



GRADES
K-12

MY FIRST BUSINESS LAB™

Facilitator Guide

Everything you need to run My First Business Lab: a pretend market stall that turns an idea into a plan, at every grade from K to 12.

 Read in about 15 minutes  Whole class, pairs and small groups  Packets for K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12

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What it is

and what it isn't

My First Business Lab turns one idea into a thoughtful business plan while students practice real money decisions: costs, prices, profit, saving and giving. It runs on a pretend market stall with given prices, so every student can take part, and nothing is ever really bought or sold.

Stage	K-2 · 1 session	3-5 · 2 sessions	6-8 · 2-3 sessions	9-12 · 3 sessions
1 · The Big Idea	Pick a stall	Pick a stall, say why	A want or problem + survey	Product + customer + competitor research
2 · My Customers	Draw a customer	Describe customers	Survey 5 classmates	Interview 5; check 2 competitors
3 · What Will It Cost?	Count coin costs (to 20)	Add up supplies in dollars	Per-item vs one-time costs	Unit economics, fixed costs, break-even
4 · My Money Plan	Save / spend / share jars	Price, profit for 20, rainy day, split	Profit and margin at 20 and 40; percent budget; a cost rise	Scenarios, startup cash, inventory risk, money plan
5 · Tell the World	Poster	An honest sign	Honest sign + checklist	Ethics check on promotion claims
6 · Give Something Back	Share jar	One way to help	One realistic way to give back	Give-back plan in the money plan
7 · The Showcase	Poster share	Junior Business Plan, partner share	Launch Portfolio + 60-second pitch	Startup One-Pager + 90-second pitch

Three ground rules

1. **Pretend only.** No real money, selling or spending is part of this project.
2. **No names or photos** leave the room without family permission (see the showcase on p. 4).
3. **Giving is always a choice.** No student is asked to donate, and no amount is "right."

Choosing a schedule

Sessions of 35–50 minutes

	1 session	2 sessions	3 sessions
K–2	The full packet (as written)	Add a pretend market day: students “sell” to each other with play coins	Add a class poster gallery
3–5	Big Idea, costs, price (pp. 3–5); send the rest home	As written	Add a pretend market day and a reflection
6–8	Costs, price and profit only (pp. 5–6), using the Lemonade numbers	As written; pitch as homework	As written, with pitches in class
9–12	Unit economics + break-even (pp. 4–5) with the spreadsheet	Skip research; use the sample prices	As written

Setup

- **Print:** one packet per student (the teacher pages are the first two pages). K–2 also needs the coin page, one per pair.
- **Materials:** pencils and crayons; calculators from grade 3; laptops optional for 9–12 (spreadsheet template).
- **Prep time:** about 10 minutes, 15 for 9–12.
- **No printer:** put the price lists on the board and let students work in notebooks; every packet has a no-printer note.

Mixed ages

Run one stall at two depths: younger students do the K–2 or 3–5 pages, older students the 6–8 pages, using the same lemonade, cookie or bracelet stall. Pair them for the showcase: the older student explains profit; the younger one explains their poster.

The pretend market day

Optional, and the most fun

A market day turns the plan into a game. It works best after students have set their prices.

1. Half the class runs stalls; the other half are shoppers. Switch halfway.
2. Shoppers get the same budget in play money or tokens (K-2: 10 coins; 3-5 and up: \$5 in paper notes you print or draw).
3. Stall owners "sell" by writing each sale on a tally; no real goods change hands.
4. Afterwards, each stall counts its sales and compares them with its plan: more or fewer than expected? Why?

 **Tip** The comparison is the learning: "I planned for 20 and sold 9. What would I change?" is a real business lesson.

If your class runs a real sale

This project doesn't require one. If your school holds a real event later (a bake sale or a fair), follow its rules for handling money, food and permissions. The plans students made here are a good start, but they are not permission to sell.

The showcase

Privacy first

Every band ends by sharing. None of these options needs a student's name, photograph or a public post.

PARTNER SHARE	Students present to one partner, who asks one question. Fastest and lowest-stress.
GALLERY WALK	Posters or plans are numbered, not named. Students leave sticky-note compliments and questions.
PITCH CIRCLE	Small groups of 4–5; each student pitches (60 sec for 6–8, 90 sec for 9–12) and answers one question.
FAMILY NIGHT	Plans go home; families hear the pitch at the kitchen table. The family version of the project helps.

Sharing beyond the classroom

If you'd like to share student work outside class (a newsletter, a school website), use work without names or faces, and ask families first. We never need student names or photos from you.

Checking the learning

Rubrics are in each packet

Each packet's teacher pages include a rubric with three levels (Beginning, Developing, Strong). Across all bands you're looking for the same three things:

Look for	What it sounds like
Costs before profit	"I had to pay for the lemons before I could make anything."
A trade-off, named	"If I charge more, fewer people might buy."
A reason for the plan	"I'm saving half because I want a better sign next time."

Reflection questions (any band)

- What was the hardest choice you made? Why?
- What would you change if you ran your stall again?
- What surprised you about the numbers?

These reflections help you see students' thinking. They are not a test or a measure of financial ability.

Questions teachers ask

Do students need real money?

No. Every band uses given prices; K-2 uses play coins. Nothing is bought or sold.

Can we turn it into a real fundraiser?

Only under your school's rules for real sales. The project itself is pretend, and it works best that way: every student can take part.

What if a student's plan loses money?

Great. A loss is one of the best lessons in the project. Ask what they'd change: price, costs, or how much they buy.

Some families can't give money. Is the giving step a problem?

Giving can be time, help or an item, and it's always a choice. No student should ever feel pressured to donate.

Can students invent their own product?

Yes, from grade 6 up, with your OK. They'll need to estimate their own costs; keep the numbers realistic.

How long does each band take?

K-2: one session. 3-5: two. 6-8: two or three. 9-12: three. Page 2 has shorter options.

Where to go next

Want students to invent, prototype and pitch their own product over six sessions? See Shark Tank Lab in our Explorations programs at wealthwisekids.org/explorations. Free lessons for every grade: wealthwisekids.org/teachers-lounge/lesson-planner.