

# IDEA TO PITCH

## *Instructor Guide (Grades 6-12)*



# WELCOME

You have everything you need here to take youth from idea to pitch!

It is a journey of youth self discovery and agency to create value for others by addressing challenges and solving problems.

## THINKING LIKE AN ENTREPRENEUR

Students will see the importance of imagination and experience the process of thinking creatively. This is not just for fun (even though it will be) as “The World Economic Forum’s Future of Jobs Report predicts creativity, innovation and ideation will be key skills for the workforce of the future.”

## CURRICULUM TEACHING TOOLS

Engaging and managing students is challenging in any environment, especially remote learning. The Interactive Slides allow you to virtually connect with your students in real time or offline to complete activities. It creates community when everyone is in the same virtual workspace and facilitates various forms of collaboration and feedback.

There is also a separate Digital Workbook for optional use where students can complete the activities in a single document. It can serve as a digital portfolio and a way to organize assignments for formative and summative review.

## GRAPHIC DESIGN

The youth you’re working with are digital natives. “Digital native” is a term coined by Marc Prensky in 2001 to describe the generation of people who use technology from an early age and consider it to be a necessary part of their lives. This worldview is now a part of doing business and creating digital content is becoming a necessary workforce skill.



The VentureLab Rocket indicates an opportunity for youth to practice graphic design. Youth can use Canva, a graphic design platform, or other software to create posters, social media posts, websites, and other visual content. Offline options are provided.

NOTE: Canva can be used by children of any age. Children under the age of 13 should be directly supervised by a parent, guardian or another authorized adult (such as a teacher) who agrees to be bound by Canva’s Terms of Use.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

These are your talking points and sticky messages you want to repeat before, during, and after the activity. We’ve distilled tons of background information down to these nuggets for you to use.

# Entrepreneurial Mindsets



Always ask “why?” and “what if...” to seek new and creative ways of learning and doing.



Recognize your potential to learn and accomplish anything you work hard to achieve



Dare to step out of your comfort zone to accomplish great things



Learn to work through failure to create solutions for the problems you are passionate about



Actively observe, identify, and act on circumstances where you can innovate or solve a problem



Proactively develop creative solutions to the problems around you



Learn to work through difficult moments and view failure as an opportunity to grow and learn something new



Be confident and hopeful in your ability to innovate and your potential for making an impact



Develop quick and clever ways to overcome challenges (and don't worry, you can always iterate!)



Think about other people's needs and feelings keeping these in mind when solving a problem



Make smart changes when challenges arise without losing heart or giving up

# Entrepreneurial Skills

## 1. CREATIVITY

Being creative means being bold and imaginative and not limiting your thinking to what's already done

## 2. TEAMWORK

It's rare for someone to accomplish things alone. Seek out teams with diverse perspectives, skills, and talents

## 3. PUBLIC SPEAKING

When you have opportunities to speak about your idea, you want to do so as effectively as possible (this takes practice!)

## 4. IDEA GENERATION

The key to innovation is to let your mind spread its wings and fly. The more ideas the better, wild and silly ideas welcome!

## 5. OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Entrepreneurs look for different patterns and trends to see if an idea will be successful and if it's the right time to get started

## 6. MARKET RESEARCH

It's important to gather information about your potential users so you can turn your ideas into something they will want

## 7. DESIGN THINKING

To develop effective solutions, entrepreneurs need to put the user first and seek out feedback in order to design with users in mind

## 8. PROTOTYPING

Entrepreneurs create prototypes--simple models to explain their idea, get feedback, and learn how their product can be improved

## 9. BUSINESS MODEL

Business models help answer questions like: What will it cost to make your product? What should you change?

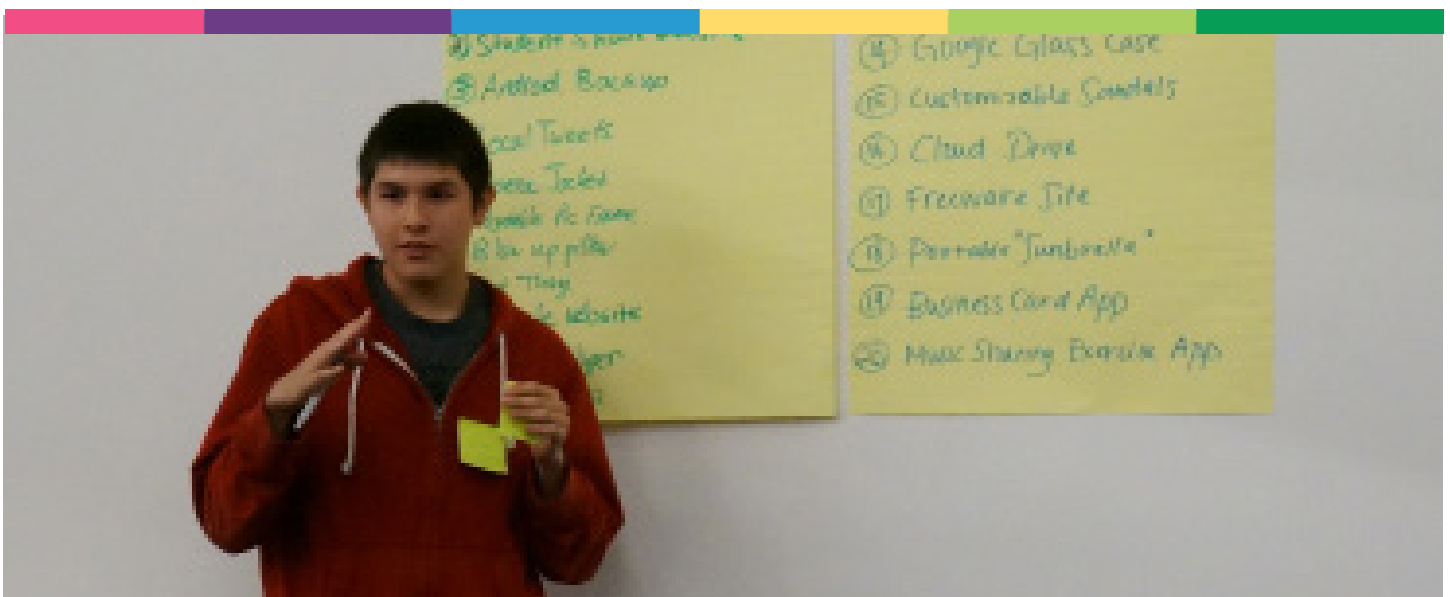
## 10. PITCHING

Rallying people around your idea is critical! Effective “pitches” to potential users and investors are clear, short, and persuasive

[venturelab.org](http://venturelab.org)

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# CURRICULUM INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

Time: 10-15 mins

The core of entrepreneurship is building a solution to a problem, having a vision and making it a reality.

## Key Takeaways

- Entrepreneurship isn't just about starting companies; it is a skillset and a way of thinking.
- The student workbook shows the process of creative thinking, problem solving, and entrepreneurship.

## Materials and Preparation

- Prepare "VentureLab Youth Pitch Playlist" video: [go.venturelab.org/pitches](https://go.venturelab.org/pitches)
- Gather Student Workbooks

## Instructions

1. Distribute student workbooks to each student. Let them know that they will use their student workbook every day as they go through the entrepreneurial process.
2. Have students review the VentureLab Mindsets & Skills page. Let them know that these are ways of thinking and acting that are already a part of their life and they will be practicing and improving them in this course. Identifying and strengthening these mindsets and skills will help them be successful in school and beyond.
3. Visit [go.venturelab.org/pitches](https://go.venturelab.org/pitches). Allow students to select the pitch video that interests them and watch it as a class. After the video, have them share one mindset and one skill they think the youth entrepreneur used to create and pitch their idea.
4. Remind students that the daily process is just as important as the final outcome of this course. Most people only consider an entrepreneur for their final product that everyone sees but often don't realize the importance of failing, trying again, learning and improving that is necessary.

# CREATION STATIONS

## Introduction

Time: 15-30 mins

This activity gives students time to explore, play, and create. Play helps entrepreneurs innovate because it's risk-free. There's no judgment or failure when you're playing.

## Key Takeaways

- To reimagine or create something new, requires the use of imagination.
- Everyone is creative and has the ability to improve their creativity.

## Materials and Preparation

- Gather materials for each Creation Stations: Paper, recycled materials (cardboard, foil, clean plastic bottles, tape, etc)

## Instructions

1. Refer students to the Creation Station page of their workbook to read about creativity.
2. Present the creativity station options and review the brainstorming rules. Let students know they'll be applying these rules throughout this course.
3. Create a sculpture using only 5 sheets of paper.
  - Use recycled materials to build a new invention. Create a description of the invention including a specific need the invention addresses.
  - Imagine a new hero and/or villain, then create a backstory about their early years and origin story, special powers, sidekicks, their primary foe, etc). Write a story or create a comic strip
  - Pick your favorite song, or use whatever song happens to be #1 on your favorite genres top 10 list, and make up a dance. Bonus points for teaching it to someone else!
4. MAKE: Give students 10-20 minutes to play. Set up a timed rotation so students visit each station or allow them to self select and move freely.
5. Let students know they'll be sharing their creations at the end of the work time. Model possible outcomes by sharing the example you created ahead of time.

TIP: Provide the opportunity for students to come up with their own creation station!

6. PITCH: With time remaining at the end, allow each student to present something they created and reflect how it felt to freely make and play.

## DISCUSSION

1. What did you do to show creativity?
2. Which brainstorming rule do you think is most important? Why?
3. Why is using your imagination an important part of being an entrepreneur?

# IDEA TO PITCH

*An innovation curriculum  
for young entrepreneurs  
(Grades 6-12)*





# INTRODUCTION

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Idea to Pitch is a condensed version of VentureLab's nationally-recognized curriculum. The goal of this document is to guide young entrepreneurs to:

- Explore their entrepreneurial identity
- Identify and solve problems that are important to them
- Research and plan their business idea
- Deliver a pitch

Entrepreneurship is more than developing products or starting a business, it involves using an entrepreneurial mindset to solve problems, address challenges and leverage opportunities.

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Entrepreneurs have the courage to create. They know that creativity is a process and way of thinking that allows them to reimagine or create something new.

Each station below allows you to practice being creative without that fear of failure or judgment. There is absolutely no wrong way to complete the stations!

Use the Brainstorming Rules below (especially Rules #2 and #3). Remember: You ARE creative and have the ability to improve your capacity to create.

<p><b>Station 1</b></p> <p>Create a sculpture using only sheets of paper. Explore different shapes by folding or cutting. Break the rules and use a bit of tape!</p>	<p><b>Station 2</b></p> <p>Use recycled materials to build a new invention. Create a description of the invention including a specific need the invention addresses.</p>
<p><b>Station 3</b></p> <p>Tell a story about a new superhero or villain. Create a backstory of their early years, sidekicks etc. Write the story, create a comic, or record an audio version.</p>	<p><b>Station 4</b></p> <p>Choreograph a dance to your favorite song. Bonus points for teaching it to someone else and making a dance video!</p>

## **Brainstorming Rules:**

1. Go for large quantities of ideas. The more the better.
2. There are no bad ideas (all ideas get recorded—if you are working on your own, do not edit out ideas and, if you are in a group, do not criticize others' ideas or make judgments).
3. Encourage wild and exaggerated ideas (anything goes in brainstorming)!
4. Capture everything - every idea must be recorded!