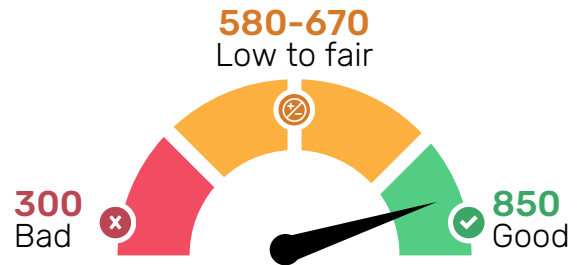


What you need to know about your credit score

What is a credit score?

A credit score is a number between 300 and 850 that helps bank, credit card, and loan companies know how reliable you are at paying them back and paying on time.

Think of your credit score as one way to measure your financial health.



Why does your credit score matter?

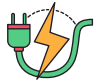
A credit score is used when you:



Rent an apartment



Get a school loan



Put utilities in your name



Lease or buy a car

What if my credit score is low?

If your score is low you may have trouble getting approved to get a loan or credit card. If you are approved, you may have to pay a higher interest rate, which will make it difficult and expensive for you to borrow money.



How is my credit score calculated?

Your credit score is influenced by 5 things:

Payment history

Record of payments you've made on any form of credit

- » Pay your bills on time. Late payments stay on your record for 7 years

Amount owed

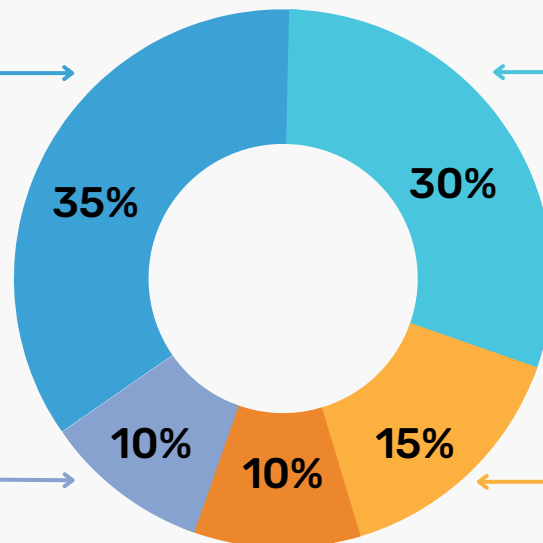
Total amount you owe, across all of your credit accounts

- » Reduce the amount of money you owe, and keep your available credit high

New credit

Applications for new credit cards or loans

- » Don't apply often for a new credit card or loan



Length of credit history

How long your oldest account has been open

Type of credit

What types of credit you have, such as credit cards, store cards, or loans

What can I do to improve my credit score?

The 5 best ways to improve your credit are:



Use payment reminders or automatic payments to help you make payments on time



If you miss a payment, catch up as soon as you can



Pay as much as you can on your credit line with the highest interest rate, but keep making minimum payments on your other accounts



Don't apply for or open unnecessary accounts, such as bank credit cards or store credit cards



Don't check your credit score more than once a year with a credit reporting agency, like TransUnion

How can I check my credit score without hurting it?

You can check your credit score through your bank, or a trustworthy monitoring app like Credit Karma, and it shouldn't affect your score.

