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# George Putnam Balanced Fund

**Summary prospectus**

**11 | 30 | 18**

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<b>FUND SYMBOLS</b>	<b>CLASS A</b>	<b>CLASS B</b>	<b>CLASS C</b>	<b>CLASS M</b>	<b>CLASS R</b>	<b>CLASS R5</b>	<b>CLASS R6</b>	<b>CLASS Y</b>
	P GEOX	P GEBX	P GPCX	P GEMX	P GPRX	P GELX	P GEJX	P GEYX

## **George Putnam Balanced Fund**

Summary Prospectus dated November 30, 2018

Effective February 28, 2019, the section *Your fund's management* is replaced in its entirety with the following:

### **Your fund's management**

#### **Investment advisor**

Putnam Investment Management, LLC

#### **Portfolio managers**

Kathryn Lakin, Director of Equity Research, portfolio manager of the fund since 2019

Paul Scanlon, Co-Head of Fixed Income, portfolio manager of the fund since 2016

Emily Shanks, Portfolio Manager, portfolio manager of the fund since 2019

#### **Sub-advisor**

Putnam Investments Limited\*

\* Though the investment advisor has retained the services of Putnam Investments Limited (PIL), PIL does not currently manage any assets of the fund.

# George Putnam Balanced Fund

Before you invest, you may wish to review the fund's prospectus, which contains more information about the fund and its risks. You may obtain the prospectus and other information about the fund, including the statement of additional information (SAI) and most recent reports to shareholders, at no cost by visiting [putnam.com/funddocuments](http://putnam.com/funddocuments), calling 1-800-225-1581, or e-mailing Putnam at [funddocuments@putnam.com](mailto:funddocuments@putnam.com).

The fund's prospectus and SAI, both dated 11/30/18, are incorporated by reference into this summary prospectus.

## Goal

George Putnam Balanced Fund seeks to provide a balanced investment composed of a well-diversified portfolio of stocks and bonds which produce both capital growth and current income.

## Fees and expenses

The following table describes the fees and expenses you may pay if you buy and hold shares of the fund. You may qualify for sales charge discounts if you and your family invest, or agree to invest in the future, at least \$50,000 in Putnam funds. More information about these and other discounts is available from your financial advisor and in *How do I buy fund shares?* beginning on page 15 of the fund's prospectus, in the Appendix to the fund's prospectus, and in *How to buy shares* beginning on page II-1 of the fund's statement of additional information (SAI).

### Shareholder fees *(fees paid directly from your investment)*

Share class	Maximum sales charge (load) imposed on purchases (as a percentage of offering price)	Maximum deferred sales charge (load) (as a percentage of original purchase price or redemption proceeds, whichever is lower)
Class A	5.75%	1.00%*
Class B	NONE	5.00%**
Class C	NONE	1.00%***
Class M	3.50%	NONE
Class R	NONE	NONE
Class R5	NONE	NONE
Class R6	NONE	NONE
Class Y	NONE	NONE

## Annual fund operating expenses

(expenses you pay each year as a percentage of the value of your investment)

Share class	Management fees	Distribution and service (12b-1) fees	Other expenses	Total annual fund operating expenses
Class A	0.52%	0.25%	0.22%	0.99%
Class B	0.52%	1.00%	0.22%	1.74%
Class C	0.52%	1.00%	0.22%	1.74%
Class M	0.52%	0.75%	0.22%	1.49%
Class R	0.52%	0.50%	0.22%	1.24%
Class R5	0.52%	N/A	0.21%	0.73%
Class R6	0.52%	N/A	0.11%	0.63%
Class Y	0.52%	N/A	0.22%	0.74%

\* Applies only to certain redemptions of shares bought with no initial sales charge.

\*\* This charge is phased out over six years.

\*\*\* This charge is eliminated after one year.

## Example

The following hypothetical example is intended to help you compare the cost of investing in the fund with the cost of investing in other funds. It assumes that you invest \$10,000 in the fund for the time periods indicated and then, except as indicated, redeem all your shares at the end of those periods. It assumes a 5% return on your investment each year and that the fund's operating expenses remain the same. Your actual costs may be higher or lower.

Share class	1 year	3 years	5 years	10 years
Class A	\$670	\$872	\$1,091	\$1,718
Class B	\$677	\$848	\$1,144	\$1,853
Class B (no redemption)	\$177	\$548	\$944	\$1,853
Class C	\$277	\$548	\$944	\$2,052
Class C (no redemption)	\$177	\$548	\$944	\$2,052
Class M	\$496	\$805	\$1,135	\$2,067
Class R	\$126	\$393	\$681	\$1,500
Class R5	\$75	\$233	\$406	\$906
Class R6	\$64	\$202	\$351	\$786
Class Y	\$76	\$237	\$411	\$918

## Portfolio turnover

The fund pays transaction-related costs, such as commissions, when it buys and sells securities (or "turns over" its portfolio). A higher turnover rate may indicate higher transaction costs and may result in higher taxes when the fund's shares are held in a taxable account. These costs, which are not reflected in annual fund operating expenses or the above example, affect fund performance. The fund's turnover rate in the most recent fiscal year was 179%.

## **Investments, risks, and performance**

### **Investments**

We invest mainly in a combination of bonds and common stocks (growth or value stocks or both) of large U.S. companies, with a greater focus on common stocks. For example, we may purchase stocks of companies with stock prices that reflect a value lower than that which we place on the company. We may also consider other factors that we believe will cause the stock price to rise. We buy bonds of governments and private companies that are mostly investment-grade in quality with intermediate- to long-term maturities (three years or longer). We may consider, among other factors, a company's valuation, financial strength, growth potential, competitive position in its industry, projected future earnings, cash flows and dividends when deciding whether to buy or sell equity investments, and, among other factors, credit, interest rate and prepayment risks, as well as general market conditions, when deciding whether to buy or sell fixed-income investments. We may also use derivatives, such as futures, options, warrants and swap contracts, for both hedging and non-hedging purposes.

### **Risks**

It is important to understand that you can lose money by investing in the fund.

The value of stocks and bonds in the fund's portfolio may fall or fail to rise over extended periods of time for a variety of reasons, including general financial market conditions, changing market perceptions (including, in the case of bonds, perceptions about the risk of default and expectations about monetary policy or interest rates), changes in government intervention in the financial markets, and factors related to a specific issuer or industry. These and other factors may lead to increased volatility and reduced liquidity in the fund's portfolio holdings. Growth stocks may be more susceptible to earnings disappointments, and value stocks may fail to rebound.

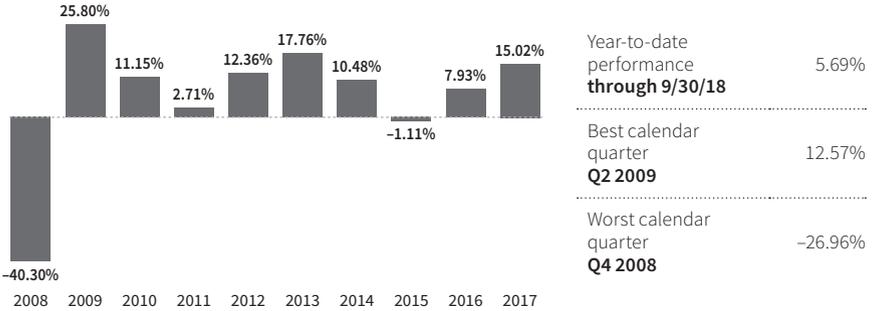
Bond investments are subject to interest rate risk, which means the value of the fund's bond investments is likely to fall if interest rates rise. Bond investments also are subject to credit risk, which is the risk that the issuer of the bond may default on payment of interest or principal. Interest rate risk is generally greater for longer-term bonds, and credit risk is generally greater for below-investment-grade bonds (sometimes referred to as "junk bonds"), which may be considered speculative. Our use of derivatives may increase the risks of investing in the fund by increasing investment exposure (which may be considered leverage) or, in the case of many over-the-counter instruments, because of the potential inability to terminate or sell derivatives positions and the potential failure of the other party to the instrument to meet its obligations.

The fund may not achieve its goal, and it is not intended to be a complete investment program. An investment in the fund is not insured or guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other government agency.

## Performance

The performance information below gives some indication of the risks associated with an investment in the fund by showing the fund's performance year to year and over time. The bar chart does not reflect the impact of sales charges. If it did, performance would be lower. Please remember that past performance is not necessarily an indication of future results. Monthly performance figures for the fund are available at putnam.com.

### Annual total returns for class A shares before sales charges



### Average annual total returns after sales charges (for periods ended 12/31/17)

Share class	1 year	5 years	10 years
Class A before taxes	8.41%	8.52%	3.79%
Class A after taxes on distributions	8.06%	8.17%	3.34%
Class A after taxes on distributions and sale of fund shares	4.93%	6.64%	2.87%
Class B before taxes	9.20%	8.71%	3.77%
Class C before taxes	13.16%	8.99%	3.62%
Class M before taxes	10.44%	8.49%	3.51%
Class R before taxes	14.73%	9.53%	4.15%
Class R5 before taxes*	15.37%	10.11%	4.67%
Class R6 before taxes*	15.45%	10.19%	4.71%
Class Y before taxes	15.31%	10.10%	4.67%
S&P 500 Index (no deduction for fees, expenses or taxes)	21.83%	15.79%	8.50%
Bloomberg Barclays U.S. Aggregate Bond Index (no deduction for fees, expenses or taxes)	3.54%	2.10%	4.01%
George Putnam Blended Index (no deduction for fees, expenses or taxes)	14.25%	10.33%	7.29%

\* Performance for class R5 and class R6 shares prior to their inception (12/2/13) is derived from the historical performance of class Y shares and has not been adjusted for the lower investor servicing fees applicable to class R5 and class R6 shares; had it, returns would have been higher.

The fund's performance is compared to the Bloomberg Barclays U.S. Aggregate Bond Index, an unmanaged index of U.S. investment-grade fixed income securities. The fund's performance is also compared to the S&P 500 Index, an unmanaged index of large U.S. company stocks. In addition,

the fund's performance is compared to the George Putnam Blended Index, an unmanaged index administered by Putnam Management, 60% of which is the S&P 500 Index and 40% of which is the Bloomberg Barclays U.S. Aggregate Bond Index.

After-tax returns reflect the historical highest individual federal marginal income tax rates and do not reflect state and local taxes. Actual after-tax returns depend on an investor's tax situation and may differ from those shown. After-tax returns are shown for class A shares only and will vary for other classes. These after-tax returns do not apply if you hold your fund shares through a 401(k) plan, an IRA, or another tax-advantaged arrangement.

Class B share performance reflects conversion to class A shares after eight years.

## **Your fund's management**

### **Investment advisor**

Putnam Investment Management, LLC

### **Portfolio managers**

#### **Aaron Cooper**

Chief Investment Officer, Equities,  
portfolio manager of the fund since 2014

#### **Paul Scanlon**

Co-Head of Fixed Income, portfolio  
manager of the fund since 2016

### **Sub-advisor**

Putnam Investments Limited\*

\* Though the investment advisor has retained the services of Putnam Investments Limited (PIL), PIL does not currently manage any assets of the fund.

## **Purchase and sale of fund shares**

You can open an account, purchase and/or sell fund shares, or exchange them for shares of another Putnam fund by contacting your financial advisor or by calling Putnam Investor Services at 1-800-225-1581. Purchases of class B shares are closed to new and existing investors except by exchange from class B shares of another Putnam fund or through dividend and/or capital gains reinvestment.

When opening an account, you must complete and mail a Putnam account application, along with a check made payable to the fund, to: Putnam Investor Services, P.O. Box 8383, Boston, MA 02266-8383. The minimum initial investment of \$500 is currently waived, although Putnam reserves the right to reject initial investments under \$500 at its discretion. There is no minimum for subsequent investments.

You can sell your shares back to the fund or exchange them for shares of another Putnam fund any day the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) is open. Shares may be sold or exchanged by mail, by phone, or online at putnam.com. Some restrictions may apply.

**Tax information**

The fund's distributions will be taxed as ordinary income or capital gains unless you hold the shares through a tax-advantaged arrangement, in which case you will generally be taxed only upon withdrawal of monies from the arrangement.

**Financial intermediary compensation**

If you purchase the fund through a broker/dealer or other financial intermediary (such as a bank or financial advisor), the fund and its related companies may pay that intermediary for the sale of fund shares and related services. Please bear in mind that these payments may create a conflict of interest by influencing the broker/dealer or other intermediary to recommend the fund over another investment. Ask your advisor or visit your advisor's website for more information.

**Information about the Summary Prospectus, Prospectus, and SAI**

The summary prospectus, prospectus, and SAI for a fund provide information concerning the fund. The summary prospectus, prospectus, and SAI are updated at least annually and any information provided in a summary prospectus, prospectus, or SAI can be changed without a shareholder vote unless specifically stated otherwise. The summary prospectus, prospectus, and the SAI are not contracts between the fund and its shareholders and do not give rise to any contractual rights or obligations or any shareholder rights other than any rights conferred explicitly by federal or state securities laws that may not be waived.

**Additional information, including current performance, is available at [putnam.com/funddocuments](http://putnam.com/funddocuments), by calling 1-800-225-1581, or by e-mailing Putnam at [funddocuments@putnam.com](mailto:funddocuments@putnam.com).**

