

GRADES
9–12



MY FIRST BUSINESS LAB™ · GRADES 9–12

My First Business Lab

Plan a pop-up booth like a startup: research your customers, find your unit economics and break-even, stress-test it, and pitch it in 90 seconds.

🕒 Three sessions, about 50 minutes each 👥 Whole class, pairs and small groups ☑️ About 15 minutes to prep

INSIDE THIS LESSON



Teacher pages

pp. 1–2



Student pages

pp. 3–10



Answer key

p. 2



Spreadsheet

download

Teacher pages

Students plan a pretend pop-up booth at a school event and produce a **Startup One-Pager**, a break-even sheet and a 90-second pitch. Nothing is really bought or sold.

GOAL	I can use unit economics, break-even and scenarios to judge whether a small business makes sense, and explain the risks and ethics of how I'd promote it.
MATH	Contribution per item, break-even = fixed costs ÷ (price – per-item cost), scenario profit, startup cash.
GET READY	Print pages 3–10 for each student, or share the spreadsheet template. Calculators or laptops.

Session 1 • Customers and unit economics

1. **The Big Idea + research (25 min, p. 3).** Interview five classmates; check two competitors (a cafeteria item, a vending machine, a store).
2. **Unit economics (25 min, p. 4).** Per-item cost, price, and what each sale contributes.

Session 2 • Break-even and risk

1. **Fixed costs + break-even (20 min, p. 5).**
2. **Scenarios + startup cash (30 min, p. 6).** Rainy, expected and great days, and the inventory problem.

Session 3 • Plan, ethics, pitch

1. **Money plan (10 min, p. 7) and ethics check (10 min, p. 8).**
2. **One-Pager + pitch (30 min, pp. 9–10).** Pitch to a small group; listeners ask one question each.

 **Tip** Money plan check: money in – startup cash = profit (at \$2 lemonade, \$120 – \$54 = \$66). Don't let students subtract the startup cash twice.

 **Tip** The rainy-day inventory question is the one adults get wrong: you pay for what you *bought*, not what you *sold*. Let students find it before you name it.

Answer key

Fixed costs are \$30.00 for every booth. At a sample price for each product (students may choose any price):

Product	Per item	Price	Contribution	Break-even (items)	Profit at 30 / 60 / 90	Startup cash for 60	Rainy day, stock for 60 bought
Lemonade	\$0.40	\$2.00	\$1.60	19	\$18.00 / \$66.00 / \$114.00	\$54.00	\$6.00
Cookies	\$0.55	\$2.00	\$1.45	21	\$13.50 / \$57.00 / \$100.50	\$63.00	-\$3.00
Bracelets	\$1.20	\$5.00	\$3.80	8	\$84.00 / \$198.00 / \$312.00	\$102.00	\$48.00

Break-even rounds **up**: you can't sell part of a cookie. The last column assumes the student bought supplies for 60 but sold only 30; the unsold stock is still a cost, which is why cookies lose money there.

Rubric

	Beginning	Developing	Strong
Research	Survey done	Survey + competitors used to set price	Evidence clearly drives the price and product
Unit economics	Lists costs	Correct contribution and break-even	Correct, and explains what moves break-even
Risk	Finds one scenario	All three scenarios correct	Spots the inventory risk and plans for it
Ethics	Completes the check	Fixes one problem claim	Promotion is honest and explains why
Pitch	Gives a pitch	Clear, under 90 seconds	Clear, honest, uses numbers, answers a question

Meeting every learner

NEEDS SUPPORT	Use the spreadsheet so the formulas do the arithmetic; focus on what the numbers mean.
READY FOR MORE	Add a 3% card-reader fee to every sale and find the new break-even.
NO PRINTER	Use the spreadsheet template and a shared doc for the One-Pager.

This is a pretend market. If your school runs a real sale later, follow its rules for handling money.

1 • The Big Idea + research

Name _____

You'll run a pop-up booth at a school event. Circle a product (or propose your own to your teacher).



Lemonade
Sold by the cup



Cookies
Sold by the cookie



Bracelets
Sold by the bracelet

#	Would you buy it? When?	Most you'd pay	What would make it better
1		\$	
2		\$	
3		\$	
4		\$	
5		\$	
Competitor (where else they could get it)		Their price	How mine is different
		\$	
		\$	

2 · Unit economics

What one sale is worth

Every item you sell has to pay for itself first. What's left over, the **contribution**, goes toward your fixed costs and then becomes profit.

Lemonade

PER CUP

Lemons and sugar	\$0.28
Cup and lid	\$0.12
Per-item cost	\$0.40

Cookies

PER COOKIE

Ingredients	\$0.45
Bag and label	\$0.10
Per-item cost	\$0.55

Bracelets

PER BRACELET

Beads	\$0.95
Cord, clasp and tag	\$0.25
Per-item cost	\$1.20

My unit economics

My price (use your research)	\$
Minus per-item cost	– \$
Contribution per item	\$
Contribution as % of price	%

Why this price? Use your survey and competitors.

3 · Fixed costs + break-even

When do I stop losing money?

Fixed costs are the same whether you sell 1 item or 100.

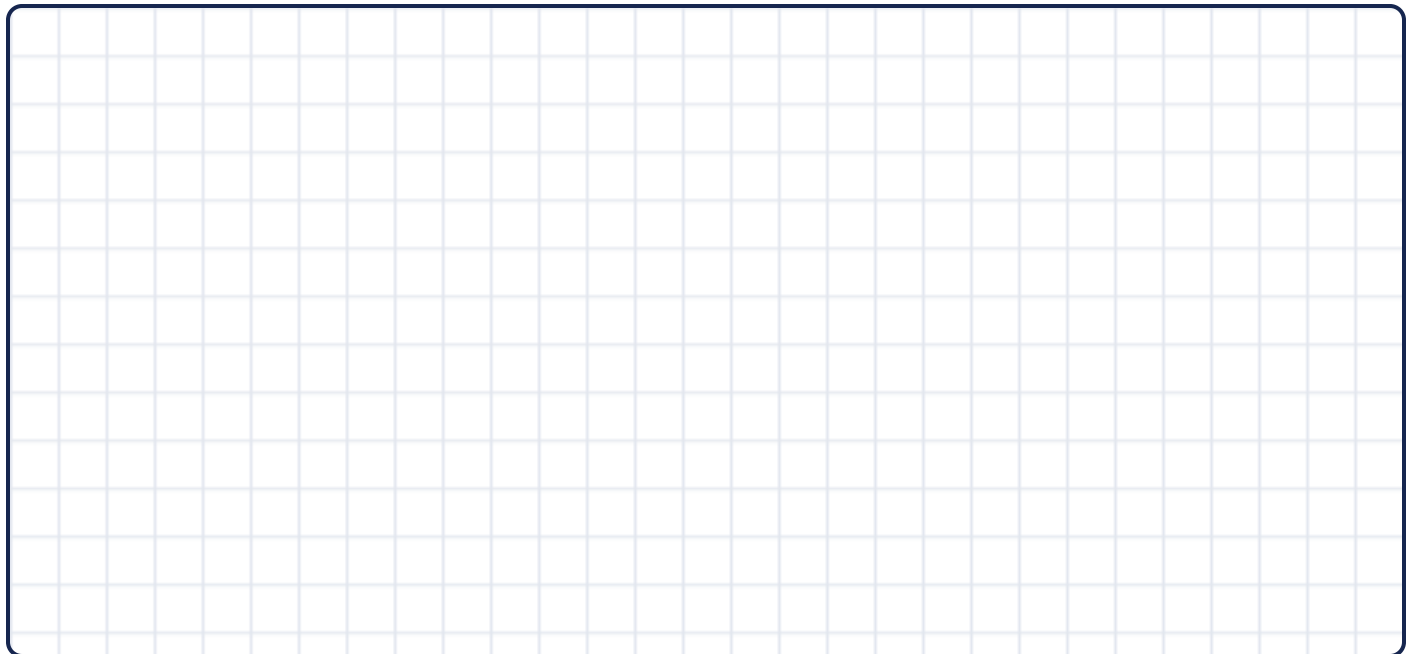
Fixed cost	Amount
Booth fee for the event	\$20.00
Sign and display	\$10.00
Total fixed costs	\$30.00

Break-even (items) = fixed costs ÷ contribution per item

÷ = items

Round **up** to a whole item. Then check it: profit at your break-even number should be zero or a little above.

Sketch it. Mark your break-even point where money in crosses total costs.



4 · Scenarios + risk

Stress-test the plan

	Rainy day (30)	Expected (60)	Great day (90)
Money in	\$	\$	\$
Per-item costs	\$	\$	\$
Fixed costs	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00
Profit	\$	\$	\$

Startup cash

You pay the fixed costs and buy supplies for 60 items **before** you sell anything. How much cash do you need up front?

Fixed costs + (per-item cost × 60)	\$
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The real risk: you bought supplies for 60, but it rained and only 30 sold. What's your profit now? (Hint: the unsold supplies are still paid for.)

Money in (30 × price) – startup cash	\$
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How would you reduce this risk?

5 • Money plan

Use your expected day

The startup cash came out **before** you sold anything. Your sales pay it back first; what's left is your profit to plan with.

Expected day		Dollars
Money in (expected sales × price)		\$
Pay back the startup cash (page 6)		– \$
Profit to plan with		\$

Where the profit goes	Percent	Dollars
Reinvest (next event)	%	\$
Save	%	\$
Give	%	\$
Pay yourself	%	\$
Total	100%	\$

Defend one choice: why that percent?

Give something back: one realistic way your booth helps your school or community. (Giving is a choice; no one should be pressured to donate.)

6 • Tell the world, honestly

Ethics check on promotion

Each claim below is something a booth might say. Mark it **OK**, **Fix** or **Never**, and say why.

Claim	OK / Fix / Never	Why
"Only 5 left!" (you have 40)		
"The healthiest snack at school"		
"Better than the cafeteria's"		
"\$2, or 3 for \$5"		
A price that changes depending on who's asking		

My promotion: the sign or post I'd actually use. It has to pass the check above.

7 · Startup One-Pager

The whole plan on one page

Product + customer	
Evidence (survey, competitors)	
Price + contribution	
Fixed costs + break-even	
Expected profit / rainy-day profit	
Startup cash needed	
Biggest risk + my plan for it	
Money plan	
How it gives back	
Promotion (passes the ethics check)	

8 · The 90-second pitch

To a small group

Pitch outline

1. **Hook** (10 sec): the want or problem.

2. **The product + who it's for** (15 sec), with one piece of evidence.

3. **The numbers** (30 sec): price, contribution, break-even, expected profit.

4. **The risk + my plan** (20 sec).

5. **The close** (15 sec): how it gives back, and the one thing you'd ask for.

The best question someone asked me, and my answer:

What I'd change before running this for real:
