

## Planning the Pitch

### The **BIG** Idea

- How will we create an effective project pitch?

## AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

- I. Warm Up: “Basketball For Lunch, Please!” Sample Pitch (15 minutes)
- II. Committee Briefing (10 minutes)
- III. Planning the Pitch: What Must We Do? (15 minutes)
- IV. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

## MATERIALS

### STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:

- Student Handbook pages 44-48, “Basketball For Lunch, Please!” Sample Pitch
- Student Handbook pages 49-50, 1-Month Calendar

### FACILITATOR PAGES:

- Facilitator Resource 1, Advisor Agreement
- Facilitator Resource 2, Community Makeover Group Assignments

### Overhead Projector

## OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Review a sample pitch for “The RTS Makeover Challenge!”
- Analyze what their project pitch will require.
- Brainstorm ways to meet these needs.

## OVERVIEW .....

To plan a class pitch for “The RTS Makeover Challenge!,” students must imagine what their project will look like in action, and be able to anticipate the various activities and materials they’ll need. In this lesson, students review a sample project pitch, and take stock of the skills and interests they can lend to their project. They also describe their project in detail, and begin to plan their pitch.

## PREPARATION .....

- List the day’s **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- Copy **Facilitator Resource 1, Advisor Agreement** and **Facilitator Resource 2, Community Makeover Group Assignments** (one per class).
- Create an overhead transparency of the following handouts
  - **Facilitator Resource 1, Advisor Agreement**
  - **Student Handbook pages 44-48, “Basketball For Lunch, Please!” Sample Pitch**
  - **Student Handbook pages 49-50, 1-Month Calendar** (two pages, one for each month)
- If you have not already done so, talk to your principal to gain the necessary approval for projects under consideration. Make sure to discuss issues like school personnel whose help may be needed, best times for students to complete the projects, and permissions if students need to be out of school to deliver items to the charity of choice. (**NOTE:** This must be done before you teach this lesson.) If the proposal is not approved, you will need to help your students select a new project idea.
- Before teaching this lesson, determine what date the projects will be judged.
- Think about the project this class is going to pitch for “The RTS Makeover Challenge!”, and be ready to suggest ideas that will help them articulate the target community, the project goal, the actions and materials it will entail, and any additional or creative materials that might seem especially appropriate (such as a survey, a collection of quotes, a cartoon).
- Create a poster explaining the interests and skills needed on each committee, as well as the product to be created, as follows:  
**NOTE:** Each poster should be written in a different color marker.

**Writing Committee**

- Researching and presenting ideas
- Getting the facts right
- Writing imaginatively and convincingly

*Responsible for:*

Introduction: approximately 4-6 paragraphs describing the targeted community, what your class thinks it needs, your project idea, and how your project will address the community's need.

[Include a copy of the Introduction from "Basketball for Lunch, Please!"]

**Planning Committee**

- Being organized
- Thinking about all the details
- Planning a project

*Responsible for:*

Plan of Action: a step-by-step description of how you will accomplish your project, with details about who will do what, when, where, and how.

[Include a copy of the sample Plan of Action]

**Budgeting Committee**

- Finding out how much things cost
- Negotiating deals
- Managing money

*Responsible for:*

1. Budget: a realistic accounting of what you'll need for the project, and how every penny will be spent.
2. [Include a copy of the sample Budget]

**Advertising Committee**

- Drawing, videotaping, creating cartoons, or making up song lyrics
- Thinking "outside the box"
- Finding new ways to convince people that your idea is great

*Responsible for:*

Inspiration and Evidence: statistics (facts), stories, and artwork. Anything that will help convince your readers that your project is needed. Up to three additional pages.

[Include a copy of sample Inspiration and Evidence page]

## IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS .....

For **Activity II: Committee Briefing**, if space allows, you may wish to tape your committee posters around the room, placing one committee assignment on each wall. Ask students to stand under the poster of the committee they'd most like to be on, then ask for volunteers to move from overcrowded committees to those in need of help.

If you think your students will not respond well to the selection process in **Activity II, Committee Briefing**, allow students to choose a number from a hat or plastic bag. Allow the student who selected number 1 to pick his/her committee first. The student who chose the number 2 slip should be allowed to select her committee next. Continue having one student at a time select his committee, in increasing number order, until all students have chosen a committee.

During **Activity III, Planning the Pitch**, if you don't think your class can handle the visualization exercise, skip it, and just brainstorm. You may also wish to make notes in this section on chart paper instead of the board, to reference in later lessons. Make sure to write the class period on top of each piece of chart paper.

**Note:** Some projects (for example, an event like a basketball tournament) may lend themselves to the creation of an additional **Public Relations Committee**. If your students have chosen such a project, the Public Relations Committee can be in charge of getting other people (like parents, teachers, etc.) to help.

## ACTIVITY STEPS

### I. Warm Up: “Basketball For Lunch, Please!” Sample Pitch (15 minutes)

1. [Greet the class, and psych them up to start preparing their class pitch today for “The RTS Makeover Challenge!” When everyone’s seated, direct students to **Student Handbook pages 44-48, “Basketball For Lunch, Please!” Sample Pitch**. Let them know that this is a sample proposal for the Makeover Challenge. Although it looks complicated, they will have several weeks to work on theirs, both as a class and in smaller committees. Remind them that each class only submits **one** proposal, so the work is spread out between everyone. There are many steps needed to create such a proposal, and you will be there to guide them through all of them.]
2. [Display the **Introduction** on the overhead and have students take turns reading each paragraph aloud. While students are listening, ask students to think about its strengths and weaknesses. Instruct students to make notes on the sample proposal to help them identify key points to keep in mind while developing their own project.

Once the students have finished reading the **Introduction**, lead a discussion using the following questions:

- Has the class presented its idea clearly?
  - Does the project address a real community need?
  - Does the project set a realistic goal?
  - Does the pitch make you want to jump out of your seat and go do the project?]
3. [Again, assign students to read each point in the **Plan of Action** aloud and lead a discussion using the following questions:
    - Are the steps written clearly and in an order that makes sense?
    - Does the plan include all of the steps needed to carry out the project? (ex: school personnel needed for project; permission by school principal]
  4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** I’d like you to take a quick look through the remaining pages of the “Basketball for Lunch” proposal. The next section in the proposal is the Budget, which let’s the judges know how you plan to spend your money if your project is selected. Finally, there’s an advertising page titled “Inspiration and Evidence.” You can use this section to include additional material that will help the judges in making their decision. [Specify what might be included here for this class’s project: survey results, quotes from people in their community, facts from a relevant website, artwork (sketches, photos, etc).]

5. [Reassure students that you will guide them through this process, starting with a general timeline. Place a copy of **Student Handbook pages 49-50, 1-Month Calendar**, on the overhead projector, and discuss what will be accomplished in each class meeting, including what's already been done. Have students write the dates in their own Student Handbooks. Note the judging date as the goal that must be met, and emphasize that consistent work will be needed in order to accomplish this goal:

Week 1: Introduce Project

Week 2: Select Project

Week 3: Assign Committees

Week 4: Project Pitch

Week 5: Project Pitch

Week 6: Final Draft of Project Pitch Due, Self-Evaluations

(Date)\_\_: Judging]

6. [Using an overhead projector, display **Facilitator Resource 1, Advisor Agreement** and explain its purpose. **NOTE:** Only one advisor is needed for each project, and students should decide who should be approached, by whom, and when, to enlist their help. This date should also be added to the calendar. If a student is chosen to enlist an Adult Advisor, he/she will need a copy of **Facilitator Resource 1, Advisor Agreement.**]

## II. Committee Briefing (10 minutes)

1. [Using the sample pitch as an example, point out that a good pitch requires a lot of work, and there are many different categories that must be addressed. In order to make sure that all of the parts are covered, the class will be divided into committees.]
2. [Write the following committee names on the board: **Writing, Budgeting, Planning, and Advertising.**]
3. [Briefly describe what each committee will do so that students have a solid understanding of what they will be volunteering for. Use the posters you've created to illustrate the responsibilities and skills needed for each element of the proposal.]

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** The **Writing Committee** will write the Introduction to the proposal, explaining whom the project is for, and what the general idea is. The **Budgeting Committee** will come up with a Budget, and shop around for the best prices for all of the items that are necessary to complete the project. The **Planning Committee** will write up the Plan of Action. The **Advertising Committee** will create the graphics and

art needed for the pitch, and also come up with something original to make the pitch special.

[Solicit and answer any questions that students may have at this point.]

4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now that you know what the responsibilities of each one of these committees are, I would like you all to volunteer for the committee that you think you would be best suited for. Most likely not everyone will get their first choice, so you will have to think about what your second and third choice options are. Keep raising your hand until you are selected for a committee.

[Begin soliciting volunteers by saying the name of each committee. Committees should be approximately the same size, ideally 5 or 6 students each. Once all students are assigned to a group, record the names of the students for each group using **Facilitator Resource 2, Community Makeover Group Assignments**. (See **Implementation Options** for more ideas.)]

5. [Once all of the groups have been determined, tell students that these groups are non-negotiable, and that they will be working within this group for the duration of the makeover project. Designate an area for each committee to meet, and ask students to change seats in order to sit with their other group members. Explain to students that for the duration of the unit, they should sit with their group members in their designated area.]

### III. Planning the Pitch: What Must We Do? (15 minutes)

1. [Erase the board, and now write on it the name of the class's "RTS Makeover Challenge!" project. Under the project name, list the four categories that will constitute the pitch: Introduction, Plan of Action, Budget, Inspiration & Evidence. Under each category, list the Committee that will handle it. Leave plenty of room under each category heading to jot down ideas the class will suggest. The board should look like this:]

PROJECT NAME			
<u>Introduction</u>	<u>Plan of Action</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Inspiration &amp; Evidence</u>
(Writing)	(Planning)	(Budgeting)	(Advertising)

2. [Assign one of your very thorough students the job of secretary, and instruct him/her to copy down everything you list on the board during this activity. Make sure this student writes the class period on the top of his/her notes.

Explain that since “The RTS Makeover Challenge!” is a competition, you must erase the blackboard at the end of class, and that it will be important to keep track of the tasks and ideas they’re about to generate.]

3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** The key to creating an effective pitch is to understand the project in extraordinary detail, and then to explain it to the judges in the clearest manner. So let’s start at the beginning, and brainstorm as many details about the project as possible. Then, next week, each committee will take the ideas we developed today, and put them into the right form for the pitch.
4. [Start with the Introduction, and prod students to articulate everything they know about the target community, and the project goal. Jot notes on the board under “Introduction” as the class comes up with relevant answers (or under any other category if something else occurs). Remember to probe for as many details as possible. For example, if the target community is “the school,” ask if it includes teachers and administrators. If you ask a question to which the students don’t know the answer, for this or any category, put the question on the board anyway, and mark it “to be answered” – perhaps by putting several question marks at the end, like this: *How many total students are in the school????*]
5. [Once you have some notes for the Introduction, move on to the Plan of Action. Tell the class they’re going to do what’s called a “visualization” to imagine the details of the project-in-action. For example, if the project involves a tutoring program, they might visualize themselves as tutors, reading to elementary school kids in a library or classroom, surrounded by books.]
6. [Tell students to close their eyes for a minute.]

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Your class has won “The RTS Makeover Challenge.” You will now put the project into action. What is the first thing you’ll do? What’s the second? What are all the events that have to happen, in order for your project to become real?”

7. [Give students a minute to visualize. Then ask them to open their eyes, and describe what they visualized about the project. (They should keep other thoughts to themselves.) As students list tasks they’ll need to do for the project, take notes on the board, jotting key phrases under the categories where they best belong. For example, if someone says, “I saw myself buying soda and chips to serve at the party,” put “BUY REFRESHMENTS” under the BUDGET category.]



**NOTE:** Each project will be different, and therefore this exercise is just a blueprint. Adjust accordingly for the nature of each class' project. (See **Implementation Options** for suggestions.)

8. [Ask students if there are any steps that need to be completed before they win (ex: get permission from the school principal). These steps should also be listed on the board.]

Continue to brainstorm project needs until you feel that the class has covered the basics. Some ideas for you to suggest that they might not think about include: *getting materials* (such as books, musical instruments, sports equipment, which they must purchase, borrow, or get as donations), *needing transportation*, *making and placing advertising* (such as flyers or newspaper ads to notify the community about a program), *getting permission* (from school and/or town), *creating additional/supporting material* (such as surveys, art, photos).]

#### IV. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

1. [Ask students to take a good look at the board, and jot down any of the questions they might be able to find answers to during the week. Ask for volunteers to report back with the answers. Instruct the secretary to record these students' names next to the question they will be investigating.]
2. [Also, if there are any suggestions for things to include in the pitch - for example, letters saying parents will be willing to drive to the store, or a list of sporting good stores where equipment can be bought - ask for volunteers willing to do these tasks. Again, ask the secretary to record the suggested tasks with the names of the student volunteers.]
3. [Tell students they will work in their committees next week, and begin to write and assemble their pitch. Also remind students to keep hush about their great ideas...a little discretion goes a long way in a school-wide challenge.]
4. [Make sure your secretary gives you the hard copy of the list on the board. Check to make sure it's complete, and then erase the board.]



## Advisor Agreement

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To Roads to Success Facilitator:

I have agreed to serve as an adult advisor in the 8th grade Roads to Success Community Makeover project.

Class Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

If this project is selected as the school winner, I will help students execute the project according to the contest rules.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_

Organization (example: ASPCA) or relationship to student (example: Joe Smith's mom)

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact E-mail

\_\_\_\_\_

## Community Makeover Group Assignments

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### Writing Committee

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### Planning Committee

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### Budgeting Committee

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### Advertising Committee

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## **The RTS Makeover Challenge!**

# **“Basketball For Lunch, Please!” Sample Pitch**

4<sup>th</sup> Period RTS Class  
November 20, 2006

## Introduction

There's a problem at Washington Middle School that happens during lunch period every day, and it causes a lot of students to get in trouble. We've asked around, and not just 8<sup>th</sup> graders are affected, but everyone. So the problem affects the whole school community, which means 158 eighth graders, 163 seventh graders, and 171 sixth graders. Plus, it affects all the lunch monitors (who are also teachers) and the principal and the assistant principal, who's in charge of detention.

Here's the problem: there's nothing to do during lunch, other than eat, which only takes about 10 minutes out of the 42-minute period. Students aren't allowed to leave the cafeteria (except to go to the library, which most kids don't want to do). But we're also not allowed to make a whole lot of noise or do anything fun in the cafeteria to keep ourselves busy.

What ends up happening is a lot of the kids who can't sit still, and even some who can, start joking around, and roaming around, and it gets pretty rowdy. The lunch monitors yell at us to go back to our seats, but we've been sitting all day and really need a break from all the sitting. So kids who just need to move around end up getting in trouble. Sometimes we end up in the principal's office or we have to spend the rest of the period in detention. All this really only happens because we're bored and need a rest from learning, which is what lunch period is supposed to give us, anyway.

Our idea is to fix up the old basketball court outside, and use it as a place to go for the last 30 minutes of lunch, so we can do something physical and play basketball. A teacher who would normally have lunch duty would come with us and watch us, and there'd be rules and we'll sign a contract saying we'll behave and clean up trash.

So our class – the totally amazing and awesome RTS 4<sup>th</sup> period class – wants to make over the basketball court to use during lunch. That's our project for "The RTS Makeover Challenge." We hope you will agree it is a good idea to fix up the basketball courts and let kids go there during lunch.

## Plan of Action

- 1) Conduct a class survey of 237 students and 35 teachers.  
**Date to be completed:** Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>
- 2) Present our survey results to the Principal in order to gain permission for our project.  
**Date to be completed:** Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup>
- 3) Our Advisor, Mr. Jinna from Social Studies, said we need to get permission from the school board as well. We will elect representatives to attend the next school board meeting.  
**Date to be completed:** Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup>
- 4) Our Advertising Committee will make posters and pie charts to show that the project will look nice.  
**Date to be completed:** Friday April 12<sup>th</sup>
- 5) Our Elected Representatives will attend the school board meeting.  
**Date to be completed:** Tuesday April 16<sup>th</sup> (next school board meeting)
- 6) Our Public Relations ("P.R.") committee will convince teachers to monitor the court during lunch.  
**Date to be completed:** Friday April 19<sup>th</sup>
- 7) As a class, we'll have a Big Clean-up day, and get lots of volunteers to help clean up the basketball court.  
**Date to be completed:** Friday April 26<sup>th</sup>
- 8) We will ask the head school custodian if he can help us put up the basketball nets and chain the trash can to the fence.  
**Date to be completed:** Friday April 26<sup>th</sup>
- 9) Our Budget Committee will buy basketball nets, a trash can, and a storage bin to keep the basketballs in.  
**Date to be completed:** Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup>
- 10) Our Planning Committee will help the school custodian put up the basketball nets and chain the trash can to the fence.  
**Date to be completed:** Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup>
- 11) Everyone will sign a contract saying we promise to behave and put trash in the trash can and take care of the court.  
**Date to be completed:** Wednesday May 2<sup>nd</sup>

## BUDGET

1. Petition (paper and pencils from school) .....	00.00
2. Meetings with Principal or others .....	00.00
3. Basketball nets, 4 chainlink @19. 95 each .....	79.80
4. Basketballs, 8 @20.00 each.....	150.00
5. Recycled steel mesh trash can.....	164.84
6. Chain and lock for trash can .....	9.99
7. Storage container for basketballs (used).....	90.00
8. Lock for storage container.....	4.99

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**Total**

**\$499. 62**

## Inspiration and Evidence

*I monitor the lunchroom twice a week. The students end up leaving lunch, frustrated and restless.*

—Coach Smith

*We sit for 8 hours a day!  
I can't even concentrate in my last class. All I can think about is moving around.*

—Bryan Jones  
(8<sup>th</sup> Grade President)



*I'll do anything to help!*

—Mrs. Thompson  
(parent of current 7<sup>th</sup> grader)

**With a little help we can make a HUGE difference....**



**OUR GOAL →**

### **SUPPORTED BY CURRENT RESEARCH**

Researchers are finding that brain activity and brain development are enhanced by physical exercise.  
—reported on NPR, August 31, 2006

### **SURVEY RESULTS**

We asked 237 kids and 35 teachers: "Do you think it would be a good idea to fix up the outside basketball court and be able to play during lunch?"

Every single person voted "yes," which makes it 100% in favor of our idea.



**1-MONTH CALENDAR (month & year: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_)**

As a class, we will use this calendar to keep track of your Community Makeover due dates. Write the month and year in the space above and write the correct date in each box.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

**1-MONTH CALENDAR (month & year: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_)**

As a class, we will use this calendar to keep track of your Community Makeover due dates. Write the month and year in the space above and write the correct date in each box.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday