



## Fixed Income Investing

Understanding how fixed income can fit into an investment portfolio.



## Contents

- 1 Understanding fixed income
- 2 Navigating the bond markets
- 3 How to evaluate bonds
- 4 Bonds in a rising interest rate environment
- 5 Volatility and downside protection
- 6 Fixed income investing at Fidelity
- 8 Next steps

# Understanding fixed income

Fixed income can be an integral part of any diversified portfolio.

Many investors find it hard to tolerate the fluctuations in their portfolios that come from the ups and downs of the markets, leaving them looking for investments that can help moderate volatility. And while many investors understand the benefits of diversification, the role of fixed income investments, such as bonds, CDs, and some annuities, and how they work, can be confusing.\* This discussion guide will primarily focus on bonds.

Bonds are typically recommended, along with stocks and short-term investments, as part of a diversified portfolio.† Bonds are typically less volatile than stocks, and may help investors better tolerate market uncertainty and remain invested for the long term. Bonds may help:

## DIVERSIFY YOUR PORTFOLIO

Higher-credit quality bonds are often less volatile and typically act conversely to stocks in the market. They can help provide diversification and lower portfolio volatility.



## GENERATE INCOME

The interest payments from bonds can help create an income stream that can be reinvested or used to manage cash flow needs. Certain bonds can also provide tax advantages.

## LIMIT RISK TO CAPITAL

Potential repayment of the original investment in a bond can help investors who are concerned about protecting capital to meet financial needs with greater certainty.

\*In general, the bond market is volatile, and fixed income securities carry interest rate risk. (As interest rates rise, bond prices usually fall, and vice versa. This effect is usually more pronounced for longer-term securities.) Fixed income securities also carry inflation, credit, and default risks for both issuers and counterparties. Any fixed income security sold or redeemed prior to maturity may be subject to loss.





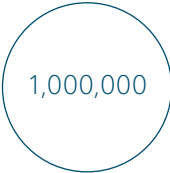
†Diversification does not ensure a profit or guarantee against loss.

# Navigating the bond markets

Investing in today’s vast bond marketplace can be tricky.

The bond market is considerably more complicated than the stock market. It’s very large and fragmented, with thousands of entities issuing millions of bonds, which represent trillions of dollars in the market. Additionally, unlike stocks, bonds do not trade on an organized exchange. Assessing the value of individual bonds and choosing from different issuers, yields, durations, and risk profiles can require additional effort from an investor.

The bond market is vast in terms of the dollar value, type of available bonds, and number of issuers.

	U.S. TREASURIES	CORPORATES	MUNICIPALS
<b>Market Size</b> There are trillions of dollars in bonds across a variety of sectors.	\$27.0 Trillion	\$11.0 Trillion	\$4.1 Trillion
<b>Number of Issuers</b> Within each sector there can be thousands of issuers.	One issuer (U.S. GOV)	 10,000	 50,000
<b>Number of Securities</b> Each issuer can issue multiple bonds and each one has unique properties.	 1,950	 43,000	 1,000,000

Source: Fidelity and the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association (SIFMA), as of Q2 2024 for Corporates and Municipals and as of August 2024 for U.S. Treasuries.

Q

- How familiar are you with bonds?
- With what types of bonds have you had experience?

In general, the bond market is volatile, and fixed income securities carry interest rate risk. (As interest rates rise, bond prices usually fall, and vice versa. This effect is usually more pronounced for longer-term securities.) Fixed income securities also carry inflation, credit, and default risks for both issuers and counterparties. Any fixed income security sold or redeemed prior to maturity may be subject to loss. The municipal market is volatile and can be significantly affected by adverse tax, legislative, or political changes and the financial condition of the issuers of municipal securities.

# How to evaluate bonds

Not all bonds are created equal.

Although some bonds have similar features, such as a fixed payment rate and maturity date, they are not all equal in terms of income potential and risk. Two important bond measurements—credit quality and duration—can provide a good indication of the income an investor might receive and the risk being taken on to pursue that income.

## Credit Quality<sup>1</sup>

A bond's credit quality indicates the likelihood that its issuer will default on paying interest owed and repaying principal at maturity. Bonds generally fall into one of two credit quality categories:

### INVESTMENT-GRADE BONDS

**Have higher credit ratings from major rating agencies (Aaa or AAA to Baa3 or BBB-).\***

Often issued by corporations, developed governments, and municipalities that:

- Are established
- Have fairly healthy balance sheets
- Possess a positive growth outlook

### BELOW-INVESTMENT-GRADE BONDS

**Have lower credit ratings from major rating agencies (Ba1 or BB+ to C or D).\***

Often issued by corporations, developed/developing governments, and municipalities that:

- Are new or have high debt levels
- Operate in highly competitive or volatile sectors
- Have troubling fundamentals

LOWER ← ————— DEFAULT RISK & INCOME POTENTIAL ————— → HIGHER

## Duration<sup>2</sup>

In general, as interest rates rise, existing bond prices usually fall, and vice versa. But these changes do not affect all bonds equally. Duration measures a bond's price sensitivity to changes in interest rates. It is influenced greatly by the length of time until the bond's maturity, and also the way the bond pays interest throughout its life. Bonds generally fall into one of three duration categories:

### SHORT-TERM BONDS

Duration: 1–3.49 years

### INTERMEDIATE-TERM BONDS

Duration: 3.5–6 years

### LONG-TERM BONDS

Duration: 6+ years

LOWER ← ————— INTEREST RATE SENSITIVITY & INCOME POTENTIAL ————— → HIGHER



- How comfortable are you evaluating the risks in your portfolio?
- What additional resources about bonds might be helpful?

\*Each agency has its own rating hierarchy, creating differences in ratings scale shown for each credit quality category.

# Bonds in a rising interest rate environment

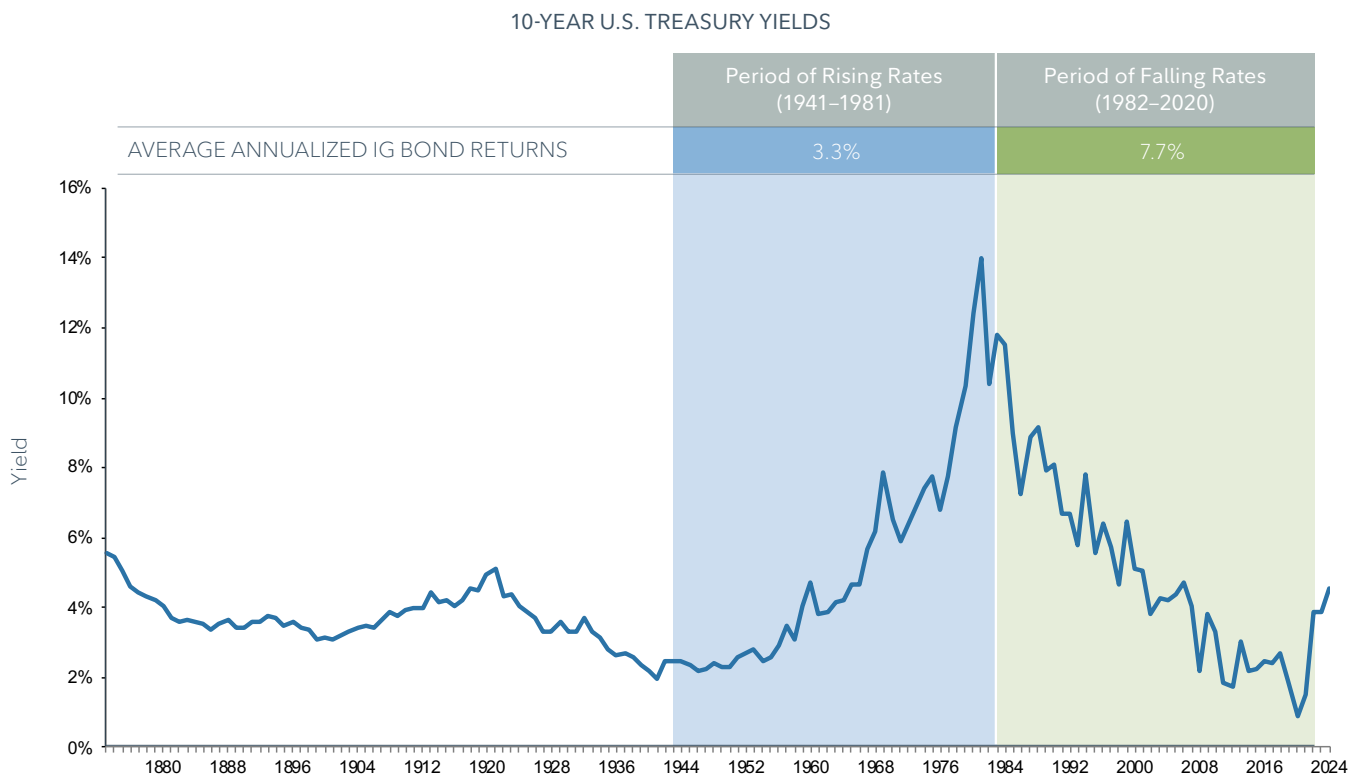
Even if rates rise, bonds can be an important part of an investor's plan.

Over the last few decades, a general decline of interest rates provided a positive backdrop for bonds. As a result, the common perception among many investors is that in the reverse scenario—a world of rising rates—bonds are not worth owning.

However, bonds may help generate income and may help limit portfolio volatility—even during periods of rising interest rates. And rising rates will not affect all bonds equally. It is important to understand the variety of bond types, and what kind of return each may provide in different types of market environments.

## Bond Returns Can Be Resilient When Interest Rates Rise

Historically, higher interest rates have led to lower bond returns, not consistent losses



**Past performance is no guarantee of future results.** IG: Investment Grade. Asset class total returns are represented by indexes from Fidelity Investments, Morningstar, and Bloomberg. Fidelity Investments proprietary analysis of historical asset class performance, which is not indicative of future performance. Sources: U.S. Treasury, Bloomberg Finance L.P., Fidelity Investments as of 12/31/2024.



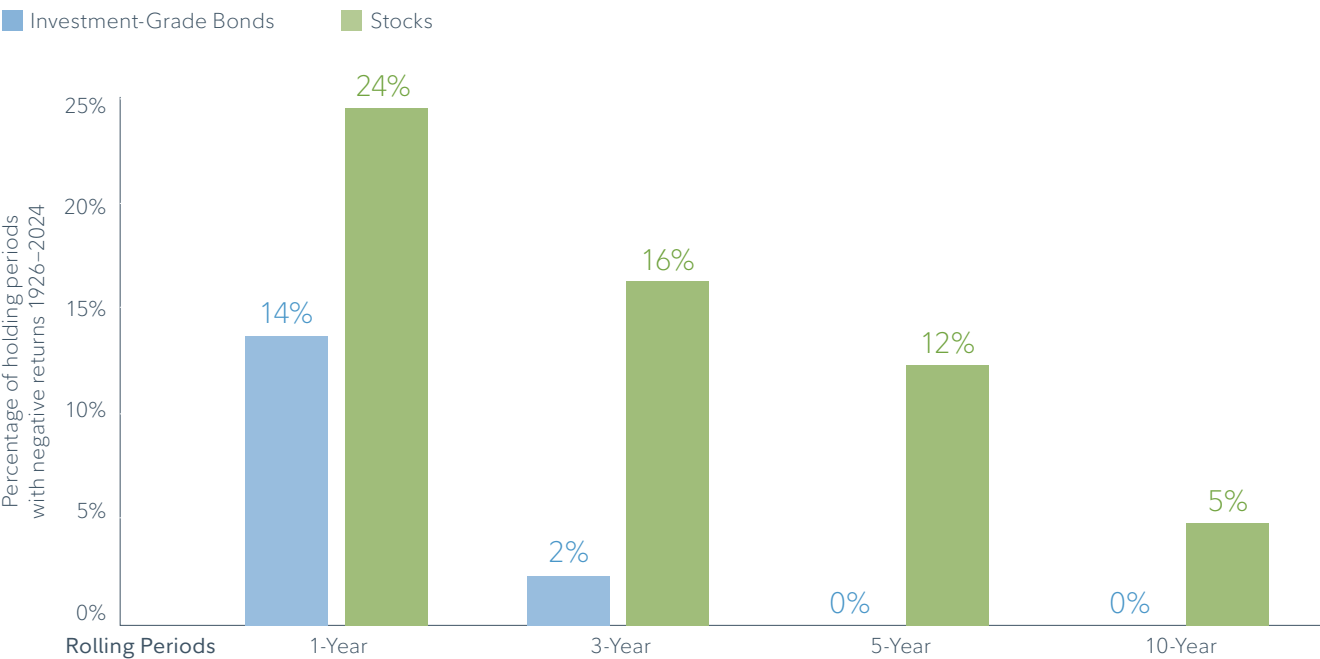
- What experience do you have with how fluctuating interest rates can affect your portfolio?
- Are you concerned about the impact of changing interest rates on your investment returns?

# Volatility and downside protection

Bonds have historically seen fewer periods of negative returns than stocks and may provide diversification.

Bonds are generally less sensitive than stocks when it comes to ups and downs in the market. That’s one of the reasons people own bonds—to help provide some protection in periods of market volatility.

If you owned investment-grade bonds for five years or more over any consecutive time period since 1926, you would have had less chance of experiencing negative returns.



Worst Total Returns over Various Holding Periods				
	1-Year	3-Year	5-Year	10-Year
Investment-Grade Bonds	-16%	-4%	0.5%	1%
Stocks	-68%	-42%	-17%	-5%

Based on rolling monthly holding periods. TABLE: annualized returns. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.** Investment-grade bond and stock returns are represented by indexes from Fidelity Investments, Morningstar, Standard & Poor's, and Bloomberg. Fidelity Investments proprietary analysis of historical asset class performance is not indicative of future performance. Source: Fidelity Investments as of 12/31/2024.



- How important is stability in your investments?
- What is your level of comfort with volatility?

# Fixed income investing at Fidelity

Our comprehensive fixed income offering can help you invest in a way that works for you.

Helping investors navigate today's fixed income market requires vast resources. Fidelity has invested heavily in both people and technology, aiming to gain a competitive edge for the benefit of our customers. We offer a variety of choices and levels of assistance in navigating the bond market through tools and resources available on Fidelity.com, access to fixed income specialists, and a variety of investment vehicles and strategies.

INDIVIDUAL SECURITIES Bonds and CDs	FIXED INCOME EXCHANGE TRADED FUNDS <sup>4</sup> (ETFs)
A fixed income investment, such as a bond or CD, that typically provides a return in the form of fixed periodic payments	A portfolio of bonds and other fixed income investments that trade as a single unit throughout the day
<b>Requires purchasing</b> a broad array of bonds to diversify	<b>Offers the potential for diversification</b> through a constantly changing portfolio of bonds
<b>Can provide income</b> and/or tax advantages, depending on the type of security	<b>Can provide income;</b> amounts will vary depending on underlying holdings of the fund, <sup>4</sup> which are constantly changing
<b>Typically provides return of principal</b> at maturity	<b>Does not repay</b> principal on a fixed schedule
<b>Broad selection</b> of more than 75,000 new issue and secondary market bonds and CDs <sup>3</sup>	<b>Access to a wide range of fixed income ETFs</b> that include U.S. and international bonds, covering a spectrum of credit qualities and maturities
<b>Exceptional value</b> as we display bond prices as we receive them from dealers and add a bond trading markup of just \$1 per bond*	<b>Intraday pricing and trading</b> with ongoing transparency of holdings
<b>Research and trade</b> on Fidelity's powerful online platform, or use our Bond Ladder Tool <sup>5</sup> to build a portfolio of bonds	<b>Research and trade</b> an expansive offering of active and passive funds on Fidelity's online platform

Minimum Investment:  
Generally \$1,000–\$5,000 per bond,  
depending on the type of bond

Minimum Investment:  
Varies by fund



- What factors are most important to your choice of investments?
- Control • Customization • Fees • Transparency • Potential tax deductions

\*Minimum markup or markdown of \$19.95 applies if traded with a Fidelity representative. For U.S. Treasury purchases traded with a Fidelity representative, a flat charge of \$19.95 per trade applies. A \$250 maximum applies to all trades, reduced to a \$50 maximum for bonds maturing in one year or less. Rates are for U.S. dollar-denominated bonds; additional fees and minimums apply for non-dollar bond trades. Other conditions may apply; see Fidelity.com/commissions for details. Please note that markups and markdowns may affect the total cost of the transaction and the total, or "effective," yield of your investment. The offering broker, which may be our affiliate, National Financial Services LLC, may separately mark up or mark down the price of the security and may realize a trading profit or loss on the transaction.

FIXED INCOME MUTUAL FUNDS	SEPARATELY MANAGED ACCOUNTS (SMAs)
A portfolio of bonds and other fixed income investments that trade at net asset value (NAV)	A professionally managed portfolio of primarily individual bonds, built and managed to an investor's preferences
<b>Can offer broad diversification</b> , though some funds are narrowly focused	<b>A diversified portfolio</b> of fixed income securities
<b>Can provide income</b> although amounts will vary depending on underlying holdings of the fund, which are constantly changing	<b>Can provide income</b> and/or tax advantages, depending on underlying holdings
<b>Does not repay</b> principal on a fixed schedule	Underlying individual bonds <b>typically provide return of principal</b> if held until maturity
<b>Access to a broad range of fund types</b> , allowing investors to select funds that align with their goals and risk tolerance	<b>A strategy based on your preferences</b> , with the ability to include existing holdings or exclude certain types of investments
<b>Pricing and trading at end-of-day NAV</b> with periodic transparency of holdings	<b>Individual ownership of bonds</b> with transparency into holdings
<b>Research and trade</b> an expansive offering of active and passive funds on Fidelity's online platform	<b>A dedicated representative</b> who can provide insights from the portfolio management team and answer questions about account activity

Minimum Investment:  
Varies by fund

Minimum Investment:  
\$350,000<sup>6</sup>



• Which solutions best address your needs?

**Fidelity Separately Managed Accounts managed accounts refer to the advisory services provided for a fee through Strategic Advisers LLC (Strategic Advisers), a registered investment adviser.** Brokerage services provided by Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC (FBS), and custodial and related services provided by National Financial Services LLC (NFS), each a member NYSE and SIPC. Strategic Advisers, FBS, and NFS are Fidelity Investments companies.

## Next steps

Working together with you, we will help you take the following steps to create a plan to help you meet your goals.

- 1 Identify your personal and financial goals.  
Completed ☐
- 2 Determine which fixed income option may meet your needs.  
Completed ☐
- 3 Implement your plan with an appropriate mix of fixed income investments to balance your financial needs.  
Completed ☐
- 4 Set up regular reviews with your Fidelity investment professional to help you refine your portfolio to help meet your lifestyle and income needs.  
Completed ☐

Please see the back cover for additional important information.





900 SALEM STREET

SMITHFIELD, RHODE ISLAND 02917

<sup>1</sup>There are credit rating agencies that analyze the creditworthiness of a company or security and indicate that credit quality by means of a grade, or credit rating. In the United States, major rating agencies include three Nationally Recognized Statistical Rating Organizations (NRSROs): Moody's Investors Service (Moody's), Standard & Poor's Ratings Services (S&P), and Fitch, Inc.

<sup>2</sup>Duration is a measure of a security's price sensitivity to changes in interest rates. Duration differs from maturity in that it considers a security's interest payments in addition to the amount of time until the security reaches maturity, and also takes into account certain maturity-shortening features (e.g., demand features, interest rate resets, and call options) when applicable. Securities with longer durations generally tend to be more sensitive to interest rate changes than securities with shorter durations. A fund with a longer average duration generally can be expected to be more sensitive to interest rate changes than a fund with a shorter average duration.

<sup>3</sup>If you want to buy or sell a CD on the secondary market, Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC ("FBS") will charge you a markup or markdown. This markup/markdown will be applied to your order, and you will be provided the opportunity to review it prior to submission for execution. CDs are made available through our affiliate National Financial Services LLC ("NFS") and from various third-party providers, including participants on the Tradeweb Markets, TMC Bonds, and Knight Capital Group platforms, with FBS normally acting as riskless principal or agent. These offering brokers, including NFS, may separately mark up or mark down the price of the security and may realize a trading profit or loss on the transaction.

<sup>4</sup>**ETFs are subject to market fluctuation and the risks of their underlying investments. ETFs are subject to management fees and other expenses. In general, fixed income exchange-traded products (ETPs) carry risks similar to those of bonds, including interest rate risk (as interest rates rise, bond prices usually fall, and vice versa), credit and default risks for both issuers and counterparties, inflation risk, and call risk. Unlike individual bonds, many fixed income ETPs do not have a maturity date, so a strategy of holding a fixed income security until maturity to try to avoid losses associated with bond price volatility is not possible with those types of ETPs. Certain fixed income ETPs may invest in lower quality debt securities that involve greater risk of default or price changes due to potential changes in the credit quality of the issuer.**

<sup>5</sup>A bond ladder, depending on the types and amount of securities within it, may not ensure adequate diversification of your investment portfolio. While diversification does not ensure a profit or guarantee against loss, a lack of diversification may result in heightened volatility of your portfolio value. You must perform your own evaluation as to whether a bond ladder and the securities held within it are consistent with your investment objectives, risk tolerance, and financial circumstances. To learn more about diversification and its effects on your portfolio, contact a representative.

<sup>6</sup>Fidelity® Strategic Disciplines (FSD) clients must generally qualify for support from a dedicated Fidelity advisor, which is based on a variety of factors (for example, a client with at least \$500,000 invested in an eligible Fidelity account(s) would typically qualify). Account investment minimum is \$100,000 for an FSD equity strategy, and \$350,000 for an FSD bond strategy.

In general the bond market is volatile, and fixed income securities carry interest rate risk. (As interest rates rise, bond prices usually fall, and vice versa. This effect is usually more pronounced for longer-term securities.) Fixed income securities also carry inflation, credit, and default risks for both issuers and counterparties. Unlike individual bonds, most bond funds do not have a maturity date, so holding them until maturity to avoid losses caused by price volatility is not possible. Foreign securities are subject to interest rate, currency exchange rate, economic, and political risks, all of which are magnified in emerging markets. Lower-quality bonds can be more volatile and have greater risk of default than higher-quality bonds. The municipal market is volatile and can be significantly affected by adverse tax, legislative, or political changes and the financial condition of the issuers of municipal securities.

Indexes are unmanaged. It is not possible to invest directly in an index.

Index performance includes the reinvestment of dividends and interest income. Securities indices are not subject to fees and expenses typically associated with managed accounts or investment funds. An investment cannot be made in an index.

Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index is a broad-based, market value-weighted benchmark that measures the performance of the investment-grade, U.S. dollar-denominated, fixed-rate taxable bond market. The Morningstar U.S. Market Index is a rule-based, float-weighted index that tracks the performance of the U.S. stock market. The index targets 97% of the market capitalization of the U.S. stock market. The S&P 500® Index is a market capitalization-weighted index of 500 common stocks chosen for market size, liquidity, and industry group representation to represent U.S. equity performance.

Information provided is general in nature. It should in no way be considered investment or tax advice. Investment decisions should take into account the unique circumstances of the individual investor. Consult an attorney or tax advisor regarding your specific legal or tax situation.

Third-party trademarks and service marks are the property of their respective owners. All other trademarks and service marks are the property of FMR LLC or an affiliated company.

Keep in mind that investing involves risk. The value of your investment will fluctuate over time, and you may gain or lose money.

Diversification and asset allocation do not ensure a profit or guarantee against loss.

**This information is intended to be educational and is not tailored to the investment needs of any specific investor.**

Fidelity, Fidelity Investments, and the Fidelity Investments and pyramid design logo are registered service marks of FMR LLC.

**Before investing in any mutual fund or exchange-traded fund, you should consider its investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses. Contact Fidelity for a prospectus, an offering circular, or, if available, a summary prospectus containing this information. Read it carefully.**

Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC, Member NYSE and SIPC, 900 Salem Street, Smithfield, RI 02917

© 2025 FMR LLC. All rights reserved.

807239.11.0