



March 29 is National Mom and Pop Business Owners Day – a day set aside to acknowledge and celebrate small business owners. It’s also a great time to develop the **Create** critical thinking trait with this integrated lesson. Small businesses are important for economic health, but the critical role they play is sometimes overlooked. Let’s support the future of entrepreneurship as students use cross-curricular skills to create a [startup business plan](#).

*Note: Preview literature and Internet websites for appropriate content to match your district guidelines.*

## Getting Started

**Critical Thinking Trait Focus:** Review the **Create** critical thinking trait with students and explain they will be using it to build a plan for a small business.



**Create:** I use my knowledge and imagination to express new and innovative ideas.

**Learning Standards Focus:** free enterprise system, effects of supply and demand, regional industry, keeping and using financial records, balancing a simple budget, gathering relevant information from a variety of sources.

**Vocabulary:** budget, economy, supply, demand, consumer, purchase, company, goods, services, profit

## Instruction

### Activity Directions

1. Introduce students to entrepreneurship using media or literature titles listed below (see Literature Suggestions or Web Resources). Use this time to examine related vocabulary.
2. Prompt students with thought-provoking questions to facilitate the development of the **Create** critical thinking trait. Examples might include:
  - “What is the underlying message?”
  - “In what ways can you connect with \_\_\_?”
  - “What are the pros and cons of \_\_\_?”
3. Allow students to work individually, in pairs, or in small groups to explore ideas for a new small business.
4. Provide technology for students to research local markets, potential competitors, overhead costs, or other information to inform their decisions. Encourage students to justify their decisions with reasonable and reliable information.
5. Guide discussions as students consider each decision for their new business on the small business startup plan. Support each step with related vocabulary.



6. Allow students to share their business plan idea with others using a marketing strategy from the Marketing Choice Board. Share on social media tagging [#MomPopBusinessOwnersDay](#).

### Reflect

After students have created their small business plan, facilitate a discussion about their thinking and learning. Guide students as they focus on how the **Create** critical thinking trait helped them complete the task. Emphasize the importance of evaluating the effects of their clever ideas.

### Extend the Learning

- Invite a local small business owner to share startup strategies and tips.
- Write a list of interview questions for small business owners. Compile the responses to create a class recipe for small business success.
- Invite students to enter their business plan into a class competition. The winning plan can be executed as a project-based learning activity.

### Literature Suggestions

**Books about Entrepreneurship:** *Sammy Startup* by Jason Harvey; *What Do You Do with an Idea?* by Kobi Yamada; *Once upon a company A True Story* by Wendy Anderson Halperin; *Billy Sure Kid Entrepreneur* by Luke Sharpe; *Better Than a Lemonade Stand! Small Business Ideas For Kids* by Daryl Bernstein

### Additional Web Resources

[Today's kids start lemonade stands with a business plan](#)

[Writing a Business Plan](#)

[What is a Company?](#)

### Ideas to Consider

Depending on the grade level and time available, the Business Plan page can be used in a variety of ways.

- Students can choose a name for their company at random or you could frame this step with a guided writing mini-lesson related to clarity and word choice. You might invite students to research their name to ensure it's unique.
- Students could sketch their buyer persona or begin with a web organizer to create a deeper plan to target their customers.
- Students might list materials needed or look up prices to create a cost analysis and determine their profit margin.



### Marketing Choice Board

#### Email

Write an email to customers explaining your product or service and how it can help them.

#### Video

Create a video commercial explaining your product or service and why it's important.

#### Drawing

Create a drawing that helps customers understand what they need to know about your product or service.

#### Podcast

Record a radio podcast interviewing a happy customer.

#### Flyer

Make a flyer to tell customers how to contact you about your goods or services.

#### Calculate

Show the math! Explain how your product or service can save your customer money.

#### Short Song

Write a jingle, or short song, to help your customer remember your company.

#### Webpage

Create a sample webpage to tell your customers what they need to know.

#### Share

Share your company news on social media by creating a sample business page.



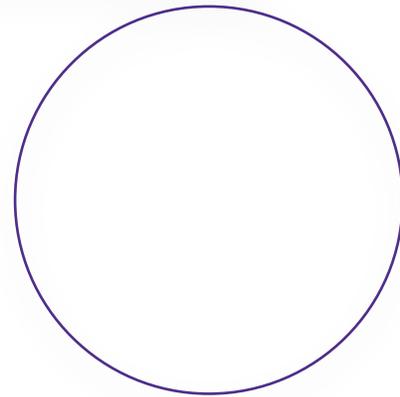
### Think It Out!

#### Company Name

Think of a clever name for your company. It should both inform and interest your customers.

#### Persona

Sketch your buyer persona.



Think about the kind of person who would be interested in what you sell.

#### Offering

What are you selling? Circle one: **Goods** **Services**

#### Why customers should buy from you

Why do customers need what you're selling? What is the problem you want to solve?

#### Mission Statement

Why does your company exist? What is your mission? Write a few sentences about what your company will offer to its customers.



### Think It Out!

#### Competitor Research

Do you know your competitors? Are there other companies offering the same product or service?

#### Advertising

How will people know about your company?

#### Materials

What materials will you need to make your product or complete your service?

#### Cost

How much will you charge to earn a profit?

#### Who will help you

You might need help with money for materials. Maybe you need others to help make or sell the product or service. Who will help you?



### Think It Out! Example pt 1

This example business plan is provided by the Small Business Administration. It has been modified from its original version to serve as an example to students.

#### Company Name

Think of a clever name for your company. It should both inform and interest your customers.

*Wooden Grain Toy Company*

#### Offering

What are you selling? Circle one: **Goods** **Services**

*Wooden Grain Toys make high-quality hardwood toys for children ages 3-10.*

#### Persona

Sketch your buyer persona.



Think about the kind of person who would be interested in what you sell.

*The target audience is adults, specifically parents and grandparents who wish to give toys to their children or grandchildren.*

#### Why customers should buy from you

Why do customers need what you're selling? What is the problem you want to solve?

*Parents and grandparents are looking for high-quality, durable toys that will entertain kids and grow creativity.*

#### Mission Statement

Why does your company exist? What is your mission? Write a few sentences about what your company will offer to its customers.

*our handcrafted toys are made from solid hardwoods and are designed with moving parts to engage young children without limiting their imagination.*



**Think It Out! Example pt 2** This example business plan is provided by the Small Business Administration. It has been modified from its original version to serve as an example to students.

### Competitor Research

Do you know your competitors? Are there other companies offering the same product or service?

Wooden toys are in a market with companies of all sizes. Large companies include Plastique Toys and Metal Happy Toys. Smaller companies sell locally in shops, at craft fairs, or online.

### Advertising

How will people know about your company?

Wooden Grain Toys will communicate with customers through an email newsletter, targeted Google and Facebook ads, social media, and in person at craft fairs.

### Materials

What materials will you need to make your product or complete your service?

- Materials for toys including wood, steel, and rubber
- Craft fair fees and travel costs
- Inventory space for products

### Cost

How much will you charge to earn a profit?

\$10 per toy

### Who will help you

You might need help with money for materials. Maybe you need others to help make or sell the product or service. Who will help you?

Currently, the only team member is the owner, Andrew Robertson. As profits increase, Wooden Grain Toys will look to add an employee to assist with social media and online marketing.