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Debit Card Vs. Checking Account: Is A Debit Card A Checking Account?

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Contributor
& 1 other

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Debit cards and checking accounts go together like peanut butter and jelly. But just like the condiments, they're not the same thing. One is a tool for accessing your money, while the other is a type of deposit account for everyday spending.

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A debit card is not a checking account, but the two are closely connected.

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Is a Debit Card a Checking Account?

A debit card is not a checking account but a card issued by a bank or credit union that is attached to a deposit account. You can use debit cards to pay for purchases and services in person or online, make ATM withdrawals or transfer money.

Checking accounts are deposit accounts intended for everyday use. You can open one at almost any bank or credit union. Debit cards can be linked to checking accounts, money market accounts or sometimes savings accounts.

Debit Card vs. Checking Account

On its own, a debit card is a tool for accessing money. When you use a debit card, you're drawing directly from your own funds and can generally only spend or withdraw what's available to you in the linked account, which may be a checking account.

A checking account is a transaction account that account holders can deposit money into and transfer from freely. Checking accounts can be used for a variety of activities, including:

- Debit card transactions
- Automated Clearing House (ACH) payments
- Bank or ATM cash withdrawals
- Bill payments
- Check transfers
- Wire transfers
- Peer-to-peer transfers

As you can see, checking accounts can do much more than debit cards. But without debit cards, spending options would be much more limited for most checking accounts.

Some checking accounts offer additional, money-boosting benefits such as the potential to earn interest on your balance or cash back on your debit spending.

Do You Get a Debit Card With a Checking Account?

Most checking accounts include a debit card. Usually, debit cards are physical cards that come in the mail a few days after opening a checking account. Some banks also offer digital debit cards you can start using immediately.

You don't usually need to pay for a debit card. However, you may incur a charge for using a debit card to withdraw money from an ATM that isn't affiliated with your bank, overdraw your account or initiate certain transfers.

When you receive a debit card for a checking account or other bank account, you will often be asked to set a personal identification number (PIN). You will enter this for PIN-based transactions. Alternatively, you may be able to provide a signature to authorize purchases instead of your PIN. This is known as a signature-based debit transaction.

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

+ **Is a prepaid debit card a checking account?**
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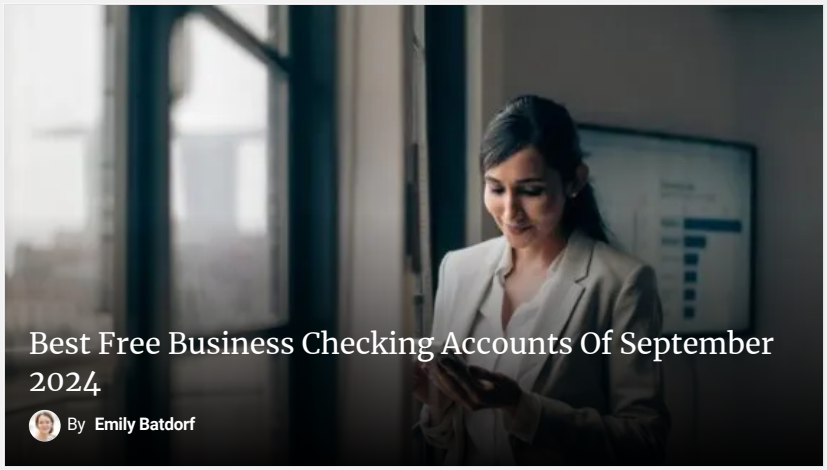

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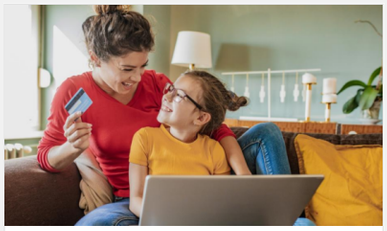

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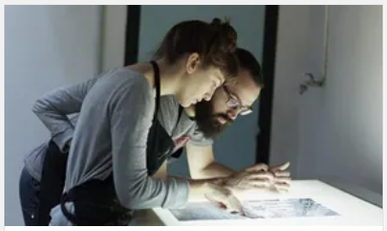

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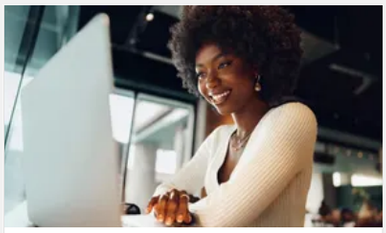

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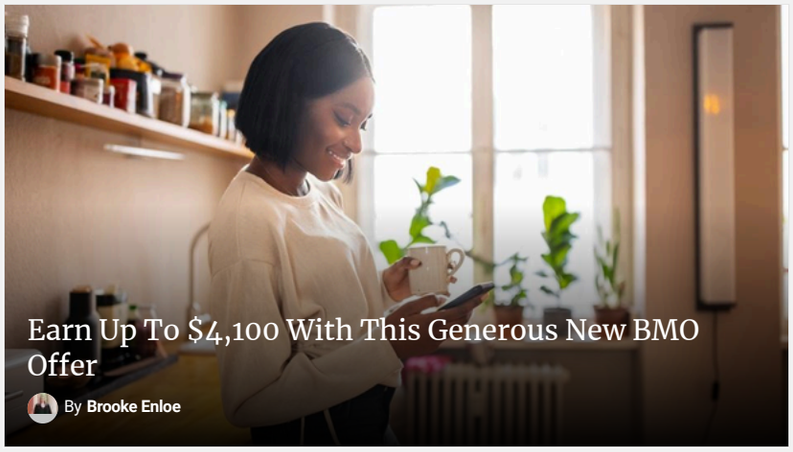

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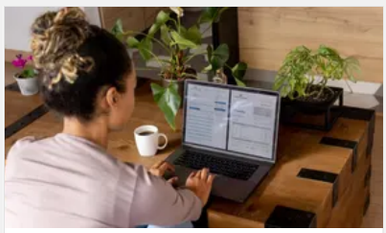
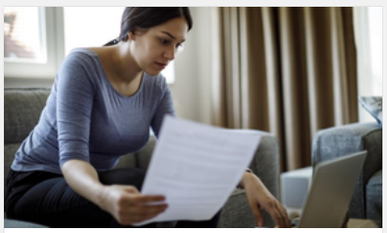


What Is An Interest Checking Account?

Unlike savings accounts, which are designed for parking your money,



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Huntington Bank is headquartered in Columbus, Ohio and is one of the nation's largest banks by assets, despite only having a presence in 11 states. The bank offers a wide range of personal and small business banking products and services, including several business checking accounts designed to fit various needs. This review covers thre...

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Brokerage Checking Accounts

While checking accounts are convenient in many ways, you usually have to transfer funds to a separate account if you want to invest that money. For investors who trade often, making these transfers can be tedious and time consuming. A brokerage checking account combines checking features with the accessibility of a brokerage account—meaning you can pay bills an...

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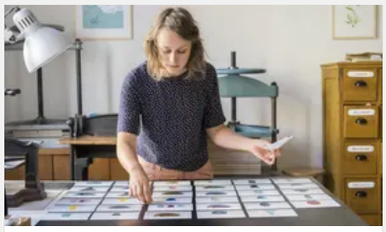

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Rachel Murphy is a freelance writer passionate about helping people make their money work harder. She has more than 15 years of writing and editing experience, focused on small businesses, banking, investing, and healthcare. She has worked with several outlets, including Investopedia, Verywell Health, Money, and IN Kansas City Magazine.

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