# Course Title: Bookkeeping & Financial Record Keeping Essentials

- **Duration:** 5 Days (approximately 35-40 instructional hours)
- **Course Goal:** To provide participants with the foundational knowledge and practical, hands-on skills to accurately record financial transactions, manage day-to-day bookkeeping tasks, maintain organized financial records, and understand the basic financial reports that are essential for business operations, compliance, and decision-making.
- **Core Focus:** Mastering the fundamental mechanics of bookkeeping, from understanding debits and credits to performing bank reconciliations and preparing a trial balance.

**Learning Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- **Understand** the core principles of bookkeeping and the accounting cycle.
- **Apply** the rules of debits and credits using the double-entry bookkeeping system.
- **Set up** a basic Chart of Accounts for a small business.
- **Accurately record** common business transactions in journals and post them to the general ledger.
- **Manage** accounts payable (bills) and accounts receivable (invoices) effectively.
- **Process** basic payroll transactions.
- **Perform** a complete bank reconciliation.
- **Prepare** a trial balance to ensure the books are in balance.
- **Understand** how bookkeeping records lead to the creation of the main financial statements (Income Statement & Balance Sheet).
- **Implement** best practices for organizing and maintaining financial records for business and tax purposes.
- **Gain** basic familiarity with a common accounting software package (like QuickBooks Online or Xero).

**Target Audience:**

- Small business owners and entrepreneurs who manage their own books.
- Administrative assistants, office managers, and bookkeepers new to their roles.
- Individuals seeking a career change into bookkeeping.
- Non-profit staff or treasurers responsible for financial records.
- Anyone who wants a practical, foundational skill in managing financial data.

**Prerequisites:**

- None. This course is designed for absolute beginners.
- Basic computer literacy and numeracy skills are essential.

**Teaching Methodology:**

This is an intensely practical "learn-by-doing" workshop. The methodology includes:

- **Interactive Lectures:** Using simple language and analogies to explain bookkeeping concepts.
- **Hands-on Practice Sets:** The core of the course. Participants will work through a complete bookkeeping cycle for a fictional small business using manual methods (spreadsheets) to build a deep understanding.
- **Live Software Demonstrations:** The instructor will demonstrate how manual concepts translate to a popular accounting software like QuickBooks Online or Xero.
- **Repetitive Drills:** Short, focused exercises on topics like debits/credits and journal entries to build confidence and muscle memory.
- **Group Discussions & Q&A:** A collaborative environment to solve problems and clarify concepts.

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**Materials Provided:**

- Comprehensive digital or printed workbook with key concepts, procedural guides, and exercises.
- A complete **Bookkeeping Practice Set** with a series of transactions for a fictional company.
- Templates for a Chart of Accounts, General Journal, General Ledger, and a Trial Balance in Excel/Google Sheets.
- Checklists for daily, weekly, and monthly bookkeeping tasks.
- (Optional: Trial access to QuickBooks Online or Xero for hands-on practice).
- Certificate of Completion.

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**Detailed Day-by-Day Curriculum**

**Day 1: The Language of Bookkeeping – Foundations**

- **Module 1: What is Bookkeeping & Why It's Crucial (Approx. 2 hours)**
    - Welcome, introductions, and course objectives.
    - The role of the bookkeeper in a business.
    - The difference between bookkeeping and accounting.
    - The importance of accurate records for decision-making, tax compliance, and securing loans.
    - The Accounting Cycle: An overview of the journey from transaction to financial statement.
- **Module 2: The Core Framework: The Accounting Equation & The Chart of Accounts (Approx. 2.5 hours)**
    - The fundamental accounting equation: **Assets = Liabilities + Equity**.
    - Deep dive into the five main account types: **Assets, Liabilities, Equity, Revenue, and Expenses.**
    - **The Chart of Accounts (COA):** The "index" of a company's financial life.
    - How to set up a simple, logical COA for a small business.
    - **Workshop:** Participants create a basic Chart of Accounts for a fictional service business.
- **Module 3: The Golden Rule: Debits & Credits (Approx. 3 hours)**
    - Demystifying debits and credits: It's just left and right!
    - The rules of debits and credits for each of the five account types (using the **DEAD CLaP** mnemonic or similar).
    - Understanding T-Accounts as a visual learning tool.
    - The principle of double-entry bookkeeping: For every debit, there must be an equal credit.
    - **Intensive Drill Session:** Participants work through numerous simple transactions, identifying which accounts are debited and credited.
    - **End of Day 1 Recap & Q&A.**

**Day 2: Recording Transactions – Journals & Ledgers**

- **Module 4: Analyzing & Recording Transactions in the General Journal (Approx. 3.5 hours)**
    - Source documents: The starting point (invoices, receipts, bank statements).
    - The General Journal: The "book of original entry."
    - A step-by-step process for analyzing a transaction and creating a proper journal entry (date, accounts, debits, credits, description).
    - **Hands-on Practice Set (Part 1):** Participants are given the first set of transactions for the course-long practice set and must create the journal entries.
- **Module 5: Posting to the General Ledger (Approx. 3.5 hours)**
    - The General Ledger: A summary of all transactions for each individual account.
    - The process of "posting" from the journal to the ledger accounts.
    - Calculating the running balance for each account.

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- **Hands-on Practice Set (Part 2):** Participants post their journal entries from the previous module to the corresponding General Ledger T-accounts or spreadsheet tabs.
- **End of Day 2 Recap & Q&A.**

**Day 3: Managing Payables, Receivables & Payroll**

- **Module 6: Managing Accounts Receivable (AR) – The Money You're Owed (Approx. 3 hours)**
  - The sales process: Creating and sending customer invoices.
  - Recording sales on credit (debit AR, credit Revenue).
  - Recording customer payments (debit Cash, credit AR).
  - Tracking what customers owe: The Accounts Receivable Aging Report.
  - Managing sales returns and allowances.
  - **Hands-on Practice Set (Part 3):** Recording sales and customer payment transactions.
- **Module 7: Managing Accounts Payable (AP) – The Money You Owe (Approx. 2.5 hours)**
  - The purchasing process: Handling vendor bills.
  - Recording expenses on credit (debit Expense, credit AP).
  - Recording payments to vendors (debit AP, credit Cash).
  - Tracking what you owe: The Accounts Payable Aging Report.
  - **Hands-on Practice Set (Part 4):** Recording vendor bills and payment transactions.
- **Module 8: Bookkeeping for Basic Payroll (Approx. 2 hours)**
  - (This is a simplified overview, as payroll is complex and localized).
  - Calculating gross pay.
  - Understanding common payroll deductions (employee taxes, benefits).
  - Recording the payroll journal entry.
  - Recording the payment of payroll liabilities.
  - **End of Day 3 Recap & Q&A.**

**Day 4: Bank Reconciliations & Adjusting Entries**

- **Module 9: The Bank Reconciliation: A Critical Control (Approx. 3.5 hours)**
  - Why the bank reconciliation is a non-negotiable monthly task.
  - The purpose: To match your cash records to the bank's records and identify any discrepancies.
  - A step-by-step process for performing a bank reconciliation.
  - Identifying common reconciling items (deposits in transit, outstanding checks, bank fees, interest).
  - Making journal entries for items found on the bank statement.
  - **Intensive Workshop:** Participants perform a complete bank reconciliation for the practice set company using a sample bank statement.
- **Module 10: Introduction to Adjusting Journal Entries (Approx. 3.5 hours)**
  - The need for adjusting entries in accrual accounting.
  - Types of adjusting entries:
    - **Accrued Revenues:** Revenue earned but not yet invoiced.
    - **Accrued Expenses:** Expenses incurred but not yet paid (e.g., salaries).
    - **Prepaid Expenses:** Paying for an expense in advance (e.g., insurance).
    - **Unearned Revenues:** Receiving cash before revenue is earned.
    - **Depreciation.**
  - **Hands-on Practice Set (Part 5):** Recording basic adjusting entries for the practice set.

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- **End of Day 4 Recap & Q&A.**

**Day 5: Finalizing the Books & Using Accounting Software**

- **Module 11: The Trial Balance & Finding Errors (Approx. 2.5 hours)**
  - Preparing the Adjusted Trial Balance: Listing all accounts and their final balances.
  - The purpose: To prove that total debits equal total credits.
  - Common techniques for finding errors when the trial balance doesn't balance.
  - **Hands-on Practice Set (Part 6):** Participants prepare the final Adjusted Trial Balance for the practice set company.
- **Module 12: From Trial Balance to Financial Statements (Approx. 2 hours)**
  - How the Adjusted Trial Balance is the source for the financial statements.
  - Creating a simple **Income Statement** from the revenue and expense accounts.
  - Creating a simple **Balance Sheet** from the asset, liability, and equity accounts.
  - Understanding the closing process (overview).
- **Module 13: Introduction to Accounting Software (QuickBooks Online / Xero) (Approx. 2.5 hours)**
  - How software automates the manual processes learned during the week.
  - **Live Demonstration:**
    - Setting up a Chart of Accounts.
    - Entering a bill and paying it.
    - Creating an invoice and receiving payment.
    - The automated bank reconciliation feature.
    - Running standard financial reports with one click.
  - The importance of understanding the fundamentals *before* relying on software.
- **Module 14: Course Review & Best Practices (Approx. 1 hour)**
  - Review of the complete accounting cycle.
  - Checklist for daily, weekly, and monthly bookkeeping tasks.
  - Open forum for final questions.
  - Course evaluation and closing.

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