It’s *ALL* Business: My Life in the Corporate World

A Middle School Keyboarding Unit

Foundations

**Literacy:** While studying business and technology areas, it seems both necessary and possible to “covertly” focus on several major literacy areas. First, symbols play a very important role in business and technology curriculum areas. In business, symbols play a role in company logos, organizational chart and, the proverbial climbing “corporate ladder.” Here, these symbols are used to describe an idea or emotion, to convey meaning and to explain or represent a message contained in the symbol. During this unit, students’ attention will be focused on how their actions and behaviors will promote them through the corporate ladder and achieve higher levels (effort and achievement, create success) in the business world. During this unit, students’ attention will be focused on their work progress can be a powerful influence on their success rate of promotion. Why are logos important? Why are those symbols powerful? Why is it important to communicate messages for products and services to attain success in business? How does the use of business structure and successful accomplishment influence the promotional path? Many students will have to wait years to tie the two together and experience the work effort vs. promotion areas.

A second domain of literacy that fits well with business and technology areas would be the many forms of discourse. Students will study and learn how to use print, video, web and PowerPoint presentations for creation of high-impact, robust business documents. These can be taught from both the decoding/interpreting and encoding/designing perspectives.

Third, it is possible to create activities that focus students on further expanding and developing their use of design principles. Design, encode, assemble, publish and revision process to ensure students’ high quality business documents and projects Teacher instruction that support students’ understanding, expands and develops their use of the elements and principles of design. We can also see how analyzing the effects these elements and principles have on the communication of an idea. Does it make it more impactful? Softer? The student conceptualization of an idea via an advertisement or business card or other business document, through the combination of both text and imagery produce meaningful business communication.

Fourth, students’ literacy abilities will be enhanced by designing and publishing a business card, Thank You letter, Web Advertisement, Online Book review and a web based Business Plan. The learner will become more competent in understanding how strong visual symbols can be powerful influences on people and how their choice of style, images and words will impact a target audience.

Lastly, students’ literacy abilities will be enhanced by supporting and direction the preparation of an oral presentation—one not only the instructor but will involve business leaders and parents in the community. Students will become more competent at understating how these visuals can be created and used to support, how choice of style influences audience reception and how notes or prompts can serve to both support and to interfere with a well presented oral presentation.

**Problem-Solving:** What do business and technology have to do with students’ lives? Why should they be interested in learning about these concepts? How can learning about the various forms of media connect to students’ lives? More succinctly: what is it that real people do in business and why should students care?

Here, business “promotion” up the corporate ladder is one of the corner stone symbols for gauging business success in American culture. The authentic problem that is the core of this unit will center on having students participate and challenge themselves in a “real-world” business environment where students (i.e. “employees) will be hired, promoted, perform business tasks and complete deliverables based on roles and responsibilities of the corporate world.

During the unit, the initial introduction to the problem will include a detailed analysis of the steps to be completed. No particular problem-solving strategies will be targeted although information-extending processes will be stressed as students apply knowledge to think through the creation of new applications of knowledge. Design processes will be used as students learn to apply their knowledge on the elements of design—along with business backgrounds—to work in various media forms.

The final solutions to the authentic problem will be two presentations: 1) A short portfolio brief on the business deliverable; 2) A detailed presentation on the high level business plan to the “Shark Tank”—group of teachers, local business leaders and parents.

**Knowledge:** Identified standards in the Contents section of this document clearly identify learning objectives and outcomes, yet leave plenty of room for interpretation and application. These standards are meant to be used as a framework for students to work and learn within the computer lab. This unit will focus on Job, business card, letterhead, online article, web advertisement and high level business plans. The structure and content of these deliverables and how to create and produce a high impact images that clearly communicates a message as well as the practical design process and associated technologies.

This will include research using the Internet, appropriate sources and using several specific design processes as appropriate. Students will also use newly gained knowledge in the various forms of discourse: desktop publishing, web-publishing, PowerPoint and video production to create their deliverables. Knowledge of the MS Office Suite, Internet browsing, computer image capture/manipulation will be implemented, among others. The desktop publishing process will be demonstrated by rough drafts, documenting preparation, and final project submission.

**Using Information:** Throughout this unit, students will have plenty of opportunities to search, sort, create and communicate. Students will also have the opportunity to implement the design, encode, assemble, publish and review as well as use the look, see, imagine and show process. The central information using skills that will frame this unit are the analytical skills of summarizing information (job application, hot dog stand sales and business plan), connecting information to background knowledge, and interpreting and using information to create action items (job application, business card, letter head, online article, web advertisement and business plan).

For these deliverables, students will also need to decide what type of graphic(s) they will use to communicate their business vision: a decorative, representative, organizational, explanative or transformative image.

Lastly, critical thinking skills such as analysis of information found, interpretation, synthesis and evaluation will also be used over the course of the unit deliverables.

**Community:** The main focus on this unit is teamwork and collaboration on two levels. First, students will work singly on the initial 5 projects but must solicit help and review feedback from other students. Second, students will work as a member of a business design team, just as in the “real world” to create an effective business plan brief for the culminating activity. Here the students will divide into groups of 4 and must jointly present the plan to the “Shark Tank”—a group of 5 or so teachers, business leaders, administrators and parents for grading/comment/constructive criticism.

Activities

**Authentic Activities:** To design a series of well designed business projects that--over the life of their employment at a company—will simulate “staged” promotions path, which will culminate in them developing their own company plan and becoming President of that venture.

They will complete the following authentic activities:

**A1:** Students will identify open job positions from a mock newspaper ad and research how to apply

**A2:** Each Student will complete and submit a job application to the company they want to work for.

**A3:** At the company of their choosing, students will be tasked to research successful business card layout and logo design for a new company card. Complete an online portfolio of work, including business card, letter head design, online book review, advertisement, hot dog stand, and business

**A4:** Student will research successful letterhead design attributes and produce a thank you letter with a new company letterhead.

**A5:** Students will research successful online article design attributes then complete an online book review for a magazine.

**A6:** Students will research attributes to successful advertisements then complete a web advertisement indicating a new corporate vision.

**A7:** Students will review several scaled down spreadsheet applications on revenue/sales and costs. Then complete a sample weekly sales numbers for management.

**A8:** Students will research how companies are started. They will watch several videos on “Teen Entrepreneurs” and NBC Episodes of Shark Tank to get ideas for company/product/service ideas. Student will generate a high level business plan.

**A9:** Final completion of all activities into a professionally prepared briefing for the class on “my life in the corporate world,” including their online portfolios and the business plan. This will be done with several local business leaders, and teachers for review/comment/feedback/grading.

**Background Building Activities:**

**B1:** Teacher to present corporation (what are they, how organized) and promotions—what are they and why are they important. Example of my own experience in life of promotion to be reviewed. Class review on their promotion schedule for the unit, plus gaming log. Explain review “assessment” at the end of unit.

**B2:** Teacher to present traits, trait analysis sites. Job application, what is it and why important in business? Analyze sample job applications (good and bad). Model filling out a job application template for students and how to submit. How to find a job via newspapers and matching your skills with what employers want.

**B3:** Teacher to present several business card designs—what it is and why it is important in business? Contents, components, design elements will be reviewed. Analyze/discuss sample cards (good and bad). Model starting one.

**B4:** Student review of business letter purpose and composition, page 54-56 of text book. Teacher to present good and bad examples with verbal quiz check for understanding of components and layout. Teacher to review project example.

**B5:** Teacher to review importance of magazine articles for a company (image, name in the press). Structure, design layout, grammar and proof reader marks. Student to review website (link) on proof reader marks. Teacher to review project example.

**B6:** Teacher to review advertisements (content, good and bad) and why they are important. Students to research and show examples of good and bad and discuss why. Teacher to review project example.

**B7:** Teacher led review Excel/database and its importance in searching and sorting. Review simple example of formula creation. Student to review sample and classroom discussion with teacher. Teacher to review project sample.

**B8:** Teacher led review steps to starting your own company. Videos of student run startups shown. Several prescreen episodes of Shark Tank to be viewed and discussed. Teacher to show past student example good and bad and discuss why. Teacher to review business plan example.

**B9:** Teacher led final review of “my corporate life” format. Sample portfolio brief and business plan brief will be discussed/reviewed.

**Constructing Activities:**

**C1:** Student will create job application customized with their specific personal traits.

**C2:** Create a business card that represents their company—logo, address and contact information—establish a company identity—standard look and feel.

**C3**: Create corporate letterhead, along with appropriate business letter. Electronically generate mailing envelope and address labels.

**C4:** Students will construct a “corrected” company business article for publication in an electronic magazine.

**C5:** Students will create a corporate advertisement to effectively promote the company’s product or service.

**C6:** Students will create an electronic spread sheet for a company to evaluate profit, loss, and revenue.

**C7:** Students will team up to create a high level business plan for a new company.

**Sharing Activities:**

**S1**: Peer review of all projects prior to teacher review.

**S2:** Teacher review/discuss/grade projects.

**S3:** Peer review of portfolio prior to teacher review.

**S4:** Teacher review/discuss portfolio.

**S5:** Teacher review/discuss/grade weekly game log.

**S6**: Team self assessment on rubric of Business Plan prior to teacher review.

**S7**: Teacher to review team components prior to Shark Tank presentation.

**S8:** Culminating Sharing Activity: The Shark Tank--Briefing/Presentation of “My Life in the Corporate World” Portfolio and Business Plan reviewed by a panel of 5-6 professionals. These will include community business leaders, other teachers, parents, and administrators.

**S9:** Teacher led review/discuss/grade culminating team activity with all feedback points from panel for final grade submission.

Contents

**Primary Content Objectives**

**Demonstrating Workplace Readiness Skills: Personal Qualities and People Skills**

1.Demonstrate positive work ethic.

2.Demonstrate integrity.

3.Demonstrate teamwork skills.

4.Demonstrate self-representation skills.

5.Demonstrate diversity awareness.

6.Demonstrate conflict-resolution skills.

7.Demonstrate creativity and resourcefulness.

**Demonstrating Workplace Readiness Skills: Professional Knowledge and Skills**

8.Demonstrate effective speaking and listening skills.

9.Demonstrate effective reading and writing skills.

10.Demonstrate critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.

11.Demonstrate healthy behaviors and safety skills.

12.Demonstrate an understanding of workplace organizations, systems, and climates.

13.Demonstrate lifelong-learning skills.

14.Demonstrate job-acquisition and advancement skills.

15.Demonstrate time-, task-, and resource-management skills.

16.Demonstrate job-specific mathematics skills.

17.Demonstrate customer-service skills.

**Demonstrating Workplace Readiness Skills: Technology Knowledge and Skills**

18.Demonstrate proficiency with technologies common to a specific occupation.

19.Demonstrate information technology skills.

20.Demonstrate an understanding of Internet use and security issues.

21.Demonstrate telecommunications skills.

Addressing Elements of Student Life

22.Identify the purposes and goals of the student organization.

23.Explain the benefits and responsibilities of membership in the student organization as a student and in professional/civic organizations as an adult.

24.Demonstrate leadership skills through participation in student organization activities, such as meetings, programs, and projects.

25.Identify Internet safety issues and procedures for complying with acceptable use standards.

**Keyboarding (Middle School)**

26.Identify computer system components.

27.Describe ergonomic and repetitive strain injury (RSI) guidelines related to safe computer use.

28.Maintain workstation, equipment, materials, and supplies.

29.Boot, access, reboot, and shut down an operating system and start and exit software programs.

30.Input data and commands using peripherals (e.g., keyboard, light pen, mouse, scanner, audio/video input, voice recognition).

31.Key alphabetic, numeric, and symbol information using a touch system and correct techniques.

32.Manipulate data/software/operating system using ribbons, launchers, icons, and pull-down menus, mouse, and function keys.

33.Use file external storage device (i.e., Universal Serial Bus [USB], and online (e.g., Google Docs, Web pages, e-mail) management techniques, such as copy, clear cache, move, store, rename, retrieve, save, delete, and create/manipulate directories.

34.Improve keyboarding techniques.

35.Increase keyboarding speed and accuracy.

36.Proofread copy, using proofreaders' marks.

37.Write letters, memos, e-mails, reports, blogs, outlines, and tables, using the English writing process steps.

38.Key and format letters, memos, e-mails, reports, outlines, columns, and tables.

39.Edit copy.

40.Key, format, and merge addresses on labels and envelopes.

41.Produce documents incorporating simple graphic elements, including tables and graphs.

42.Obtain assistance for preparing documents from electronic and hard-copy references and documentation (e.g., help screen, spell check, user's manual, dictionary, grammar check, thesaurus, Internet search).

43.Correlate keyboarding skills with the appropriate career pathways.

44.Develop a résumé.

45.Complete an online and/or a written job application form.

46.Create an electronic and/or hard-copy portfolio containing representative samples of student work.

47.Identify potential employment barriers for nontraditional groups and ways to overcome the barriers.

**Secondary Content Objectives:**

LCPS, Career and Technology Education: [Workplace Readiness](http://www.cteresource.org/attachments/atb/WRSRepositoryFiles/WRSList.pdf)

**Tertiary Content Objectives**

LCPS:[SOL Correlation by Task](http://www.lcps.org/Page/12736)

# Tools

# Authentic Problem: Similar to new employees to a company, students will be introduced to the unit with an oral presentation, dubbed “Q2 Kickoff: It’s *ALL* Business,” to summarize the purpose, organization, grading, goals and student activities/responsibilities for the quarter.

# Desktop publishing materials/Promethean board.

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| --- | --- |
|  | B1: Computer, Traits book/websites. Job application example, Project template  B2: Computer, MS Publisher, Publisher examples/hard copies  B3: Computer, MS Word, Word examples, Project sample  B4: Computer, MS Word, e-Magazine examples, Project sample  B5: Computer, MS PowerPoint, Advertisement examples, Project sample  B6: Computer, MS Excel, Database/Excel examples, Project sample  B7: Computer, MS Word, Word examples, Project sample/template  C1: MS Word, Job Application Template  C2: MS Publisher, Business Card  C3: MS Word, Business Letter/letterhead  C4: MS Word, e-Magazine Article  C5: MS PowerPoint, Advertisement  C6: MS Excel, Hot Dog Stand  C7: MS Word, High Level Business Plan  S1: Peer Review Rubrics (all Projects)  S2: Teacher Grading Rubrics (all Projects)  S3: MS Excel, Lemonade Stand Log Template |

# System of Assessments

A series of rubrics for: All unit deliverables (job application, business card, letter head design, e-magazine article, web advertisement, hot dog stand, business plan, student game logs.

A series of teacher/employee feedback sessions: portfolio review and business plan

A reflective essay contained in the briefing written by the students around the following prompts: 1) What did you learn?; 2) What did you like?; 3) What improvements would you make?.

At end of unit, an objective, short answer, essay for background knowledge and content standards. This will be positioned as an “Exit Interview.”

# Learning Environment

**Computer Lab**—keyboarding is based in computer lab. Research, simulation, and project production activities. Students can work collaboratively and help each other out with the projects and research idea generation. Link in business world—develop understanding, work collaboratively, problem solve, take some risks, create documents/deliverables, encourage analytical and creative thinking. Support, motivate, fun, creativity, production.

**Home/Open Lab**—any student falling behind can use their computers at home or reserve lab time to catch up or work on refining the deliverable sets.