

Identifying Ticker Symbols & Interpreting Stock Quotes

Suggested Grade

Grades 4-5

Suggested Time

45 minutes

Teacher Background

A ticker symbol, also known as a stock symbol, is a unique group of letters that identifies a company's stock. It is necessary for students to know the ticker symbol of a company's stock to purchase or do research on it.

The Stock Market Game™ like E-Trade, Ameritrade, and other professional online trading systems uses ticker symbols to identify companies. The online SMG team portfolios provide students with a ticker lookup feature. Students may also choose to use Yahoo! Finance, NASDAQ, or other financial news and stock market sites to lookup ticker symbols.

Vocabulary

Brand-name: A name that sets apart a product or company from rival products or companies.

Quote: The bid or ask price quoted for a stock at a given time.

Subsidiary: A company of which more than 50% of the voting shares are owned by another corporation, called the parent company.

Ticker Symbol: Letters that identify a security for trading purposes on the consolidated tape, such as XON for Exxon Corporation.

Performance Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Lookup a company's ticker symbol online.
- Use the ticker symbol to locate a company.

Subject Areas

English Language Arts, Economics, Technology/Research, Mathematics, Social Studies



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Materials

Fact Sheet 1: Parent Companies
Fact Sheet 2: Brands and Subsidiaries
Activity Sheet 1: Such a Search
Activity Sheet 2: Real Symbol
Fact Sheet 3: Web Quotes
Activity Sheet 3: Screen Test
Stock Talk Vol. 11, No. 1: Ticker's Tale

Springboard Activity

Ask your students how many of them have nicknames?

Have students suggest some examples of nicknames. Make sure to tell them that some nicknames are short versions of the student's official name like Jenny for Jennifer; others are initials like JP for John Paul and still others are completely different like Jack for John. Have the students if think of other examples that illustrate this "nickname" idea.

Tell your students that companies have a variety of nicknames that have developed over time called ticker symbols. Ticker Symbols make it easier to locate company information because they are unique and short (usually only one to five characters). To purchase stock from companies, students must learn how to find the ticker symbol or nickname for the company.

Procedure

Distribute *Fact Sheet 1: Parent Companies*. Play a version of scavenger hunt or Company bingo with the students. As you call out the brand, have the students locate the company ticker symbol or abbreviation. Repeat several times. The team that most quickly answers the most questions wins.

Distribute *Fact Sheet 2: Brands and Subsidiaries* and repeat the scavenger hunt or Company bingo activity.

Ask your students if they know the difference between a brand, a subsidiary, and a company? Most students will be unfamiliar with the term "subsidiary." Provide them with this simple definition: A subsidiary is a company that is owned by another company or corporation, called the parent company.

It is the company, not the brand or subsidiary that has a ticker symbol. For example, Quaker Oats is a brand of oatmeal and cereal. It's owner is Pepsico (Ticker Symbol: PEP), the same company that makes Pepsi soda and Doritos chips. ABC Television and Marvel Studios are subsidiaries of The Walt Disney Company (Ticker Symbol: DIS).



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All Levels

Guide SMG teams through the first two examples (if needed) before instructing them to complete *Activity Sheet 1: Such a Search*. Review the answers with the class.

Set up your SMG teams at computer stations. Guide the students through the SMG website.

Ask SMG teams to complete *Activity Sheet 2: Real Symbols* on their own. Review answers with the class/group.

Master & Grand Master Levels

Set up your SMG teams at computer stations. Guide the students through *Fact Sheet 3: Web Quotes*.

Afterwards instruct them to complete *Activity Sheet 3: Screen Test* on their own. Review answers with the class/group.

Assessment

Novice & Apprentice Levels

Have students write a paragraph or explain to the class how knowledge of ticker symbols will assist them in the purchase of stock.

Master & Grand Master Levels:

Have students identify the information they will use to purchase stock and explain why this is the important information.

Application

All Levels

Have students create a two-column table with one column named "Company" and the other named "Ticker Symbol." Ask them to complete the table by listing the names and ticker symbols of companies in which they may want to invest.

Enrichment Activities

Novice & Apprentice Levels:

Distribute *Stock Talk Vol. 11, No. 1: Ticker's Tale*. Read it together and discuss. Have students complete Task 1 on page 2 of the newsletter.



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Master & Grand Master Levels:

Distribute *Stock Talk Vol. 11, No. 1: Ticker's Tale*. Read it together and discuss. Have students complete Task 2 on page 2 of the newsletter.

Answer Keys

Activity Sheet 1

Mark a B next to each Brand or Subsidiary and a C next to each parent company.
Mark an X next to a name that is both a brand and parent company.

Name	B, C, X	Name	B, C, X
Apple	C	Hasbro	C
Bank of America	C	Jif	B
Barnes & Noble	C	Hershey Foods	C
Ben & Jerry's	B	J.M. Smucker Co.	C
Carter's	C	Kellogg	C
Cheerios	B	Kraft Foods	C
Cheez-it	B	McDonald's	C
Crest	B	Merrill Lynch	B
Disney	B	Minute Maid	B
Domino's Pizza	X	Pepsi Co.	C
Ford	C	Procter & Gamble	C
Fritos	B	Pizza Hut	B
Gap	B	Taco Bell	B
General Mills	C	Tootsie Roll	X
Good and Plenty	B	Tropicana	B



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Activity 2

Name	Parent or Producer (if any)	Stock Symbol
AT & T	AT & T	T
Bank of America	Bank of America Corporation	BAC
Caterpillar Inc.	Caterpillar Inc.	CAT
Cover Girl	The Procter & Gamble Company	PG
DIRECTV, Inc.	The DIRECTV Group, Inc.	DTV
Eddie Bauer Inc.	Eddie Bauer Holdings, Inc.	EBHIQ
Fruit of the Loom	Berkshire Hathaway Inc.	BRK
Geoffrey Beene	Hampshire Group, Limited	HAMP
Goodyear Tire & Rubber	The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company	GT
Hewlett-Packard	Hewlett-Packard Company	HPQ
Jif	J.M. Smucker Company	SJM
Johnson & Johnson	Johnson & Johnson	JNJ
Macy's	Macy's	M
MapQuest.com	AOL	AOL
Monsanto	Monsanto	MON
Pepsi	PepsiCo	PEP
Procter & Gamble	The Procter & Gamble Company	PG
Rite Aid	Rite Aid Corporation	RAD
Saab Automobile	General Motors - Motors Liquidation Company	MTLQQ
The Coleman Company	Jarden Corporation	JAH
Travelodge Hotels	Wyndham Worldwide Corporation	WYN
Tylenol	Johnson & Johnson	JNJ
Warner Music	Warner Music Group Corporation	WMG
Wrangler Jeans	V.F. Corporation	VFC

Activity 3

Answers will vary. The objective of this activity is for students to practice "reading" numbers and drawing meaning from them. They should be able encouraged to support their opinion regarding which is a better investment using the prices provided in the quotes.



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Activity Sheet 1: Such a Search

The list below presents popular brand-names and companies. Your task is to search companies to complete the activity.

Mark a B next to each Brand or Subsidiary and a C next to each parent company. Mark an X next to a name that is both a brand and parent company.

Name	B, C, X	Name	B, C, X
Apple		Hasbro	
Bank of America		Jif	
Barnes & Noble		Hershey Foods	
Ben & Jerry's		J.M. Smucker Co.	
Carter's		Kellogg	
Cheerios		Kraft Foods	
Cheez-it		McDonald's	
Crest		Merrill Lynch	
Disney		Minute Maid	
Domino's Pizza		Pepsi Co.	
Ford		Procter & Gamble	
Fritos		Pizza Hut	
Gap		Taco Bell	
General Mills		Tootsie Roll	
Good and Plenty		Tropicana	



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Activity Sheet 2: Real Symbol

Name	Parent or Producer (if any)	Stock Symbol
AT & T		
Bank of America		
Caterpillar Inc.		
Cover Girl		
DIRECTV, Inc.		
Eddie Bauer Inc.		
Fruit of the Loom		
Geoffrey Beene		
Goodyear Tire & Rubber		
Hewlett-Packard		
Jif		
Johnson & Johnson		
Los Angeles Dodgers		
Macy's		
MapQuest.com		
Monsanto		
Pepsi		
Procter & Gamble		
Rite Aid		
Saab Automobile		
The Coleman Company		
Travelodge Hotels		
Tylenol		
Warner Music		
Wrangler Jeans		



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Activity Sheet 3: Screen Test

Use Yahoo! Finance, NASDAQ.com, or any other online stock quote site to find stock price and company information for **Apple Inc.** (Symbol: AAPL), the maker of the iPod, the iPhone, the Mac Powerbook, and other electronic products.

There are many websites that provide stock quote but they don't always provide the same information. You may have to check more than one to find all 19 items below.

Today's Date:		Company: Apple Inc.	
1 Last	2 Change	3 % Change	4 Previous Close
5 Open	6 Day High	7 Day Low	8 Volume
9 Av. Daily Vol.	10 Bid	11 Ask	12 Shares Out.
13 EPS	14 P/E Ratio	15 52-week High	52-week Low
16 Market Cap.	17 Dividend	18 Yield	19 Ex-Div

Fact Sheet 1: Parent Companies

Activision (ATVI) creates interactive software games.

Apple (AAPL) is a prominent hardware and software company.

Bank of America (BAC) is one of the largest US commercial banks.

Barnes & Noble (BKS) sells books, digital media, and educational products in the United States.

Berkshire Hathaway (BRK) is a holding company for various businesses.

Bertelsmann AG is a private transnational media corporation

Burger King (BKC) is the world's #2 hamburger chain after McDonald's.

Cadbury plc (CBY) is the world's second largest candy maker after Mars.

Campbell Soup (CPB) is the world's largest soup maker.

Carter's – (CRI) is the leading US maker of youth apparel.

Daimler AG (DAI) manufactures cars and trucks.

Domino's Pizza (DPZ) is the world's #2 pizza chain.

Dun & Bradstreet (DNB) supplies business information and research.

Electronic Arts (ERTS) is a leading video game publisher.

Ford (F) manufactures cars and trucks.

Fox Entertainment Group is a subsidiary of News Corporation.

The Gap (GPS) is a national clothing retailer.

General Mills (GIS) is the US' #1 cereal maker.

Groupe Dannon (GDNNY) is one of the largest dairy food producers in the world.

Hasbro (HAS) is the #2 toy maker in the US.

Hershey Foods (HSY) makes chocolates and candies.

Ilitch Holdings is the private company that owns Little Caesars pizza chain.

In-N-Out Burgers is a privately owned burger chain.

J.M. Smucker Co. (SJM) is the #1 US producer of jams and preserves.

Johnson & Johnson (JNJ) is a health care company with diverse products and medical devices.

Jones Apparel (JNY) owns many popular apparel and shoe brands.

Kellogg (K) is the #2 cereal maker in the US.

Kraft Foods (KFT) is the world's #2 food company.

Limited Brands (LTD) owns Bath & Body Works beauty and health products.

Mars Inc. is a privately owned candy maker.



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McDonald's (MCD) is the world's #1 selling fast food company.

Merrill Lynch is a subsidiary of Bank of America.

PepsiCo (PEP) is the world's #2 soft drink maker.

Pfizer (PFE) is the world's largest research based pharmaceutical firm.

Procter & Gamble (PG) is the world's #1 maker of household products.

Rogers Communications (RCI) is Canada's largest cable services provider.

S.C. Johnson & Son is a privately owned maker of consumer chemical products.

Sara Lee (SLE) is a leading manufacturer of packaged foods.

Sears Holding Corp. (SHLD) owns Kmart and Sears retail chains

...is a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell.

The Topps Co. is a privately owned company distributing trading cards and Bazooka

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Fact Sheet 2: Brands

Arista Records is a noted subsidiary of BMG Entertainment, which is part of Bertelsmann AG.

Bath & Body Works is a personal-care products company that makes scents for its parent, Limited Brands.

Barnes & Noble is a national seller of books, digital media, and educational products.

Ben & Jerry's makes ice cream and is a subsidiary of consumer products company, Unilever.

Burger King is the world's second largest hamburger chain.

Cheerios is among General Mills' popular brand.

Cheez-It snack crackers are available in a variety of flavors from Kellogg.

Crest covers a full line of dental hygiene products from Procter & Gamble Co. including toothpaste, toothbrushes, and mouthwashes.

Dairy Queen which introduced its soft frozen desserts in 1938 is owned by Berkshire Hathaway.

Dannon yogurt is a product of Groupe Danone.

Dentyne gum is available in a variety of flavors produced by Cadbury plc.

Disney is a theme park, a movie studio, a cable channel and many more things to its owner The Walt Disney Company.

Domino's is the world's #2 pizza chain.

Doritos is just one of the tangy snack chips produced by PepsiCo.

Dr. Pepper soda which was first introduced in 1885 is a product of the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group.

Duracell makes many different types of batteries for its owner Procter & Gamble.

Express sells clothing and was launched by Limited Brands in 1980. It has since become its own company; Express LLC.

Fritos corn chips is owned by Frito-Lay which is owned by PepsiCo.

Fruit of the Loom undergarments are made by Fruit of the Loom, Inc. which is owned by Berkshire Hathaway.

Gap sells clothing on behalf of its owner The Gap, Inc.

Good & Plenty licorice candies are made by Hershey Foods.

Jif is the peanut butter part of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich produced by J. M. Smucker Co.

Minute Maid orange juice is sold under the Cappy brand which is owned by Coca-Cola.

Pizza Hut restaurants is run by its owners Yum! Brands.

Taco Bell is a nice Mexican food alternative to pizza offered by Yum! Brands.

Tropicana orange juices are made by PepsiCo.



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Fact Sheet 3: Web Quotes

Websites offer all kinds of stock quotes. The Stock Market Game™ provides stock quotes through the “Investor Research” link in its team portfolios. The trouble is, each Web sites arranges quotes differently. For example, you often have a choice of selecting "basic" quotes or "detailed" quotes. In either case, you'll find Web sites easy if you understand the following sample.

INVEST MINTS (YUMI)			
1	2	3	4
Last	Changes	% Change	Previous Close
55.75	0.25	4.5	55.50
5	6	7	8
Open	Day High	Day Low	Volume
56.30	56.52	54.63	7,314,736
9	10	11	12
Av. Daily Vol.	Bid	Ask	Shares Out
18,452,000	55.8-	55.72	555 mil.
13	14	15	
EPS	P/E Ratio	52-week High	52-week Low
1.50	37	59.86	45.00
16	17	18	19
Market Cap.	Dividend	Yield	Ex-Div
30.9	1.10	2.0	Nov. 26

(1) Last

is the last price of the stock at the end of the trading day. It is also called the closing price. The last sale of Invest Mints on this day was at a price of \$55.75.

(2) Change

is the increase or decrease in the stock's price between today's last price and the closing price of the previous trading day. In this example, Invest Mints's stock closed at \$55.50 on the previous day (box 4), and its last price today is 55.75. So the stock's price has increased by \$0.25 a share ($\$55.75 - \$55.50 = \0.25). $\text{Change} = \text{Last price of stock today} - \text{Closing price of stock on previous day}$

(3) % Change

is the change in the stock's price as shown in box 2 expressed as a percentage of the closing price on the previous day. The change in Invest Mints's stock as shown above is +\$0.25. On the previous trading day, the stock closed at \$55.50, so today's change represents 4.5% of the earlier closing price ($\$0.25 / \$55.50 = 0.045 = 4.5\%$). $\% \text{ Change} = \text{Today's change in stock's price} / \text{closing price of previous day}$.

(4) Previous Close

is the stock's closing price on the previous trading day. Invest Mints's previous close was \$55.50.



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(5) Open

is the price of the day's first trade of Invest Mints's stock. It is also referred to as the opening price. On this day, its opening price is \$56.30.

(6) Day High

is the highest price the stock has traded at so far today. The Day High for Invest Mints was \$56.52.

(7) Day Low

is the lowest price the stock has traded at so far today. The Day Low for Invest Mints was \$54.63.

(8) Volume

is the total number of shares traded so far this day. This chart shows more than 7 million shares of Invest Mints has already traded today.

(9) Average Daily Volume

presents the number of shares traded per day averaged over a period of time. By comparing an entire day's volume to this average, an investor can see if current trading of the stock is high or low compared with the average number of shares traded each day in the past. The average daily volume for Invest Mints was more than 18 million shares.

(10) Bid

is the highest quoted price investors are currently willing to pay for a share of the company's stock. It shows the price an investor can expect to receive from the sale of the stock at this time.

(11) Ask

is the lowest quoted price sellers are currently accepting for a share of the company's stock. It shows the price an investor can expect to pay when buying a share of the company's stock. The ask price is also called the asked or offer price.

(12) Shares Outstanding

means the total number of shares the company has sold to the public and are now held by investors.

(13) EPS

stands for earnings per share. Earnings per share is a company's total profit or earnings divided by the number of shares outstanding. When making this calculation, Web sites usually use the company's total profit from the latest year, often referred to as trailing twelve months or TTM. For example, Invest Mints earned a profit for the latest twelve months of \$832.5 million (not shown on Web page). The company had 555 million shares of stock outstanding, so its earnings per share equaled \$1.50



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$(\$832,500,500 / 555,000,000 = \$1.50)$. EPS = Latest annual earnings / shares outstanding.

(14) P/E Ratio

is the company's price/earnings ratio, which is the company's previous closing price divided by its latest annual earnings per share. Invest Mints earned \$1.50 per share for the most recent year. Dividing the stock's previous closing price of \$55.50 by this number yields a PE of 37 ($\$55.50/\$1.50 = 37$). P/E Ratio = Latest annual earnings per share / previous closing price of stock.

(15) 52-Week High & 52-Week Low

show the highest and lowest prices of the stock during the last 52 weeks. These numbers are identical to those shown in column 2 of the newspaper quotes.

(16) Market Cap

is short for market capitalization. Market capitalization is the current market value of all outstanding shares of the company. It is calculated by multiplying the stock's current price by the number of shares outstanding. Invest Mints has 555 million shares outstanding, each of which now has a current (last) price of \$55.75. Its market cap is \$30.9 billion ($555,000,000 \times \$55.75 = \$30,941,250,000$). Market cap = Number of shares outstanding x Last price of stock.

(17) Dividend

presents the latest annual dividend the company has paid to stockholders. A dividend is a portion of the company's profits that it pays to stockholders. For example, Invest Mints has paid \$1.10 of its annual profits to stockholders for each share of stock they own. If you had owned 100 shares when the dividend was paid, you would have received \$110 in dividends from the company's profits. A company can only pay its stockholders dividends if it earns a profit. Still, many companies earn a profit but don't pay dividends because they prefer to keep the money to reinvest in their growth. For these companies, this column will be blank.

(18) Yield

is the latest annual dividend divided by the stock's latest closing price. Many companies don't pay dividends, however, so this column would be blank. But Invest Mints did pay a dividend of \$1.10 per share, which is 2.0% of its closing price of \$55.50. ($\$1.10/\$55.50 = 0.02 = 2.0\%$). So the 2.0 shown in this column means the company's dividend yield was 2%. In other words, you would have earned a dividend of two cents on each dollar you had invested in the company.

Yield = Latest annual dividend / previous closing price

(19) Ex-Div

is the date a company sets a few weeks before the dividend's payment, so it will know who owned the stock on or before that date. The company will then send the dividend check to those people. Anyone buying the stock on or after this date will not receive the dividend. In this example, Invest Mints will send its dividend check to the investors who owned the stock on or before November 26.



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Stock talk

Ticker's Tale

by Bill Dickneider

Lots of people look for me but can't find me. Sometimes they even confuse me with someone else. But I'm not hiding out, and I'm not a lost cause. Who am I? My name is Ticker, and I'd like to tell you my story.

Tick, Tick, Tick ...

My story begins a long time ago when I was a kid in the '60s. No, not the 1960s. The 1860s. In those days, we had no telephones or televisions, but we did have a "tele-something" that had just been invented. It was the telegraph.

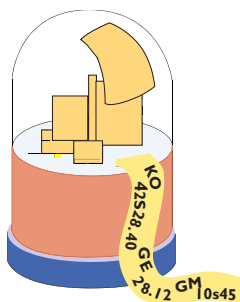
The telegraph may seem like a weakling compared with cell phones and e-mail today, but it was the Internet of the nineteenth century. Consider how it changed the stock market after Thomas Edison and others perfected a little machine called the stock ticker. Suddenly, stock prices on the New York Stock Exchange could be telegraphed across many miles and printed out by these machines ticking away at their task.

But sending information on a telegraph was awkward. Someone had to use special code to enter stock prices on a telegraph, so it made

sense to shorten stock names into special symbols. Here's where I came in because I represent all these symbols. As we ticked our way out of these little machines, people began calling us ticker symbols. That's how I got my name, Ticker.

Of course, the telegraph and stock tickers eventually went the way of the dinosaur. But we ticker symbols are still here doing our job. Even with computers and fiber optic cables, we still make it easier to communicate stock quotes.

Today, there is an electronic ticker tape that streams information about stock trades during the open hours of the stock market. Maybe you've seen one of these at the bottom of your TV screen. We symbols make this electronic reporting much simpler and faster because we communicate information with only a few letters. How many letters depends on the stock exchange. The New York



The New York Stock Exchange began using stock tickers in 1867. Why were there no stock symbols before that date?

Stock Exchange uses one to three letters in its symbols. The Nasdaq Stock Market uses four.

We symbols try to help investors by making ourselves easy to find. But people still have trouble locating us. Sometimes they confuse us with the names and abbreviations that newspapers put in their stock tables. I don't like being confused with a newspaper name, but a ticked off Ticker I'm not.

No Newspaper Names

For example, some newspapers list Dell Computer as DellCptr, which investors often think is the company's stock symbol. But the company, which is listed on the Nasdaq Stock Market, has the ticker symbol DELL. This confusion doesn't occur when a newspaper like *The Wall Street Journal* presents ticker symbols along with companies' full names. But limited space prevents most newspapers from doing this. So they ignore us symbols and list only company names, which are often abbreviated. Still, listing company names is better for investors than listing only us stock symbols. After all, if stock tables gave symbols but no company names, investors would never find a company in the table if they didn't know its symbol.

On the web, however, people can look us up by typing in the company's name and searching for its ticker symbol. Many newspapers offer this service at their web sites. You can find symbol searches at many other sites too. The Stock Market Game has a research section at its web site where you can look up symbols. Here are a few other sites too:

The Nasdaq Stock Market — www.nasdaq.com
The New York Stock Exchange — www.nyse.com
Hoovers Online — www.hoovers.com
Yahoo!Finance — <http://finance.yahoo.com>



Searching the Web

Even on the web you might still have trouble finding us. There are two reasons why. First, the business you're searching for might own other companies (called subsidiaries) with similar names. So when you type in a company name and click on "symbol lookup," you could end up with a list of possibilities. How do you know which one to pick?

Let me give you an example. Not long ago an investor went to a web site to find the stock symbol for Ford Motor Company. The investor typed in Ford Motor and clicked on "symbol

lookup." What appeared on the screen looked something like this:

There are four symbols here, but the second

SYMBOL	NAME	MARKET	TYPE
F	Ford Motor Co.	NYSE	Stock
FCJ	Ford Motor Credit Co.	NYSE	Stock
FCZ	Ford Motor Credit Co.	NYSE	Stock
F_pb	Ford Motor Co.	NYSE	Stock

and third ones are for Ford Motor Credit Corporation. This company is a subsidiary of Ford Motor Company, so neither is the right one. You can always click on the symbol to see if the company is a subsidiary.

There's a second reason why investors might have trouble finding a symbol on the web. A company may also have other stocks besides the **common stock** you're trying to find. These other stocks would be various kinds of **preferred stock**. What's a preferred stock? Here's a brief explanation:

STOCK (A share of ownership in a company)

COMMON STOCK - Most stock is common stock, which is the basic ownership of a company. Common stockholders own most of the company's profits and bear most of its losses. They usually have voting rights.

PREFERRED STOCK - A preferred stock receives a fixed share of a company's profits as a dividend. Payment of dividends on this stock come before any dividends on common stock, so it gets preferred treatment. This stock has no voting rights, and does not share most of the company's profits (or losses).



If you see a symbol with lines, odd characters, or more than four letters, it's probably a preferred stock, not the common stock you're searching for. That's true for the last symbol above, "F_pb." The first symbol, "F," is the correct one. It represents the common stock of the Ford Motor Company. What if your search yields no symbols at all? If so, try a company name search at the Hoover.com site above.

Write Now

Pick one of the following and write a paragraph to explain your answer.

Choose a web site and search for Coca-Cola's common stock. Explain how you found the correct symbol for the stock.

Pick two companies and find their listings in a newspaper. Then use a web site to find their symbols. How do the symbols differ from the