

CREATING A SMALL BUSINESS PLAN

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Overview

In this 18-day English Language Arts (ELA) unit plan, students work in groups to create a small business idea. Throughout the unit, students develop a small business idea, interview small-business owners in the community, strengthen their business plan based on ideas they gleaned from their interviews, and finally, pitch their ideas - using persuasive language and advertisements - to business owners in their community.

Standards Addressed

1. **ELA.8.L.1.:** Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood.
2. **ELA.8.L.3(a):** Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).
3. **ELA.8.SL.4:** Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
4. **ELA.8.SL.5:** Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
5. **ELA.8.SL.6:** Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
6. **ELA.8.SL.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
7. **ELA.8.SL.2:** Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

8. **ELA.8.SL.3:** Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
9. **ELA.8.W.7:** Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
10. **ELA.8.W.1:** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

Day One

Standards Addressed: 6, 7, and 8

Students watch an episode of “Shark Tank” and discuss themes, trends, and presentation tips from the show. Introduce students to the assignment by reviewing the **Business Plan Project** and showing them previous student work samples.

Days Two and Three

Standards Addressed: 1, 2, 6, 9, and 10

Students form teams and come up with a small business idea. They must submit a paragraph proposal to the teacher for approval using the **Business Plan Project**. They should use the **Business Plan Guide** to help them in this activity.

Day Four

Standards Addressed: 1, 2, 6, 9, and 10

Students prepare questions to interview small business owners. Questions are related to the following topics: marketing a new business, personnel issues to consider, start-up costs, financial projections, and how to target an audience of buyers. Teach a mini-lesson on appropriate interviewing techniques. Use **Questions to Get to Know Business Owners** as an example of student-generated questions.

Day Five

Standards Addressed: 3, 5, 7, and 8

Invite several small business owners to come to the classroom to speak to the students. Students sit with their teams and rotate to the different small business owners. During each rotation, students ask the questions they generated the day before (**Questions to Get to Know Business Owners**), as well as the **Questions to Ask Business Owners about Your Business**. The students should take note of each adult’s responses and create a synthesis of the information they learned to submit to the teacher.

Day Six

Standards Addressed: 1, 2, 6, 9, and 10

Students have the opportunity to workshop their business plan ideas with their group members using the information gleaned from the small business owners the day before. They should use **Business Plan Project** and **Business Plan Guide**.

Days Seven to Nine

Standards Addressed: 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, and 10

Students learn the difference between the ethos, pathos, and logos persuasive appeals. Using the document camera, the class analyzes various advertisements using persuasive strategies. These ads can be found in any type of magazine that you or the students bring in to class. Students then analyze various ads pulled from magazines in a small group using **Identifying Pathos, Ethos, and Logos Graphic Organizer**. Finally, each student brings in their own ad that found either online or in a magazine. Students will write a full analysis using the **Ad Analysis Graphic Organizer**.

Days Ten and Eleven

Standards Addressed: 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, and 10

Students have the opportunity to workshop with their group to create an advertisement for their business using pathos, ethos, and logos in a PowerPoint.

Day Twelve

Standards Addressed: 3 and 5

Teach students the proper way to interact with an adult by looking them in the eyes, having a firm handshake, and speaking clearly without stammering. Students practice with each other.

Day Thirteen

Standards Addressed: 3 and 5

Several business leaders volunteer to come to the classroom and speak with students. Each volunteer is given a **Great Shake Evaluation Form**¹ to fill out while the students rotate to speak to them. Volunteers should ask the students about their business using the **Student Interview Questions**. Students are evaluated on how prepared they are to answer the questions as well as how articulate and professional they are in their interactions.

¹ The Great Shake is an activity adapted from the [Ron Clark Academy's](http://www.11alive.com/story/news/education/2014/06/12/ron-clark-academy-compete-amazing-shake-graduate/10375923/) "Amazing Shake." For more information, please visit: <http://www.11alive.com/story/news/education/2014/06/12/ron-clark-academy-compete-amazing-shake-graduate/10375923/>

Day Fourteen

Standards Addressed: 6, 7, and 8

As students prepare the finishing touches on their business projects, the class watches another episode of “Shark Tank.” With each pitch presented, students evaluate the presenters and their use of persuasive strategies.

Days Fifteen and Sixteen

Standards Addressed: 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8

Each group practices their presentations for the rest of the class. The class evaluates the presentations using the **Business Plan Rubric**. After each presentation, there is a class discussion about how well the presenters did based on each standard listed in the rubric. Each group goes through this process twice.

Day Seventeen

Standards Addressed: 3, 4, and 5

The same group of business men and women from the community return and form a “Shark Tank” panel. Each group dresses professionally (tie for the boys, skirt or dress for the girls) and presents their small business pitch. Each group submits a business plan which includes a pie chart financial analysis or a spreadsheet. The groups also display their advertisement and social media tweets that they would use to market their business. The “Shark Tank” panel uses the **Business Plan Pitch Evaluation** to evaluate each group. Once all presentations are completed, a winner is selected. That group receives “seed money” to start the business.

Day Eighteen

Standards Addressed: 7, 8, and 10

The groups receive their rubrics from the evaluations the day before. Each team member writes a **Group Reflection** based on their scores.