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Many people think that purchasing stocks is incredibly intimidating, and when you don’t know anything about the stock market it can be intimidating. But once you learn about how the stock market works, it’s not nearly as hard as it originally seemed. The most important thing you can do before you invest in stocks, bonds, or mutual funds is research that company. When you research a company before you invest, you can learn numerous things to help decide if it’s really a smart decision to invest your hard-earned money into this specific company. Maybe on the surface the company seems to be normal and trustworthy but if you research you may find out that there is a lot of drama surrounding the company and it wouldn't be wise to invest.

There are many research sources that are dedicated to helping you develop your portfolio for the Stock Market Game. Stock Rover is said to be one of the best research sources you can find for the stock market and although the Stock Market Game is just a game, it runs along with the real stock market so you need to be aware of what is currently happening. Seeking Alpha is also said to be an incredible research source in helping create a portfolio. Both websites have tools that are unlike any other research source for example Stock Rover provides “research reports” that give the user real-time summaries of all stock rover tracks in the U.S. When thinking about your future investments you want to be sure that you make more money than you lose or it isn’t worth it, and to be sure that you make more money you need to use the best research sources that are available to you.

One of the tools I find myself gravitating to most often is the 52-week range. The 52-week range lets you look at how the company’s stock has been doing in the last 52 weeks, you are able to see when the stock started to dip a little, or a lot, and when the stock began to rise. Another tool that I look at often when trying to decide whether investing in a company's stock is wise is the company’s news. People are incredibly susceptible to believing anything they see online whether it’s true or not. The news surrounding the company you want to invest in is something you always need to be aware of because if it’s bad then the stock is most likely going to reflect that and vice versa. The final tool I constantly use when researching a company's stock is the market cap value. The market cap lets you see the price that investors are willing to pay for that specific stock. If a company’s market cap is high it typically means that it’s a larger, or more established, company and are also usually safer investments.

Depending on what kind of stock you are looking to invest in alters what might be the most important tool for you to use is. One of the most important tools I think you can use is the 52-week range. I believe this one is one of the most important because you can see how the company has been doing in the last year. You are able to see trends in when the price rises and falls and their correlation to the value you are willing to pay. Does the stock typically rise in the fall months? If so, it probably isn't the smartest idea to purchase the stock in spring. The 52-week range can help you gauge when the market will dip so you can purchase stock for a lower price and then also tell when it starts to rise again and is worth more money. Another tool I believe is important to look at when investing is the beta of a company's stock. Beta is what investors look at to try and gauge how much risk a stock is adding to their portfolio. Many times, a higher number is good, but with beta the higher the number the higher the risk.

Etsy is a great addition to your portfolio, looking at the 52-week, it’s currently on the rise. Right now you can buy stock for $112.33 but at its market cap investors were willing to pay $291.38, the market cap was reached last November, and although they have a beta of 1.8 it’s still a good stock to invest in. Another stock that would look good in your portfolio is Enaphase Energy. Currently, the stock is being sold for $257.45 while its market cap is about $361. The beta is 1.49, which is within the safe investment range. News surrounding the company is relatively good talking about how the stock is making big moves. One of the final bonds I would add to my portfolio is Fidelity U.S. bond index fund no load. Currently, the bond is lowering and is only being purchased for $10.13 while the market cap is $12.72.

I selected these specific stocks and bonds because I believe they will have a good return on investment in the future. I believe these stocks and bonds will be good long-term investments because they have done well in the past and are currently doing well or are on the rise. Yes, sometimes you can be wrong about what stocks are the best long-term investments, but if you have looked at all the data you have been given all you can do is hope you make the right decision.

In conclusion, to have a good portfolio all you really need to do is research; research the market cap, news about the company, look at the price of stock now and in past years, and look into the beta for that stock. Learning about stocks and how to trade it isn’t really that difficult once you actually try and begin to look into it.