

I'm My Own Boss

Using Microsoft Word to Encourage an Entrepreneurial Spirit

OBJECTIVES

- Explore skills and education needed to operate and maintain a successful business venture
- Practice technical writing skills
- Develop business-related materials

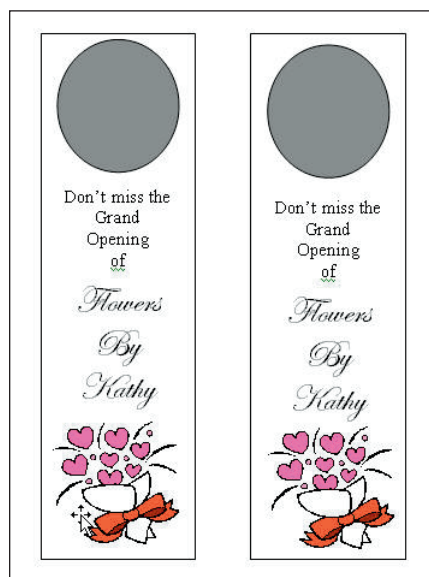
Note: Before the lesson, spend time reviewing the I'm My Own Boss sample activities and templates. Make changes to meet the needs of your specific situation or have students make the changes and create their own templates. Explore the Internet Connection section for more ideas on teaching students entrepreneurship.

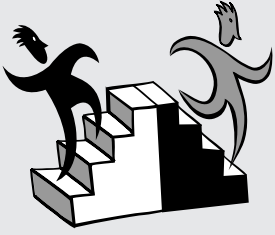
MATERIALS

- Microsoft Word software
- I'm My Own Boss Planning Sheet
- I'm My Own Boss Logo Template
- I'm My Own Boss Ad Sample Activity
- I'm My Own Boss Ad Template
- I'm My Own Boss Business Plan Template
- I'm My Own Boss Budget Template

Just about everyone harbors a secret dream of one day inventing an incredible product or developing a service that people just can't live without. It's the American dream! Practicing entrepreneurship in the classroom can make school or career education come to life and help students see how all the skills they learn can actually lead to future success.

In this activity, students are given the ultimate creative freedom as they work alone or in small groups to create their own business. Their business may be based around a product or a service. Part of their start-up activities includes writing a business plan, designing a logo, and creating advertisement documents.





Customizing to Meet Your Needs

- The closer a student is to becoming an adult, the more important it is to give them opportunities to practice making decisions about a business of their own. Include budgeting of a business, a more in-depth study of possible businesses, skills and education needed, and a business plan that includes a timeline of goals to realize a students' dream.
- If video equipment is available, create a commercial. If not, try a radio commercial.
- Keep younger students' business plans relevant to them. Have them focus on businesses they could actually do now. For example: pet sitting, babysitting, mowing lawns, lemonade stands, and so on.

Before the Computer

1. In a whole class setting, have students brainstorm a list of possible business ideas that either they or their parents might use. Encourage students to come up with new and unusual ideas or businesses that they'd like to run.
2. Make a decision about how the project will be completed: individually or in small groups. Each individual or group must decide on what his or her new service or product will be. They need a name for their company and a logo. Have students browse the Internet, magazines, and newspapers to look at company names and logos before they design their own.
3. Create advertising strategies. Refer to the "I'd Buy That" lesson for ideas about teaching advertising strategies. Have students decide if they will create a flyer, brochure, magazine advertisement, or a poster. Students should draft these items before going to the computer.
4. Have students design a business plan on the I'm My Own Boss Planning Sheet. Talk about how a bank would want to see a business plan before funding start-up loans.
5. Have students draft and revise text before heading to the computer. This strategy will save time.

At the Computer

1. Direct students to the I'm My Own Boss templates and model sample activities. Instruct how to save. As time permits, allow students to modify the templates to suit their needs.
2. As students begin their work at the computer, monitor to make sure they are closely adhering to their plans and not wasting valuable computer time changing their minds. Assure them that making changes is legitimate but that it is important to have plans completely thought out before moving to the computer.
3. Throughout the design process, remind students to stop and take time to save their work.
4. As students are completing their work, have group design meetings. Allow students to offer feedback and suggestions to one another on the design of their documents before their final products. Peer feedback helps students' creativity flow and encourages efforts.

Other Great Activities

- Encourage students to interview owners of small businesses. Invite business owners to be guest speakers in the classroom.
- Conduct class surveys of local businesses on workplace attire, guidelines for customer relations, marketing strategies, and employee policies.
- Make a game of the lesson and give students a set amount of money to start a business, such as \$5,000. Have students determine if they would be able to choose a different business if they had \$100,000 to start.
- Set up a scenario where students live in a different country or different historical time for them to create a business.

Internet Connection

<http://totallyabsurd.com/absurd.htm>

This site relates absurd but authentically patented inventions. It will get your students brainstorming for their own possible inventions.

<http://www.entre-ed.org/busplan.htm>

This site offers lesson plans and ideas on how to help students understand business plans.

<http://www.entre-ed.org/>

This site is devoted to helping teachers teach entrepreneurship in the classroom.



Tips & Timesavers

- Use a project checklist to help students keep track of work completion schedules and stay on task.
- Visit the microsoft.com site for templates for brochures, business plans, and flyers.
- Instruct students how to use Word's Draw tools in combination with clip art for unique designs.