



Innovation and idea generation

Age range: 11-14 and 14-16

 **BARCLAYS** | LifeSkills



Session overview

Time	Key learning outcomes	Resources
90 mins	<p>By the end of the activity students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link being creative with generating innovative ideas • Describe how to generate ideas • Identify where they see creativity being used and when they need to generate creative ideas in their own lives • Evaluate their ideas about how they could improve their school, youth group or other institution • Explain why it is important to be able to get their ideas across in a concise way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation and idea generation presentation slides

Remember that you can refer to the guiding principles for establishing a safe learning environment in the Appendix section of the [LifeSkills content guide](#). This includes suggestions for signposting students to further support.

Optional:

The Skills Builder Framework provides measurable steps for eight essential skills and can be used in combination with this lesson to support your students' progress in the skill of creativity – the use of imagination and the generation of new ideas

Skills Builder also offer a student Self-Assessment Tool, which helps learners to reflect on their own skill strengths and areas for development. This and other resources can be accessed on the [Skills Builder Hub](#)

Contents

Activities	Time	Page
Activity one: Being innovative through creativity	45 mins	3
Activity two: Putting creativity into action	45 mins	7

Activity one

Being innovative through creativity

1. Generating ideas

- Explain to students that together you'll be looking at why creativity is a very useful core transferable skill and how we can improve it, before putting the skill into practice
- Start with a brief discussion about being creative:

What examples can students give of being creative, at school, in their day-to-day lives or at work if they have a job?

What benefits can this skill offer employers?

- Ask students to record their thoughts about what it means to be creative in the form of a mind map, drawing or a graffiti wall. Students who are less confident about sharing their ideas in a group may wish to create their own individual mind map or graffiti wall. These activities will help to gauge students' starting points and enable them to demonstrate the progress they have made by the end of the lesson. It will also offer an opportunity for teaching to be adapted where necessary
- Select an icebreaker to get students generating creative ideas

Innovation challenge option 1

- Spend five minutes on a 'what if' question, giving each student the chance to provide a response. Set out a few ground rules, such as no criticising each other's ideas and no interrupting. It doesn't matter how outlandish or fantastic the ideas are, the aim is to get the students thinking creatively. For example, you could ask, how would the world be different if:

We all had a pair of wings?

We all had to find a new way to travel long distances?

We all had to find a new way to communicate?

Animals could talk?

- Praise the students for their creative ideas

Activity one

Being innovative through creativity (cont'd)

Innovation challenge option 2

- Ask students to work in small groups and invite them to consider an everyday object – for example, a book, a ruler, a plastic bottle, a spoon – and invite them to think of new uses for the object. Hand the object around the group: when a student holds the object, he or she should say what their new use for it is. Some students will find this easier than others: if a student is struggling, allow them to pass the object on and say that you'll come back to them later when they've had a chance to think
- Make sure you have some ideas of your own so you can help the students. For example, a ruler could be a diving board for a mouse, a device for propping a book open, a handy holder for elastic bands. This should help students appreciate that:
 - Looking at things differently helps us create solutions
 - Being innovative reinvigorates existing ideas and helps you to stand out
 - Some of the best inventions don't "reinvent the wheel", they just tweak an existing concept
 - Being creative with others helps build relationships and encourages collaboration

2. What is enterprise?



Ask the students what being enterprising means. How do they think somebody who is enterprising might behave? What might they do?

- For example, being proactive, resilient or helping other people to solve their problems. Show **slide 2** to explore the examples listed and help students see that they all relate to the definition that being enterprising means bringing about change

Now ask students what being innovative has to do with being enterprising?

- Explain that in order to bring about change, an idea needs to be thought of to fill a gap or solve a problem. If you have time, show the [film of Baroness Karren Brady](#) to summarise how important creativity is in being enterprising
- Ask students to think of something they do in their own lives that demonstrates being innovative. Working in small groups, ask students to create a graffiti wall with all encouraged to write or draw on the wall with their ideas. Remind them that people can be creative with how they use their time, resources they have to hand or in the ways that they get tasks completed so it is not always something that is visible to the eye. Ask each group to present the main ideas from their wall

Activity one

Being innovative through creativity (cont'd)

- **Slide 3** shows a range of activities: ask the students how innovation is used in each of the listed tasks. Invite one spokesperson from each group to feedback their ideas about how one of the examples on the slide demonstrates thinking outside the box
- When you have worked through all the activities, explain that they all require creativity to some degree or another
- Being innovative and enterprising are both linked to being creative. Show **slide 4** with a definition of creativity and check the students agree that this sums up what creativity is
- Ask students for ideas about why innovation and creativity is important – if needed, they can draw on the mind map or graffiti wall created earlier for inspiration. Help them to understand that without new ideas, our world would be a very different place: we wouldn't have developed most of the things we see around us. Innovation allows us to keep improving our world
- It is important here to highlight that creativity is a skill that every single person is already using in some way and can be developed further. The way people demonstrate this can differ, some people might be musically creative, others are mathematically creative, or innovative on the football pitch or in the kitchen
- If you have time, get students to read the creativity case study from the '[Growth mindset toolkit](#)' to find out how Jade used her creativity to get a job – ask your students if they would be innovative and take a creative risk to get a job. Remind students not to act illegally or take risks with their personal safety or that of others when jobseeking. Signpost them to additional support in school such as careers advisors or form tutors who can guide them on key aspects of personal safety and enable them to avoid unnecessary risk-taking

3. Generating ideas



- Show **slide 5**: this is a drawing by the cartoonist W E Hill (1915) called My Wife and My Mother-In-Law, which was adapted from a picture going back at least to an 1888 German postcard. Ask the students what they see: some will see a young woman looking away over her shoulder, and others will see an old woman looking downwards. Invite students to reflect on how ideas are generated in class, e.g. graffiti wall, mind mapping, concept mapping, pass the object, silent debates, role playing (observer, main protagonist, etc.)
- Explain that our different points of view and perspectives when viewing the same thing are why sharing the creative process generates more ideas than one person on their own
- Explain to students that one frequently used creative technique is idea generation: using creativity, and often teamwork, to create new and innovative ideas. These ideas could be new to your team, new to your company or your school or never been thought of before. Developing the ability to generate ideas together is a key skill that is useful in the work place but also sometimes in the application process as assessment events often involve tasks that require a group to be creative or problem solve together

Activity one

Being innovative through creativity (cont'd)

- Hand out copies of **slide 6** and explain that you are going to look at how we can develop our creativity. Put the students into groups of three to six and ask them to discuss the question on the sheet. Give them five minutes to talk and note down their ideas. Students who don't feel comfortable working in groups may wish to write down their ideas individually. The sheet includes a few ideas to get students thinking: be aware that some students will find this activity quite challenging, so be ready to support groups that are struggling to find answers. Here are some examples of how they could improve their creativity:

Listening to others – use other people's ideas to help develop your own and be inspired by people who have achieved things that you admire – you can find examples from friends, colleagues and social media

- **Being positive** – help yourself and others to be confident
 - **Trying new approaches and having an open mind**, for example, free thinking can be very powerful as it involves noting down everything that comes into your mind quickly and not dwelling on anything then reflecting later on all your ideas
 - **Encouragement** – allowing yourself or others to work through a creative process – Looking for opportunities to be creative – the more you practise being creative, the easier it becomes. Taking the easy route is not always the best – pushing yourself to be brave and pursue the most creative route can pay off
 - **Not rejecting any ideas (at least to start with)**: by embracing innovation – even though an initial idea might seem silly or irrelevant – you'll develop more inventive ideas
- After five minutes, ask each group or individual to feed back their ideas about developing creativity. Write these on a board, flipchart or the graffiti wall if you created one at the start of this activity

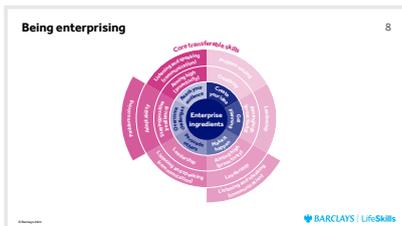
Activity summary

- Hand out copies of **slide 7** and ask the students to fill in part 1, listing where creativity is used. These answers should encompass all people, not only students. They should look at where this could apply to different situations, e.g. at home, in school and at work
- Ask the students to feed back briefly on where they see creativity used. Remember that it is important to ensure distancing techniques are used so that these scenarios do not reflect directly on students' real lives, as some may find it emotionally challenging to discuss certain situations too personally
- Now challenge them to think about where they are already creative in their own lives. Ask the students to complete part 2. Students can ask their peers for support or suggestions and may want to work in pairs if they feel comfortable doing so
- After a few minutes, ask the students to feed back where they are already creative. They should feel positive about where they are already creative, both in education and outside of it
- At this point, ask students to revisit their baseline mind map and ask them to add any new or additional ideas they have learned about in relation to what it means to be creative

Activity two

Putting ideas into action

1. Explore which key skills make someone enterprising



- Ask students to consider their knowledge, skills and understanding in the following areas, rating themselves on a scale of 1-10 in terms of their confidence:
 - Generating ideas
 - Putting ideas into action
 - Choosing and presenting ideas effectively
- Invite students to record their thoughts in a mind map or graffiti wall to gauge their starting points and enable them to demonstrate their progress at the end of the lesson
- Creating ideas is a key part of being enterprising and this uses creativity and problem solving skills. Use **slide 8** to explain how many different skills come together to make someone enterprising
- Explain to the students how important action is to being enterprising. To become more enterprising they will need to improve their creativity by developing a positive, can-do attitude and self-confidence

2. Generating ideas for the school

- Assign new groups and set them a challenge. They will need to generate as many ideas as possible about how to improve an aspect of the school or community – for example they could focus on the way their cohort learns and studies, an app for a school/community/workplace, a peer to peer school buddy mentoring scheme or improving the school environment whether the physical building or the culture
- Each group should then select their best idea and 'sell' it to the other groups (less confident students may prefer to present this in a non-verbal format, e.g. as a poster, presentation or leaflet)
- Be clear with the students that for the first part of the activity, they must try to be positive about all ideas: every idea is good, and every idea goes down on paper as long as it's appropriate to the context. In the second part they can explore which idea might work and use more critical thinking. Allow five minutes for the idea generation and critical reviewing parts of the task respectively. You might want to remind the group about good teamwork skills before they begin this activity
- While the groups are working, go around and offer encouragement and positivity, but not your own ideas. Ensure that the groups are being inclusive and that every individual is getting a chance to speak: you never know where the best idea may come from. Ask each group to appoint a chair person whose job is to ensure that everyone is given the chance to speak and share their ideas

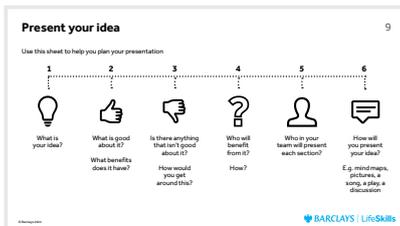
Extension

- Get students to watch the [enterprise film](#) and look out for instances where Julius and Lucy have shown examples of using enterprise skills to be proactive and make ideas happen

Activity two

Putting ideas into action (cont'd)

3. Choosing the best idea and creating a presentation



- After five minutes, ask each group to select their best idea – the one that they think will appeal the most to the class – and develop it further to present to the rest of the class. The presentations will be two-minute pitches. Tell the students to focus for the next five minutes on picking and developing their best idea. Once students have generated an initial idea, the [enterprise planner](#) can be used to provide structure and build out the detail
- When the five minutes is up, ask the groups to move on to creating and practising their presentation. Inform the group that they will present their idea to the rest of the class. They need to try and persuade everyone that their idea is the best
- Show **slide 9**, which contains some hints about what the students should think about when creating their presentation. Remind them that because it's only short, it needs to be punchy. It has some prompt questions which can help students plan their presentation. If needed, show or print **slide 10** which includes some top tips for successful presentations
- Give students ten minutes to practise. Make sure everyone is involved in this process: they will need to agree who is going to make the presentation but they can all help to write it. You may want to assign roles at your discretion if you have students who are likely to be less comfortable with presenting to the class. Explain to students that this is how a team would work together in most businesses: some people are better at coming up with ideas, others will be good at working out how to turn the idea into reality and others will be able to present it to others to make them believe in it too
- As before, while the groups are working, go around and offer encouragement and positivity

4. Presenting ideas

- After ten minutes, bring the class together. Remind them that there is a time limit for each pitch and that you want them to really sell the class their best idea
- Ensure that the rest of the class understand that they must be silent during presentations and encouraging at the end of each one, and that each group has two minutes to give their presentation
- Go around each group and ask each to give their presentation from the front of the room
- After each presentation, ask the students to give some feedback: to make sure this is positive, and it feels appropriate for students' confidence levels, you could ask students to give the presenters feedback on two or three things they liked about the idea and the presentation, and one way to improve it
- When all the groups have presented, take a vote on which idea is the most popular
- If students are keen on taking any of their ideas forward they can use the [LifeSkills Enterprise idea planner](#) to explore and plan their idea in more detail

Activity two

Putting ideas into action (cont'd)

Extension

- To support students with developing a complete enterprising mindset take a look at the [Putting enterprise skills into action](#) lesson pack and encourage students to try the [Your enterprise journey interactive tool](#)

Activity summary

- Reinforce the importance of developing creativity, and the role it plays in being enterprising and generating innovative ideas
- Highlight again that we all have this skill which can be developed over time
- Recap the definition of creativity, what the class consensus was on how to develop the skill and where they are already creative. Praise their effort and ability to embrace the creative challenge
- Finish by reminding the group that creativity is a core transferable skill which employers look for in potential employees, and is an important aspect of being enterprising. Enterprise is centred in action, and requires a mixture of core transferable skills
- Revisit the mapping exercise completed at the start of this activity to assess students' progress. Invite students to look again at their confidence ratings and decide if they feel that their ratings have now improved. This could then be used to help present an overview of how they've developed their skills, knowledge and understanding via a presentation, written report or poster. You could also revisit their answers on the Skills Builder self-assessment
- You can further show your students how creativity is a core transferable skill which will help them in the world of work through the [Creativity lesson](#)