

## VACANT LOT GROWTH (ENTREPRENEURIAL) MINDSET

Seeing ourselves as empowered to be changemakers using our talents and abilities to take action and solve problems in our own neighborhoods requires an opportunity mindset. This lesson will help your students examine what an opportunity mindset is and the importance of having an opportunity mindset in order to create value ourselves and others. Students will collaborate with their classmates to examine the problems these vacant lots (and boarded up buildings) represent and ideate solutions. Students experience the process of identifying problems, empathizing with the market and ideating meaningful solutions.

### PREPARATION

- Determine the size of the teams (3-4 students is suggested) and whether you or your students will decide who will be on which teams.
- Print one large vacant lot photo per team. (11 x 17 or larger is recommended)
- Place Post-It notes, Sharpies or markers, and vacant lot photos on each table.
- Prepare to incentivize students with Empowered currency when adding value during the design and discussion phases and during the debrief.

### INTRODUCTION

- After teams assemble at their tables, say: "Today and everyday across America from coast to coast, from rural communities to suburbs to inner cities, we walk, pedal and ride by a landscape littered with vacant lots and boarded up storefronts. There is a striking resemblance between these vacant lots and storefronts and the problems facing our communities. Today, you will engage in an activity that asks you to look at some vacant lots and storefronts with a growth mindset."

<b>ACTIVITY TIME</b>	50 Minutes
<b>FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES</b>	
Passion	Responsibility
Win-Win Focus	Sound Judgment
<b>KEY CONCEPTS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Growth (Entrepreneurial) Mindset</li> <li>● Transform</li> <li>● Ownership</li> <li>● Opportunity Costs</li> <li>● Respect</li> </ul>	
<b>MATERIALS NEEDED</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Vacant Lot Intro Video</li> <li>● Vacant Lot Close Video</li> <li>● Vacant Lot Photos</li> <li>● Vacant Lot PowerPoint</li> <li>● Post-It Notes</li> <li>● Sharpies or markers</li> <li>● Empowered Currency - Printed or Virtual</li> </ul>	

### ACTIVITY STEPS

1. As the video is playing, students should think about the following prompts, and be prepared to do the following in their group.
  - a. Be prepared to discuss what you see, hear and feel while watching the video.
  - b. Write down your response to the following question on a Post-It note and place it on the photo: "What is the biggest problem illustrated in the video?"
2. Play the "Vacant Lot Intro" video. (2:54) Give teams 5 minutes to discuss the prompts above.
3. Have teams share out and discuss with the entire class.
4. Give each team 3 minutes to discuss possible solutions to the problem(s) illustrated in their photo. Remind students that it is okay to think both big and small. Not all
5. Give each team 8 minutes to use the Sharpies or markers to illustrate on their photo a solution that will transform the community by creating value for themselves and others.
6. Give each team 1-2 minutes to pitch the following to the class, including:
  - a. How they defined the problem.
  - b. How their solution to the problem will transform the community by creating value for themselves and others.
  - c. **Pro-tip:** After teams pitch their problems and solutions, you may want to encourage additional conversation using a "Yes and" dialogue. As teams share their ideas, allow other teams to provide "Yes and" feedback that builds upon their classmates' ideas.

7. Tell them you are going to show another short video, revisiting some of the sights and sounds they saw in the first video. Tell them to think about the following question as they watch the video and be prepared to discuss within their teams: “How important is mindset when viewing a problem?”
8. Play the “Vacant Lot Close” video. (:48) Step 8. Allow 3 minutes for the students to discuss the question in their teams.
9. Have teams share out what they discussed and have a class discussion on what an opportunity mindset is and the importance of having one.
  - a. An entrepreneurial mindset is seeing potential solution(s) when viewing a problem. Individuals with an entrepreneurial mindset don’t see the vacant lot as an eyesore or as a symbol of the failures of others, but as what the vacant lot could possibly become to create value for their community.
  - b. Entrepreneurial mindset also requires seeing ourselves as being empowered to take action and solve the problem. We have the power to make the change.

## SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITY

Vacant Lot Growth Mindset is a great activity to leverage culturally responsive teaching practices while facilitating. Doing so will allow for deeper discussions and afford the opportunity for students to bring their uniqueness, talents and assets into their learning experience. See the “Vacant Lot Growth Mindset - Student-Centered Support” under Lesson Resources for guiding questions and support.

## ACTIVITY DEBRIEF

### PRINCIPLES + MARKETS

- What Responsibility do we have to help our communities thrive (if any)?
- Why is it important for us to see ourselves as changemakers in our community? To see ourselves as empowered to be a part of the solution.
- Why is it important to consider the needs of the community before generating a solution for the vacant lot?
- How is creating a solution that helps solve the needs of your community demonstrating Passion?
- What challenges did you face or experience when you were working to brainstorm ideas for ways that the vacant lot could be used?
- Who owns the vacant lots (boarded up buildings) you see in your community? If someone owns these buildings, why would they not take better care of them, or create value with them?
- What do you think? Could these buildings just represent a lack of innovation in solving the problem? How important is innovation to your team, as you try to find opportunity in these lots/buildings?
- How are entrepreneurial (growth) mindset and Win-Win Focus related? Can you have an entrepreneurial (growth) mindset without using Win-Win Focus? What would be the market consequences if either were missing?
- Which Foundational Principles do all your teammates believe were practiced in a way that enhanced the quality of the team’s vacant lot design? What evidence do you have that this is an honest analysis?
- Which Foundational Principles do all your teammates believe might have been practiced more consistently that would have improved the team’s vacant lot design? What evidence do you have that this is an honest analysis?
- From the perspective of incentives, why is it sometimes challenging for vacant lots and buildings to become viable, thriving places in our communities?
- How does the concept of markets apply to the vacant lots and buildings you saw in the videos and photographs?
- Sunk costs are a cost that cannot be recovered by any means, including the money, time, effort, or resources. What is the relationship between these lots/buildings and sunk costs? While we can and should learn from the past, why might it be a mistake to base our current decisions on the sunk costs that have been realized in these lots/buildings?
- How can you use market signals or observational research to come up with a profitable solution? What observations have you made as a member of this community that might help you understand how to approach this problem?
- How do markets and value creation relate to the designs your team developed to fill those vacant lots and buildings?
- As you ideated solutions for these lots/buildings, did you consider the opportunity costs? Explain.
- How does the process your team went through and the solution(s) your team came up with demonstrate respect? Does demonstrating respect create value? Explain.

## MINDSET

- How does it make you feel when you see abandoned lots in your town/city? Can you identify any vacant lots, storefronts, or areas that could possibly be used to solve a problem in your community? What ideas do you have to go there?
- What did this activity show you about the value you can create when working as a member of a team?



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