

# Debt Collection Worries

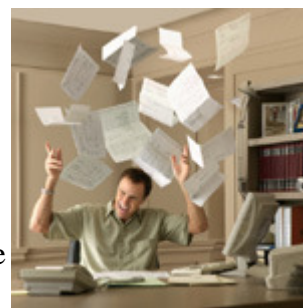
## Pre-reading

Questions: What do you know about debt collection and the worries about it?

Definitions: Creditor – a person or business to whom money is owed by someone

Obligation – something that is owed

Opress – to cause a heavy feeling of defeat or hopelessness



## Reading

Shane lost his job at the school. He was worried about his loss of income. He thought,  
17 “How will I make my rent payment? How will I pay-off my loans? How will I make ends meet?”

36 Shane was probably not going to be able to pay his bills on time. He worried about debt  
54 collectors knocking on his door. He had visions of big, unfriendly men harassing him and his  
70 family for his unpaid bills.

75 Kim, Shane’s case worker at the WorkForce Center, tried to help ease some of Shane’s  
90 concerns. She suggested that he contact his creditors right away. Many creditors are willing to  
105 discuss a modified payment plan that reduces a person’s monthly payment to a more manageable  
120 level. If Shane does this, his creditors will know he is trying to meet his obligations.

136 If Shane chooses not to contact his creditors and neglects his payments, his accounts will be  
152 turned over to a debt collector. Kim gave Shane some information on the federal Fair Debt  
168 Collection Practices Act.

171 She reviewed the Federal Trade Commission’s “Fair Debt Collection” brochure with him.  
183 It addressed many commonly asked questions on the subject. Kim wanted Shane to be informed  
198 about his rights and to know that debt collectors must treat people fairly.

211 What does it mean to “treat people fairly”? In the matter of debt collection, it means that a  
229 debt collector may not contact you at inconvenient times or places, such as before 8 a.m. or after 9  
248 p.m., unless you agree. A debt collector may not contact you at work if the collector knows that  
266 your employer disapproves of such contacts.

272 According to the Federal Trade Commission, a collector may contact you in person, by  
286 mail, telephone, or fax. Debt collectors may not **harass**, oppress, or abuse you or any third parties  
303 they contact. They may not use threat of violence or harm, and they may not use obscene or  
321 profane language.

323 Kim’s suggestions and information were very helpful. Many of Shane’s questions were  
335 answered, and many of his worries disappeared. Shane is less stressed and feels more optimistic  
350 about his future.

## Understanding

1. What does the word **harass** mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. Who helped Shane with his money concerns? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. What is debt? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. What is the federal debt collection law called? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. How could Shane best manage his debt payments? \_\_\_\_\_  
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6. Can a debt collector contact a person at his/her workplace? \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. What specific information helped put Shane's mind at ease? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Who published the brochure about debt collection that Shane received? \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: Have you or someone you know had an experience like Shane's? If so, write about it.

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