your Rights and Responsibilities*** tells you all about this.

Managing Your Money: How to Save with a Credit Card

Do you want to lower your interest rate, use up your credit balances wisely and make sure your monthly payments are never late? ***Managing Your Money*** will show you how.

Playing It Safe: How to Protect Your Credit Card and Credit History

Just about everybody has a credit file, but where is it kept and is it accurate? How can you protect yourself if your card is lost or stolen? ***Playing It Safe*** answers these questions for you, and quite a few more.

Secured Credit Cards

The ***Secured Credit Cards*** comparison table includes information about secured credit cards and offers a handy comparison table of different secured credit cards available across Canada. If you've had trouble getting an unsecured credit card, the ***Secured Credit Cards*** comparison table is for you.

Credit Card Comparison Tables

The following pull-outs compare the features and costs of various credit cards available from credit card issuers across Canada:

- Standard Credit Cards (low-rate and regular-rate)
- Gold Credit Cards (low-rate and regular-rate)
- Platinum Credit Cards (low-rate and regular-rate)
- U.S. Dollar Credit Cards
- Student Credit Cards (low-rate and regular-rate)
- Secured Credit Cards
- Retail Credit Cards
- Charge Cards

The following two tables compare the service fees from various credit card issuers that are applicable to certain credit card transactions:

- Service fees on Visa, MasterCard and American Express credit card transactions
- Service fees on retail credit card transactions.

Worksheet to Help You Choose a Credit Card

This handy pull-out is designed to make your comparison shopping easier. Take this easy-to-follow table with you to your credit card issuer and fill it in. When you're finished, you'll have the information you need to choose the best credit card for you.

Glossary of Key Terms Used in This Kit

Annual interest rate, cash advance, grace period, prime rate, security deposit … these are all important terms that you'll find in the ***Glossary of Key Terms Used in This Kit***. Many of the terms you'll find in your credit card agreement are also defined here.

Understanding the Terms and Conditions of Your Card

Credit cards can be extremely useful and convenient. They've become part of our lives, and it can be hard to get along in today's world without one.

You'll get more out of a credit card if it's the right one for you. You'll also probably save money and manage your finances more effectively if you know how your credit card works.

This guide will help you understand credit cards. If you're looking for your first card or for a new one, be sure to explore options such as specialized credit cards, student cards and more. We've also included a handy checklist at the back of the guide to help you choose your credit card.

If you've received an offer of a card with a low introductory rate, this guide will give you more information about these offers, too. Or, if your credit card statement is puzzling you, read the sections that talk about interest calculations and interest-free periods. At the end of this guide, we give you tips to help you save money on interest and fees.

While credit cards are indispensable for most people, they do come with potential risks. You can manage these risks better if you know what they are. Here's a quick look at these benefits and risks.

Benefits

A credit card can:

- help you establish a credit history and earn a credit rating;
- be more convenient to carry than cash;
- offer free use of funds, provided you always pay your balance in full, by the due date;
- give you incentives, such as reward points, that you can redeem for merchandise or services; and
- provide a convenient payment method for purchases made on the Internet and over the telephone.

Risks

On the other hand, credit cards can:

- allow you to build up more debt than you can handle;
- damage your credit rating if your payments are late;
- have complicated terms and conditions; and
- cost much more than other forms of credit, such as a line of credit or a personal loan.

Four Steps to Choosing a Credit Card

Choosing the right credit card is much easier if you know what you're looking for and understand what the various credit card issuers are offering. Here are four steps you can follow to help you decide which card is best for you.

Step 1: Know your needs and wants

Ask yourself:

- How much will I spend on the card each month?
- Will I be able to pay my balance in full each month?
- Would I benefit from any reward programs?
- Am I prepared to pay an annual fee?

Step 2: Use Table 1 or Flowchart 1 to help you choose the right type of credit card

- There are many types of credit cards, including specialized cards. For more information on specialized cards, see Table 1 (on page 6).
- If you can't benefit from a specialized card, use Flowchart 1 on page 7 to help you choose another type of credit card that meets your needs.

Step 3: Once you've selected the type of card, shop around

To compare the features and costs of cards from different issuers, see the comparison tables provided with this kit. If you did not receive comparison tables, contact FCAC and we'll send you a free copy.

Step 4: Before you make your final choice, make sure you understand all the terms and conditions of your credit card

This step will save you a lot of time and money! By understanding the terms and conditions of your credit card, you'll get more out of it. At the same time, you'll minimize the drawbacks of using the card. Make sure you know:

- the interest rate charged on purchases, cash advances and balance transfers;
- how the interest is calculated;
- the annual fee and other applicable fees;
- the grace period (see page 15);
- the minimum monthly payment;
- what happens if you make your payments late;
- other features such as introductory offers (see page 10);
- the order of transactions and how your payment will be applied; and
- how to make a complaint if you have a problem with your credit card.

A credit card agreement is a legally binding contract. Make sure you understand all its terms and conditions before you use your card. And if something isn't completely clear to you, ask questions!

For additional help on how to choose credit card that works best for you, see *Your Credit Card Checklist* on page 19, or use the *Worksheet to Help You Choose a Credit Card* provided in this kit.

Table 1: Specialized Credit Cards

Type of Card	Main Purpose	Features	Choose If…	Comparison Tables
U.S. Dollar	Lets you make purchases in U.S. dollars	• **Annual interest rate around 18%** • Usually has an annual fee • May offer additional benefits such as accident and car rental insurance	• You normally **pay your balance off in full** each month • You often shop in the U.S. • You have a U.S. bank account from which you can pay your credit card bill	**U.S. Dollar Cards + Service Fees on Visa, MasterCard and American Express Credit Card Transactions**
Secured	Can help you establish or improve your credit rating	• **Annual interest rate around 20%** • Requires a deposit to secure your credit limit • May have a start-up fee • Generally has monthly maintenance fees	• You need to build a credit rating or rebuild a poor credit rating • You are having difficulty obtaining other types of credit cards	**Secured Cards + Service Fees on Visa, MasterCard and American Express Credit Card Transactions**
Retail	Can offer discounts or reward programs at a specific store or retailer	• **Annual interest rate around 28%** • Generally has no annual fee • **Can usually be used only at the issuing retailer or a limited number of stores** • Calculation of interest is often complex • Some retailers charge you less interest by calculating it from the statement date instead of the purchase date, or if you pay at least 50% of the balance	• You normally **pay your balance off in full** each month • You often shop at a specific retailer • You can take advantage of the benefits the retailer offers	**Retail Cards + Service Fees on Retail Credit Card Transactions**
Charge	Has an unlimited credit limit	• **Must pay entire balance off each month** • Generally has a high annual fee • High penalty interest rate for late payments (usually around 30%) • Often has a longer grace period than other cards • Often has reward programs • Can usually be used only at the issuing retailer or a limited number of stores	• If you **pay your balance off in full** each month • If you can benefit from options such as unlimited credit or reward programs	**Charge Cards + Service Fees on Visa, MasterCard and American Express Credit Card Transactions**

Flowchart 1

Answer the two questions below to find what type of card is right for you.

1. Are you a student with a limited income?

❑ Yes.

A student credit card may be right for you.

- **If you carry a balance** (if you don't pay the balance in full each month), a low interest rate is important. You should consider a **low-rate** student card.

Comparison Tables	Low-Rate Student Card Features
Student Cards (Low-Rate) + Service Fees on Visa, MasterCard and American Express Credit Card Transactions	• Geared specifically to students with lower income • Credit limit usually around $500 • **Annual interest rate around 12%** • Generally has an annual fee. Make sure your savings on the interest outweigh your annual fee. To learn more about saving money with a low-rate card, see ***Managing Your Money***, available in this kit. • Can help build a credit history • Often has reward programs such as discounts in bookstores or clothing stores

- **If you don't carry a balance**, the interest rate is less important. You should consider a **regular-rate** student card.

Comparison Tables	Regular-Rate Student Card Features
Student Cards (Regular-Rate) + Service Fees on Visa, MasterCard and American Express Credit Card Transactions	Same features as above, except: • **Annual interest rate is around 18%** • Generally has no annual fee

❑ No.

Go to Question 2 on the next page.

2. Do you need special insurance options, such as car rental insurance or medical travel insurance?

❑ Yes.

A Gold or Platinum credit card may be right for you.

- **If you carry a balance** (if you don't pay the balance in full each month), a low interest rate is important. You should consider a **low-rate** Gold or Platinum card.

Comparison Tables	Low-Rate Gold and Platinum Card Features
Gold Cards (Low-Rate) or Platinum Cards (Low-Rate) + Service Fees on Visa, MasterCard and American Express Credit Card Transactions	• **Annual interest rate around 12%** • Generally, the higher the annual fee, the more benefits associated with the card • Generally has a credit limit of at least $2,500 (Gold) or $5,000 (Platinum) • Requires a higher minimum income • Usually offers reward programs • Often offers additional benefits such as medical and accident insurance • Make sure your savings on the interest outweigh your annual fee. To learn more about saving money with a low-rate card, see ***Managing Your Money***, available in this kit.

- **If you don't carry a balance**, the interest rate is less important. You should consider a **regular-rate** Gold or Platinum card.

Comparison Tables	Regular-Rate Gold and Platinum Card Features
Gold Cards (Regular-Rate) or Platinum Cards (Regular-Rate) + Service Fees on Visa, MasterCard and American Express Credit Card Transactions	Same features as above, except: • **Annual interest rate is around 18%**

❑ No.

Go to the next page.

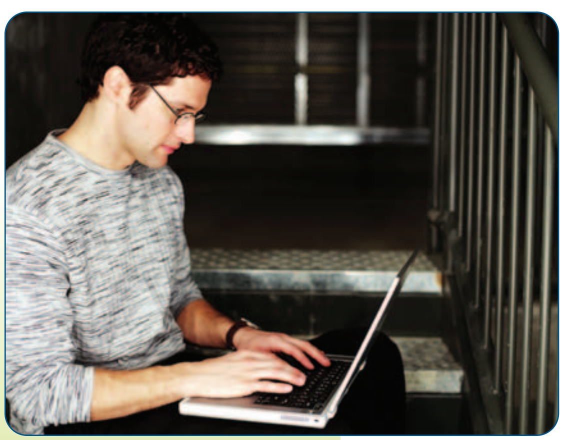
If you don't need a card with Gold or Platinum features, a standard credit card is probably right for you.

- **If you carry a balance** (if you don't pay the balance in full each month), a low interest rate is important. You should consider a **low-rate standard** card.

Comparison Tables	Low-Rate Standard Card Features
Standard Cards (Low-Rate) + Service Fees on Visa, MasterCard and American Express Credit Card Transactions	• **Annual interest rate around 12%** • Generally has an annual fee. Make sure your savings on the interest outweigh your annual fee. To learn more about saving money with a low-rate card, see ***Managing Your Money***, available in this kit. • May offer reward programs

- **If you don't carry a balance**, the interest rate is less important. You should consider a **regular-rate standard** card.

Comparison Tables	Regular-Rate Standard Card Features
Standard Cards (Regular-Rate) + Service Fees on Visa, MasterCard and American Express Credit Card Transactions	• **Annual interest rate around 18%** • Generally has no annual fee • Often has reward programs



Understanding Low Introductory Rates

Credit card issuers frequently offer an attractive introductory interest rate on newly issued cards, or on balance transfers to your existing card. If you tend to carry a balance on a credit card, this kind of offer may save you money.

However, you should realize that these low rates generally apply for a *limited time only*. As soon as the introductory period ends, the rate increases to the card's regular rate. To find out what the regular rate is, ask the issuer or refer to the comparison tables in this kit.

Before applying for an introductory offer, make sure you understand its terms and conditions. Ask the credit card issuer:

- what types of transactions the introductory rate applies to;
- when the introductory period will end;
- what the interest rate will be after the introductory period ends;
- whether the introductory rate will end if you make a late payment or go over your card's credit limit;
- what the order of transactions is and how your payment will be applied; and
- whether any other fees or conditions apply.

Don't base your credit card decision solely on one factor such as an attractive introductory rate. Make sure you understand all the features and conditions of a card before you accept it.

Getting the Most from Low Introductory Rates

Before you accept a credit card with a low introductory rate, find out which types of transactions the offer applies to. If the low introductory rate applies only to balance transfers and/or cash advances (and not to purchases), limit your new purchases until you pay off the transfers and the advances. This will save you money in the long run.

If you make purchases while carrying a balance, you may reduce the money you can save on your transfers and advances. There are two reasons for this.

You'll lose the interest-free period on new purchases

If you don't pay off your entire balance at the end of the first month (including all purchases, cash advances and balance transfers), you lose the interest-free period on new purchases (see pages 15 to 17 for an explanation of interest-free periods). This means that you begin paying interest on your new purchases from the date you make them or, in some cases, from the day they are posted to your account. The interest is usually at the credit card's regular and higher rate.

Your payments will be applied to the lower-interest-rate balance first

Most institutions apply your payments to balance transfers and cash advances before they apply them to purchases. This is called the "order of transactions" related to payments.

If you make a cash advance or balance transfer at a low introductory rate, and then purchase something, you end up reducing your potential savings. This is because you're paying off the lower-interest-rate debt (your transfer or advance) first, while carrying the higher-interest-rate debt (your purchase) for a longer time.

However, the order of transactions may vary from one institution to another. Ask your credit card issuer to explain how its order of transactions applies to your payments.

Example: Getting the Most from Low Introductory Rates

In both of the following cases:

- On May 1, you transfer a balance of $5,000 from an old card to a new one to benefit from the low introductory rate.
- Your new card has a 6 per cent introductory rate on balance transfers, and an 18 per cent interest rate on purchases.
- Your payments are applied first to balance transfers, then to purchases.
- **You'll have a $5,000 balance remaining, but you'll pay $9.06 less interest in Case 1.**

Case 1:

- You make **no other purchases** during the month.
- You'll pay **$25.47** in interest charges.

Case 2:

- A few days after the transfer, you make a **purchase of $1,000** on your new card.
- The day after your purchase, you make a **partial payment of $1,000** to bring the balance back to $5,000.
- You'll pay **$34.53** in interest charges.

Case 1: No other purchases	Outstanding balance
May 1: Balance transfer	$5,000
May 31: Outstanding balance	**$5,000**
Interest rate on balance transfer	6%
Interest charged for May	**$25.47***

* $5,000 x (6% interest rate ÷ 365 [days in a year] x 31 days) = $25.47

Case 2: Additional purchase of $1,000	Outstanding balance	
	From the balance transfer	From the purchase
May 1: Balance transfer	$5,000	
May 5: Purchase of $1,000		$1,000
May 6: Partial payment of $1,000 (applied to balance transfer)	$4,000	
May 31: Total outstanding balance = $5,000	**$4,000**	**$1,000**
Interest rate on each balance	6%	18%
Interest charged for May	$21.21*	$13.32**
Total interest charged for May	**$34.53**	

* Balance transfer: [$5,000 x (6% interest rate ÷ 365 [days in a year] x **5** days) + $4,000 x (6% interest rate ÷ 365 [days in a year] x **26** days)] = $21.21

** Purchase: [$0 x (18% interest rate ÷ 365 [days in a year] x **4** days) + $1,000 x (18% interest rate ÷ 365 [days in a year] x **27** days)] = $13.32

How Interest Charges Are Calculated

If you always pay the amount owing on your credit card by the payment due date, you never have to pay interest.

If you don't pay the amount owing on your credit card in full, by the due date, your credit card issuer will charge you interest depending on the type of transaction: a new purchase, a previous purchase, a cash advance or a balance transfer.

New purchases

- These are purchases that appear on your monthly statement for the first time.
- They can be interest-free under certain conditions (see the section on interest-free periods on page 15).

Previous purchases

- These are purchases that were listed on a previous statement and not paid off.
- You're charged interest from the date you made these purchases until they're paid for in full. Some credit card issuers charge interest from the date the purchases are posted to your account.

Cash advances and balance transfers

- You're charged interest from the date you made the cash advance or balance transfer.
- You don't benefit from an interest-free period on these transactions.

When your credit card company calculates the interest you owe, it normally uses either the "average daily balance method" or the "daily balance method". Although the two methods differ in their way of calculating interest, they generally yield the same interest charge. To find out which method your credit issuer uses, check your credit card agreement or contact the issuer.

Here's how both methods work:

Average daily balance method

The average daily balance on your credit card is the balance you carried during the billing period, averaged by the number of days in the billing period (usually 30 or 31). Your average daily balance is calculated at month's end by adding the balance at the end of each day, then dividing the total by the number of days in the billing period. To calculate the interest charged for the month, you multiply the average daily balance by the daily interest rate (obtained by taking the annual interest rate and dividing by the number of days in the year [365]); then you multiply the result by the number of days in the billing period.

Daily balance method

Whereas the average daily balance method only makes a month-end calculation of the interest owed, this method calculates interest owed at the end of each day of the billing period. To calculate the daily interest charge, you multiply the daily balance by the daily interest rate (obtained by taking the annual interest rate and dividing by the number of days in the year [365]). Next, add up the resulting daily interest charges to obtain the amount of interest charged for the month.

Example: Methods of Calculating Interest

The following example shows how the two methods work.

Mrs. Smith received her new credit card on January 1. On January 5, she made a purchase of $3,000. Her January statement, which covers her transactions between January 1 and January 31 (a 31-day billing period), has a payment due date of February 19.

Let's assume that Mrs. Smith didn't pay her bill in full, by the due date. This means that the grace period didn't apply to her new purchase, so interest is calculated from the purchase date of January 5. (For an explanation of why the grace period didn't apply, go to page 16.)

Let's assume also that Mrs. Smith didn't buy anything on her credit card during February. When her February statement arrives, it shows a charge of approximately $41 in interest for the month, based on an annual interest rate of 18.5%. The daily interest rate of 0.05068%, shown in the calculations below, is the annual interest rate divided by the number of days in the year (18.5% ÷ 365).

	Average Daily Balance Method	**Daily Balance Method**
January 1 to January 4 – No transactions	$0 for 4 days	$0 x (0.05068%) = $0 $0 x 4 days = $0
January 5 to January 31 – Purchase of $3,000	$3,000 for 27 days	$3,000 x (0.05068%) = $1.52 $1.52 x 27 days = $41.05
Calculation of Average Daily Balance	($0 x 4 days) + ($3,000 x 27 days) 31 days in the billing period = Average daily balance of **$2,612.90**	Not applicable
Total Interest Charged[1]	Average daily balance x Daily interest rate x Number of days in the billing period = $2,612.90 x 0.05068% x 31 days = **$41.05**	$0 + $41.05 = **$41.05**

[1] The average daily balance and daily balance methods generally yield the same interest charge.

Understanding the Interest-Free Period on New Purchases

You benefit from an interest-free period when you buy something with your credit card and the credit card company doesn't start charging you interest on the purchase right away. In other words, you're getting credit without having to pay for it. Be careful, the interest-free period doesn't always apply to your new purchases. See the section "Determining If the Interest-Free Period Applies" for more information.

It's important to remember that the interest-free period doesn't apply to balance transfers or cash advances. With these transactions, interest is charged immediately.

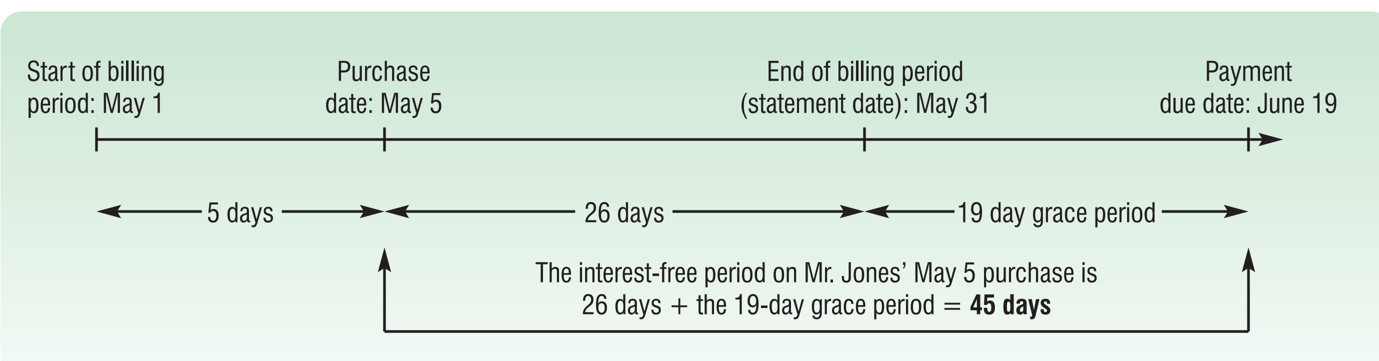
The interest-free period on new purchases starts on the date you make a purchase and ends when the credit card issuer begins charging you interest on that purchase. The interest-free period has two parts:

- the time between the purchase and your statement date; and
- the time between your statement date and your payment due date. This is called the grace period, and can vary from 15 to 26 days. To find out the length of the grace period for your credit card, see the comparison tables provided with this kit or ask your credit card issuer.

Here's an example of an interest-free period:

- Mr. Jones' statement covers transactions he made between May 1 and May 31 (31-day billing period).
- Mr. Jones made a new purchase on May 5.
- His payment due date is June 19. Therefore, the grace period provided by his credit card issuer is 19 days.

The total interest-free period on the purchase Mr. Jones made on May 5 is 45 days, but it only applies if he meets certain conditions (see "Determining If the Interest-Free Period Applies" on page 16).



Determining If the Interest-Free Period Applies

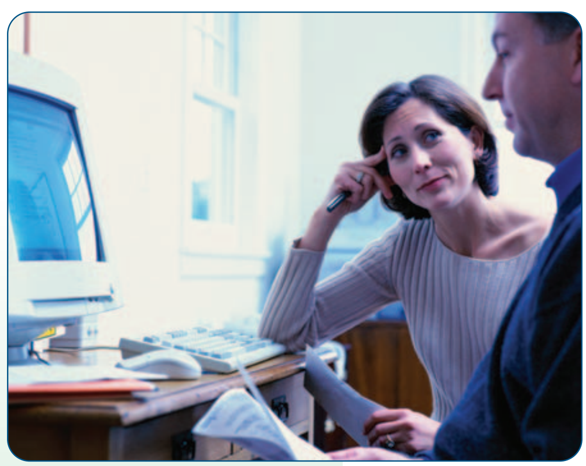
Credit card issuers use one of two methods to decide whether the interest-free period applies to your new purchases:

- **Method 1: With this method, the interest-free period applies** to your new purchases only if you pay your current month's balance in full, by the due date.
- **Method 2: With this method, the interest-free period** applies to your new purchases only if you pay your current month's balance in full, by the due date, and you have also paid your previous month's balance in full, by the due date (in other words, you're not carrying a balance from the previous month).

As an example, let's look at Mr. Jones. He didn't pay his April balance in full, so he carried a balance of $2,000 from that month. On May 5, he made a new purchase of $1,000. He paid his new balance in full, by the due date shown on his statement (June 19). Here's how the two different methods would affect him.

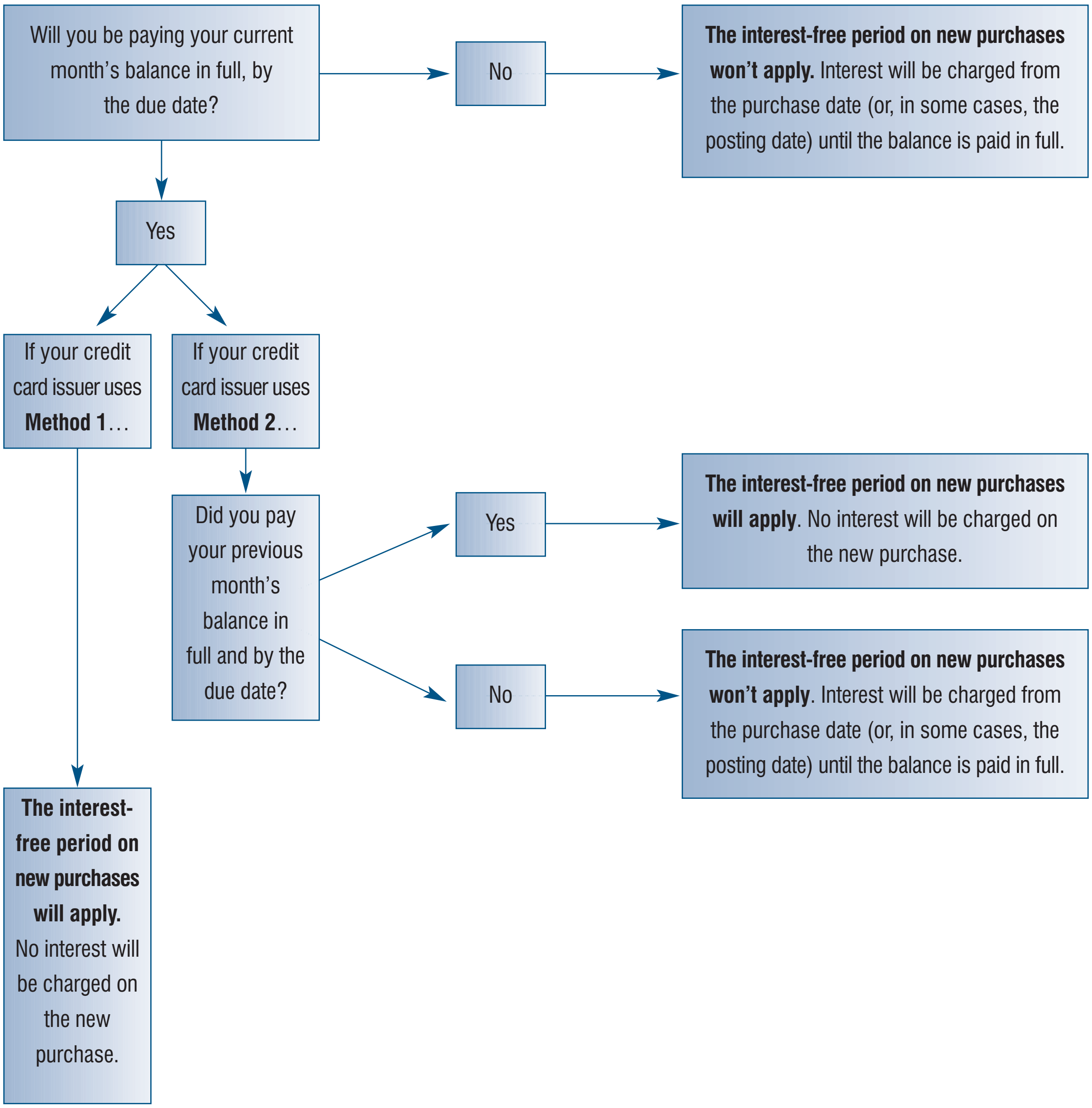
- **If Mr. Jones' credit card issuer uses Method 1**
  Mr. Jones will have to pay interest only on the $2,000 carried over from April. He will get the interest-free period on his new purchase of $1,000, because he paid his current balance in full, by the due date of June 19.
- **If Mr. Jones' credit card issuer uses Method 2**
  Mr. Jones will have to pay interest on the $2,000 carried over from April and on the new purchase of $1,000, because Mr. Jones carried a balance over from April.

To find out which method your credit card issuer uses, ask your issuer or refer to the comparison tables provided in this kit.



Flowchart 2

Follow the flowchart below to find out whether the interest-free period applies to your new purchases. Remember to check the comparison tables provided with this kit to see whether your credit card issuer uses Method 1 or Method 2.



Tips to Help You Save Money

There are lots of ways to get the best value from your credit card and avoid situations that might cost you money.

Ask questions

If you're puzzled about some aspect of your credit card, ask your credit card issuer about it. Their answer may help you make better financial choices.

Don't base your credit card choice on just one factor

Low introductory rates or reward programs may not be what you really need. Look for the package that best suits your overall financial situation.

If possible, pay your balance in full each month

If you can't, transfer the balance to a form of credit with a lower annual interest rate, such as a line of credit. If you do this every month, you'll always benefit from the grace period on your credit card. In your monthly budget, include the amount needed to pay off your outstanding balance as quickly as possible.

Make early payments between statements

If you carry a balance on a credit card, interest is normally charged from the date you make a purchase until you pay it in full. Making an early payment will save you interest charges. For more information on how to save money by paying your bills early, see ***Managing Your Money: How to Save with a Credit Card***, available in this kit.

Take cash advances only when absolutely necessary

Use cash advances for short-term or emergency situations only. That's because interest on advances is charged from the time you borrow until the time you pay the advance in full. In addition, there are usually service fees associated with a cash advance. If you *must* take a cash advance, make a payment to your credit issuer as soon as possible. This will avoid daily interest charges, which add up in a hurry.

Allow time for your payment to reach your credit card company

If you don't, you may end up making a late payment that could affect whether the interest-free period applies to your new purchases, and could also negatively affect your credit history. For more information on the effects of late payments, see ***Managing Your Money: How to Save with a Credit Card***, available in this kit.

Take advantage of pre-authorized payments

Consider making your monthly credit card payments automatically from your bank account to ensure that your payments are never late. But remember to keep track of these payments so that your account always has enough money to cover them. For more information on pre-authorized payments, see ***Managing Your Money: How to Save with a Credit Card***, available in this kit.

Read your statements and other mailings from your credit card company carefully

This way you'll always be up to date about any fee increases or rule changes.

Your Credit Card Checklist

Here's a handy checklist of questions you should ask yourself and the credit card issuer when you're looking for a credit card. Be sure to take these questions, and the ***Worksheet to Help You Choose a Credit Card*** provided in this kit with you when you comparison-shop.

Ask yourself:

- How much credit can I handle?
- Will I be able to pay my balance in full each month?
- Would I benefit from a rewards program?
- Am I prepared to pay an annual fee?
- Do I shop at a particular retailer often enough to benefit from their card?
- Have I shopped around for the credit card that best suits my needs?

When you're checking out the terms and conditions of the card:

- What are its annual fee or other applicable fees?
- What is the minimum monthly payment?
- What is the interest rate on purchases, cash advances and balance transfers?
- How is interest calculated?
- How long is the grace period?
- What are the consequences of late payments?
- What features or enhancements are offered?
- What customer service or support is available for the card?

When considering an introductory low-rate offer:

- To which type(s) of transactions does the introductory low rate apply?
- When does the introductory period end?
- What interest rate will apply at the end of the introductory period?
- Are there any other fees or conditions that apply to the offer?
- Will the introductory rate period end if I make a late payment or if I go over my card limit, and if so, what will the new rate be?
- What is the "order of transactions" for my payments?
- Will this "order of transactions" affect any savings I may get with a low introductory rate?

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How You Can Reach Us

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