



Special school lesson plan



The School We'd Like competition: lesson pack for special schools

Key stage

Key stage 2/3

Subjects

- England: citizenship; English
- Scotland: social studies; expressive arts; literacy and English
- Wales: personal and social education; English

Lesson pack objectives

- To inspire students to work together in groups to develop an idea that would improve the quality of life for their school community
- To develop relevant skills including brainstorming, pitching ideas, gathering support and writing persuasively

Resources and preparation

The ideas contained in this lesson pack can be used in sequence or as stand-alone activities. In addition to pencils and paper you will need:

- A selection of photographs of different areas of your school
- Six large pieces of paper, around A3 size
- Recording or podcasting equipment

Introduction

The School We'd Like aims to inspire students to work together in groups to develop an idea that would improve the quality of life for their school community.

This lesson pack is designed to help teachers introduce the competition while giving young people the opportunity to develop relevant skills including brainstorming, pitching ideas, gathering support and writing persuasively.

The lesson pack is accompanied by a School We'd Like assembly presentation and resource pack.

*Remember your entry must be submitted by **12 noon 29 November 2013**. Terms and conditions apply – see guardian.co.uk/school-competition for details.



Activity 1 - school wishes

Start by asking the class to imagine they could make one wish for something that would make the school better. What would it be? Would it be something to make the school a more attractive, happier place? Would it be something to improve learning and teaching or tackle a problem such as bullying? Would it be something to make the school more environmentally friendly? Or would it be something else? Take some suggestions from the class.

Next, split the class into groups. Have a selection of photographs of different areas of the school. Areas could include: classrooms; playground/outdoor space; dinner/assembly/gym hall; computer suite; music room. Invite each group to pick a photograph.

Ask each group to discuss what is good and/or bad about their chosen area. What would make it better? Spend five to 10 minutes doing this. Groups should then choose their top two ideas. Draw or write these on a large piece of paper and attach it to the wall.

Finally, ask the groups to look at all the lists and put a tick at their favourite idea from each one. The winning idea from each list will be the one with the most ticks. The class can then vote on what they think is the best overall idea.

To take the idea forward for the competition, ask pupils how they could get feedback on their top idea from the rest of the school. Follow-up activities could include devising a questionnaire or using the peer review forms contained in the School We'd Like resource pack.



Activity 2 - the elevator pitch

Pitching an idea to a Dragons' Den-style panel of judges is a key part of the School We'd Like competition. For this drama activity, pupils will practice 'elevator pitching'.

First, ask pupils to get into groups of four. They should start by sharing some of their ideas for improving the school. These can be ideas from Activity 1 if this has been completed.

Next, explain that a pitch is a talk designed to 'sell' an idea. It should be short and to the point but also creative and memorable. Two pupils will start being the 'pitchers' while the other two should pretend to be the School We'd Like judges. Ask the pitchers to imagine they are in a lift. The doors open and the judges walk in, carrying the winning prize money. The pitchers have just as long as the lift journey to convince the judges that their idea should be the winning one. Pupils then swap roles.

Remind pupils that the pitch should explain: what the idea is; the problem it will solve; the people who will benefit; what the long-term impact will be. Ask some volunteers to perform their elevator pitches for the rest of the class. Discuss which ones are the most convincing and why.

To take pupils' ideas forward for the competition, groups from activity 1 could devise a short skit or advert promoting their best idea. Pupils could then vote for their favourites. The top two ideas could be the subject of a class debate to find the overall winner.

Activity 3 - gathering support

Collaboration is a key theme of the School We'd Like competition. Schools should have compelling evidence that teachers, students and other members of the school community have worked together on the project. The focus of this activity is on sharing ideas and gathering support.

Start with a class discussion about how information about important news or events is usually shared. Suggestions might include news flashes, posters, text alerts or emails.

Social media has become an increasingly popular way of sharing information. Discuss pupils' experiences of this. Some pupils may be aware of Twitter. Twitter is an online social networking service that enables its users to send and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters known as 'tweets'.

Working in groups, ask pupils to compose a tweet about their best idea for improving the school. Remember, it must be informative, catchy and only 140 characters - NOT words - long. Share these tweets as a class and discuss which ones are most effective and why.

Pupils could take their ideas forward for the School We'd Like competition by planning an assembly to share their ideas with the rest of the school. Groups (from Activity 1) could make posters or a display about their ideas and place these around the school. The whole school could then vote on the best idea.



Activity 4 - powers of persuasion

In order to perform well in the School We'd Like competition pupils will have to persuade the judges that their idea is the best.

Start by discussing persuasion. Can pupils explain what it means? Is persuasion a tactic they have ever used to get something? Was it successful?

Working in groups, pupils are going to record a podcast - similar to an advert you might hear on the radio - persuading the rest of the school to back their idea for the School We'd Like competition. Groups can use their best idea from activity 1 if this has been completed.

Groups should start by devising:

- A catchy name or slogan that summarises the idea
- Three positive adjectives to describe their school-improving idea e.g. brilliant, awesome, fantastic
- Three positive emotions that pupils will feel thanks to the idea e.g. happy, calm, excited
- A statement explaining why the school must enter this idea in the competition now

Pupils should incorporate all of these ideas into their podcasts then share their work with the rest of the class for feedback.

To take the idea forward for the competition, groups need to write a plan of no more than 600 words that explains their idea. Remind pupils to:

- Keep the plan focused, clear and to the point.
- Draft and edit the plan before entering it into the competition.
- Read the plan out loud. Get others to read it too, including someone who knows nothing about the competition. Make sure it makes perfect sense.
- Ask others to check the grammar, spelling and sentence construction - listen to their feedback.
- Spell out in the introduction what you propose to do and how you plan to do it - you will grab the readers' attention with a strong introduction. Then go on to develop your idea and give more details.
- Think about your audience - the judging panel - and make sure the language you use is appropriate for them.

Pupils can share their completed plans with the rest of the class and post them around the school to obtain feedback.

Taking this further

After working through this lesson pack, your school should almost be in a position to enter the School We'd Like competition. A final task would be for pupils to consider the cost of their plan. You will find a budget and costing help sheet in the School We'd Like resource pack. Good luck!



Curriculum information

Completing the activities in this lesson plan will help students meet the following objectives / outcomes

England

Citizenship

Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities

1. Pupils should be taught:

a. to talk and write about their opinions, and explain their views, on issues that affect themselves and society

Preparing to play an active role as citizens

2. Pupils should be taught:

a. to research, discuss and debate topical issues, problems and events

English

Group discussion and interaction

3. To talk effectively as members of a group, pupils should be taught to:

a. make contributions relevant to the topic and take turns in discussion

b. vary contributions to suit the activity and purpose, including exploratory and tentative comments where ideas are being collected together, and reasoned, evaluative comments as discussion moves to conclusions or actions

c. qualify or justify what they think after listening to others' questions or accounts

Drama

4. To participate in a wide range of drama activities and to evaluate their own and others' contributions, pupils should be taught to:

a. create, adapt and sustain different roles, individually and in groups

Writing

Composition

1. Pupils should be taught to:

a. choose form and content to suit a particular purpose

Planning and drafting

2. To develop their writing on paper and on screen, pupils should be taught to:

a. plan - note and develop initial ideas

b. draft - develop ideas from the plan into structured written text

c. revise - change and improve the draft

d. proofread - check the draft for spelling and punctuation errors, omissions and repetitions

e. present - prepare a neat, correct and clear final copy

f. discuss and evaluate their own and others' writing.



Scotland

Social Studies

- I can consider ways of looking after my school or community and can encourage others to care for their environment. (SOC 1-08a)
- I can contribute to a discussion of the difference between my needs and wants and those of others around me. (SOC 1-16a)
- I can explain how the needs of a group in my local community are supported. (SOC 2-16a)

Expressive Arts

- I have experienced the energy and excitement of presenting/performing for audiences and being part of an audience for other people's presentations/performances. (EXA 0-01a / EXA 1-01a / EXA 2-01a)

Literacy and English

- When I engage with others, I can respond in ways appropriate to my role, show that I value others' contributions and use these to build on thinking. (LIT 2-02a)
- I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience. (LIT 1-20a / LIT 2-20a)
- I am learning to use language and style in a way which engages and/or influences my reader. (ENG 2-27a)
- I can persuade, argue, explore issues or express an opinion using relevant supporting detail and/or evidence. (LIT 2-29a)



Wales

Personal and Social Education

Skills

Developing communication

Learners should be given opportunities to:

- listen carefully, question and respond to others
- express their views and ideas confidently through a range of appropriate methods
- contribute to class discussions and take part in debates

Working with others

Learners should be given opportunities to:

- work co-operatively to solve problems

Range

Active citizenship

Learners should be given opportunities to:

- participate in school life

Sustainable development and global citizenship

Learners should be given opportunities to:

- take an active interest in varied aspects of life in school and the wider environment

English

Skills

Writing

Pupils should be given opportunities to communicate in writing and to draft and improve their work, using ICT as appropriate, to:

- plan
- draft
- revise
- proof-read
- prepare a final copy

Range

Oracy

Pupils should be given opportunities to develop their oral skills through:

using a variety of methods to present ideas, including ICT, e.g. drama approaches, discussion and debate.