



Secondary school lesson plan



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

Key stage

Key stage 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:

- Six large pieces of paper, around A3 size

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 - brainstorming

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 different areas of the school written on pieces of card. Areas could include: classrooms; playground/outdoor space; dinner/assembly/gym hall; computer suite; music room. Place the cards face down on a table and invite one person from each group to come forward and select one.

Ask each group to brainstorm ideas for improving their selected area. Spend five to 10 minutes doing this. Groups should then choose their top three ideas. Write these on a large piece of paper with a short paragraph explaining the reasoning behind each one then attach the list to the wall. A spokesperson for each group can explain the ideas to the rest of the class.

Finally, ask the groups to circulate round 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. As a class, discuss the merits of these ideas and why they have been so popular. 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 everyone to find a partner. Pairs 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. One pupil will start being the 'pitcher' while the other should pretend to be one of the School We'd Like judges. Ask the pitcher to imagine they are in a lift. The doors open and the judge walks in, carrying the winning prize money. The pitcher has just as long as the lift journey to convince the judge 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 pairs or 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 - persuasive writing

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 writing the word persuade on the board. Ask pupils to explain what it means. Is persuasion a tactic they have ever used to get something? Was it successful? Is persuasion similar or different to words such as 'argue', 'convince', 'explain' or 'advise'? Discuss.

Working in groups, pupils are going to write an open letter to the rest of the school persuading them 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 writing:

- 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 pupils will feel thanks to the idea e.g. happy, calm, excited
- a factual statement about the positive impact the idea will have on pupils
- two or three specific reasons why the idea is so good
- a question urging pupils to see the down side if the idea did not go ahead e.g. Wouldn't it be awful not to have our own school allotment full of fresh fruit and vegetables?
- a clear sentence explaining why the school must enter this idea in the competition now

Pupils should incorporate all of these ideas into their letters. Remind pupils that persuasion is a way of helping other people see things from your point of view so their letters should be clear and confident. They might also use repetition to get their point across.

As a follow-up activity, older pupils could have a go at speech writing to promote their idea while younger pupils could produce a flyer.

To take the idea forward for the competition, groups should 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

2.1 Critical thinking and enquiry

Pupils should be able to:

- engage with and reflect on different ideas, opinions, beliefs and values when exploring topical and controversial issues and problems
- research, plan and undertake enquiries into issues and problems using a range of information and sources
- analyse and evaluate sources used, questioning different values, ideas and viewpoints and recognising bias.

2.2 Advocacy and representation

Pupils should be able to:

- express and explain their own opinions to others through discussions, formal debates and voting
- communicate an argument, taking account of different viewpoints and drawing on what they have learnt through research, action and debate
- justify their argument, giving reasons to try to persuade others to think again, change or support them
- represent the views of others, with which they may or may not agree.

2.3 Taking informed and responsible action

Pupils should be able to:

- explore creative approaches to taking action on problems and issues to achieve intended purposes
- work individually and with others to negotiate, plan and take action on citizenship issues to try to influence others, bring about change or resist unwanted change, using time and resources appropriately
- analyse the impact of their actions on communities and the wider world, now and in the future
- reflect on the progress they have made, evaluating what they have learnt, what went well, the difficulties encountered and what they would do differently.



English

2.1 Speaking and listening

Pupils should be able to:

- present information and points of view clearly and appropriately in different contexts, adapting talk for a range of purposes and audiences, including the more formal
- use a range of ways to structure and organise their speech to support their purposes and guide the listener
- engage an audience, using a range of techniques to explore, enrich and explain their ideas
- listen and respond constructively to others, taking different views into account and modifying their own views in the light of what others say
- make different kinds of relevant contributions in groups, responding appropriately to others, proposing ideas and asking questions
- take different roles in organising, planning and sustaining talk in groups
- use different dramatic approaches to explore ideas, texts and issues

2.3 Writing

Composition

Pupils should be able to:

- write clearly and coherently, including an appropriate level of detail
- adapt style and language appropriately for a range of forms, purposes and readers
- maintain consistent points of view in fiction and non-fiction writing
- structure their writing to support the purpose of the task and guide the reader
- develop logical arguments and cite evidence
- use persuasive techniques and rhetorical devices
- form their own view, taking into account a range of evidence and opinions
- use planning, drafting, editing, proofreading and self-evaluation to shape and craft their writing for maximum effect



Scotland

Social studies

Through discussion, I have identified aspects of a social issue to investigate and by gathering information I can assess its impact and the attitudes of the people affected. (SOC 4-16b)

Expressive arts

I have experienced the energy and excitement of being part of an audience for other people's presentations/performances. (EXA 3-01b)

I have experienced the energy and excitement of presenting/performing for different audiences. (EXA 4-01a)

Literacy and English

When I engage with others, I can make a relevant contribution, encourage others to contribute and acknowledge that they have the right to hold a different opinion.

I can respond in ways appropriate to my role and use contributions to reflect on, clarify or adapt thinking. (LIT 3-02a)

I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I am developing my own style. I can regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience. (LIT 3-20a / LIT 4-20a)

I can engage and/or influence readers through my use of language, style and tone as appropriate to genre. (ENG 3-27a / ENG 4-27a)

I can persuade, argue, evaluate, explore issues or express an opinion using a clear line of thought, relevant supporting detail and/or evidence. (LIT 3-29a)



Wales

Personal and social education

Skills

Developing communication

Learners should be given opportunities to:

- listen attentively in different situations and respond appropriately
- communicate confidently personal feelings and views through a range of appropriate methods
- express opinions clearly and justify a personal standpoint
- take part in debates and vote on issues.

Range

Active citizenship

Learners should be given opportunities to:

- participate in school and the wider community

English

Writing

Pupils should be given opportunities to communicate in writing to

8. draft, edit and improve their work, using ICT as appropriate, to:

- plan
 - draft
 - revise
 - proof-read
 - prepare a final copy
9. present their writing appropriately:
- using appropriate features of layout and presentation, including ICT.

Range

Oracy

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

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