DUESMART · FINANCIAL ACTION WORKBOOK

Understand and Strengthen Your Credit

Translate report information into responsible habits, focused questions and a practical next step.

Companion to Module 5 · Master Your Credit Score

LEARN · PRACTICE · ACT

Credit is a file, not your worth

A credit score estimates lending risk from information in a credit file. You may have different scores because bureaus, models, versions and dates differ. Focus on accurate reports and durable behavior.

My credit snapshot

Item	What I know	What I need to verify
Reports reviewed		
Score source and date		
Accounts paid on time		
Late or missed payments		
Revolving balances and limits		
Recent applications		

Privacy

Do not paste a complete credit report into an AI tool. Use rounded balances, partial descriptions such as Card A, and only the facts needed for the question.

Calculate revolving utilization

Utilization = reported revolving balance ÷ revolving credit limit × 100. Scores may consider overall utilization and individual accounts.

Account	Reported balance	Limit	Utilization
Card A	$	$	%
Card B	$	$	%
Card C	$	$	%
TOTAL	$	$	%

Important dates

Account	Statement closing date	Payment due date	Minimum	Autopay / alert
			$	
			$	
			$	

High-value habits

[ ] Pay every account on time.

[ ] Keep revolving balances manageable relative to limits.

[ ] Avoid opening accounts without a clear purpose and repayment plan.

[ ] Review reports and dispute only information genuinely believed to be inaccurate or incomplete.

[ ] Keep cash available for essential needs while paying debt.

Review before you act

Observation	Evidence I have	Responsible next question
Possible report error		
High revolving balance		
Payment may be late		
Considering a new account		
Debt feels unmanageable		

Optional AI prompt

```
Explain the educational factors that may affect a credit profile like this example: score
source and date [if known], Card A balance about $___ with limit about $___, Card B
balance about $___ with limit about $___, and loan balance about $___. Calculate revolving
utilization, state your assumptions, explain what I should verify on my reports and offer
several possible priorities. Do not promise a score change, contact creditors or recommend
disputing accurate information.
```

Evaluate the response

[ ] It distinguishes facts from assumptions.

[ ] It shows the utilization math.

[ ] It does not guarantee deletion or a score increase.

[ ] It does not tell me to misstate information or dispute accurate data.

[ ] The suggested payment is affordable after essentials and required obligations.

My 30-day credit action plan

Week	Action	Evidence / completion
1	Get and review all available reports	
1	List balances, limits, due dates and closing dates	
2	Activate alerts and confirm autopay settings	
2	Choose one affordable balance target	
3	Document and dispute a genuine error, if any	
3	Contact a creditor before a missed payment, if needed	
4	Review progress and choose the next action	

My first action and why it matters

Completion

Update your DUESMART credit control panel. Credit improvement takes time; steady, documented habits matter.

Official learning resources

AnnualCreditReport.com · consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/credit-reports-and-scores · myfico.com/credit-education