What to Budget for as a College Freshman

There are so many things that an incoming college student needs, and with the cost of college tuition, there isn’t a lot leftover for much else. Whether you are the one having to buy these items, or your parents, setting up a budget is important.

Living expenses
Whether you are in a dorm, apartment, or renting a house, don’t forget about the extra costs like phone, cable, internet, and other utilities. Determine what is a necessity and what you can skip. It’s also important to consider renter’s insurance to cover your belongings in case anything would happen.

Food
Many adults have fond memories of ramen noodles and soup from their college years. Develop a budget for eating out and groceries and stick to it. It’s important to maintain a balanced, healthy diet so you don’t neglect your health just to save a few bucks; cut back on eating out instead.

Books
The first visit to the book store can be the most shocking event for a college student. Textbooks are expensive! Planning is key in this area. Most classes release book requirements ahead of time; use this to your advantage and find the best deals online (and don’t be afraid to buy used).

Computer
It’s not a question of if you need a computer for college; it’s what kind will work best for your major. If you have an idea of what your major will be, check with the department for their technology requirements before purchasing a computer. That way you won’t be buying a new computer the following year.

Entertainment
College should be an enjoyable experience, and you should budget for entertainment expenses. However, this is the category that, if you are struggling with cash for the month, you should cut back on. Hanging out with friends can be just as fun as going out, so be creative.