

LEVELED BOOK • R

We're in Business



Written by Elizabeth Strauss
Illustrated by Tad Butler

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A Successful Year

“Okay, let’s get started,” Ms. Maybry said to the Kids Company Leaders Team (KCLT). Kids Company (Kids Co.) was a national program of school companies run by students. The Adams School Kids Co. had 93 members from six grades. The Leaders Team was made up of five students who were elected each year. Ms. Maybry was their advisor.

"It's been a successful year," Ms. Maybry began.

Adams Kids Co. had **exceeded** its goal for the year. The members had built the school garden, and opened a school store, *and* collected coats for homeless people.

"You did so well. I wrote to the Kids Co. state **committee** about your success."

Ms. Maybry explained.



Important News

"I have important news," Ms. Maybry stated.

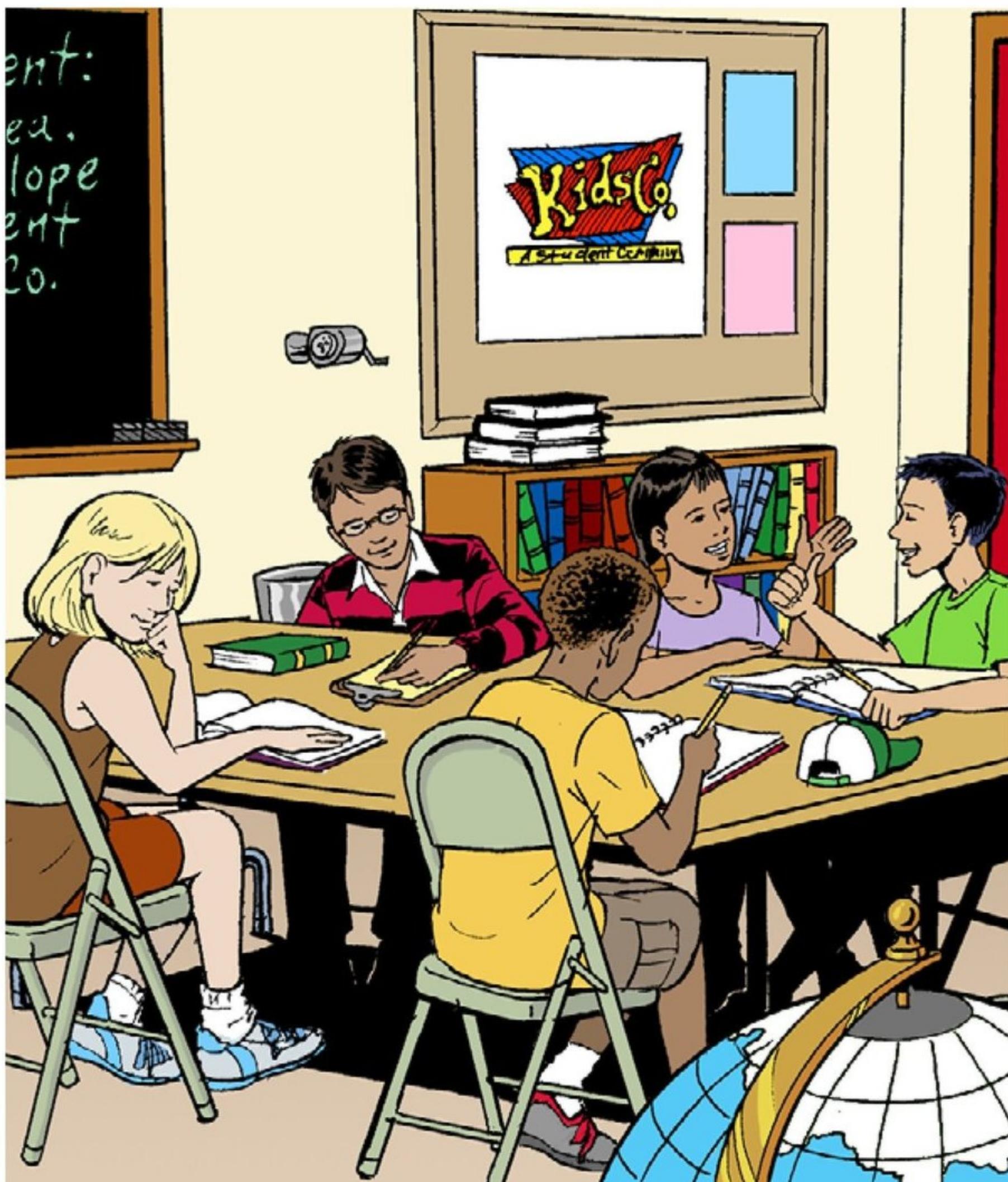
"Cool!" Mandy interrupted, always ready to talk.

"As members of the KCLT, you have been invited to **present** a project to the national Kids Co. committee. If the committee members approve your plan, they will award \$3,000 to fund your project," Ms. Maybry continued.

"Whoa!" said Brian, the math whiz and Kids Co. **finance** guy. "We could really be in business."

"Yes," said Ms. Maybry cautiously, "but you need a plan."





"Look over the **requirements**," Ms. Maybry advised. "Agree on a project to propose."

Jason and Elizabeth began reading and taking notes. Chris and Mandy started talking about how exciting this opportunity was. Brian was figuring out how much time they had to complete the project.

"Let's start a bookmobile for preschoolers," said Brian.

"How about a baby-sitting program to help adults going back to school?" offered Chris.

"Or a music video with a message," Mandy added.

"Wait a minute, you guys!" Elizabeth interrupted. "Aren't we a team? We have to decide together."

"Looks like we're going to have to decide on a way to decide," Jason observed.





The leaders stopped what they were doing. They sat looking at each other not sure what to do next.

Again, Mandy was the first to speak. “How are we ever going to pick a project?” she said.

“We could put all of the projects in a hat and pick one,” Chris suggested.

“That doesn’t seem right,” Jason said. “We were elected to lead. We should be doing more than just throwing ideas in a hat.”

Making a Decision

"What do the rules say?" Mandy asked.

Elizabeth explained that the project had to follow the Kids Co. **mission statement**, and the plan had to show how the money would be used.

Jason pulled out the Kids Co. mission statement. He read:

"Kids Co. **participants** work together to learn and use the ways of business to run successful projects that benefit the school and community in a positive way."





“How will we choose?” said Chris.
“We can’t draw straws or play Rock, Paper,
Scissors.”

“We have to operate like a business,”
Elizabeth agreed.

“How do we do that?” asked Brian.

“We ask the people who elected us,”
suggested Jason.

“What a great idea,” said Mandy. “We’ll
present our ideas to our **stockholders**, like
a real **corporation**.” Mandy could find the
drama in any situation.

The team leaders decided they would present their ideas to all the members of the Adams Kids Co. Then they would ask the members to vote on their project **presentation** ideas. They would present the members' favorite idea to the committee. The kids shared their plan with Ms. Maybry.

"I think that's a great plan," Ms. Maybry said. "It shows leadership to ask the members of the company to participate in your decision."





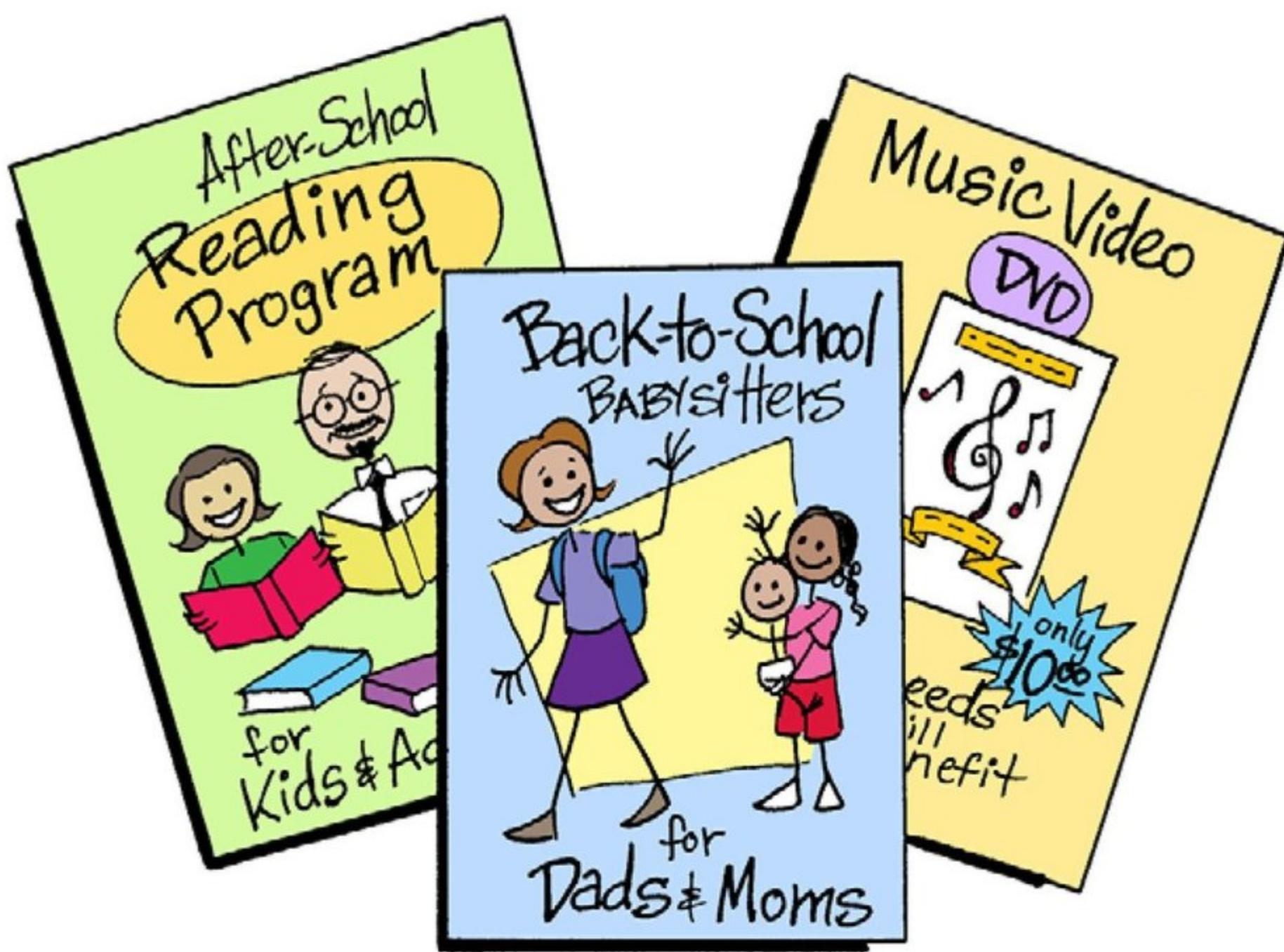
The team divided up the tasks. Brian, Mandy, and Chris began **brainstorming** project ideas. They wanted to start with a list of **potential** ideas and end up with no more than three final ideas to put on the **ballot**. They had a lot of discussing to do.

Elizabeth and Jason would check that each idea supported the Kids Co. mission statement as they put together the information for the presentation.

Mandy and Chris began preparing their presentation to the Adams Kids Co. members. First, they would review last year's successes. Then, they would read the Kids Co. mission statement and tell the club members about the invitation they had received from the Kids Co. state committee. At the end of their presentation, they would talk about the **proposed** ideas and pass out ballots for **voting**.

Brian was preparing a letter inviting all of the members to meet after school on the following Monday. After that, he would design the ballots using a computer program.





By Thursday afternoon, the list of projects was complete. The entire KCLT agreed that the three projects were supported by the Kids Co. mission statement and were good enough to present at the club meeting. The ballot was complete. The projects were:

- An after-school reading program for kids and grown-ups.
- A music video for sale to promote the school tutoring program.
- A baby-sitting program for the kids of adults who are going back to school.

The Company Meeting

The day of the meeting arrived. The members of the KCLT dressed in their most business-like clothes. The club met in the school multi-purpose room.

"Are you guys ready?" Brian asked Mandy and Chris.

Mandy nodded her head. Brian thought it was the first time he saw Mandy answer without words.

Mandy and Chris gave their presentation. The whole club applauded. The students were glad to be included in the decision-making process. The ballots were passed out.





Elizabeth collected the ballots and most of the club stayed to see which project would be voted the favorite. As it turned out, the after-school reading program won by a landslide.

"I guess everyone agreed that our school could use the money to buy students more books," Brian said.

"Or maybe they thought the music video wouldn't sell," Mandy suggested.

"Maybe they thought helping parents needing baby-sitting would be too hard for students to organize," said Chris.

The Plan

“Whatever they thought,” Brian said, “we’d better get to work. We have a project. Now we need a good **business plan.**”

But the plan didn’t take long, because Brian had been working on all three plans all along. He sat with the Leaders Team and Ms. Maybry to show them how they might spend the \$3,000 to buy books, supplies, and advertising for the program.

“Brian,” said Mandy, “you are the financial expert—you should present the plan.”

“Thanks, but I get so nervous when I talk to a group,” Brian said. “You and Chris can present to the committee. You two are the talking experts. No question.” And everyone laughed.



Are you interested in starting your own business?

It all starts with a good idea and some planning. First, you'll need to write a business plan.

- ① Develop a mission statement.** Start by writing a sentence or two that outlines the main goal or purpose of your business. (Make sure your goal is realistic.)
- ② Determine the need for your product or service.** Talk to friends, family, and neighbors. Find out if they would pay for your product or service and how much they would be willing to spend.
- ③ Decide what you will name your business.**
- ④ Find out what it will cost to start and operate your business.** Determine how much money you will need to run your business and how you will raise the money.
- ⑤ Determine how you will operate the business** while attending school, playing sports, etc.
- ⑥ Decide how you will advertise.** How will you let people know about your new service or product?

Glossary

ballot (<i>n.</i>)	a printed paper used in voting (p. 13)
brainstorming (<i>v.</i>)	developing ideas (p. 13)
business plan (<i>n.</i>)	an outline for how to start a business (p. 18)
committee (<i>n.</i>)	a group of people who consider or decide on a course of action (p. 5)
corporation (<i>n.</i>)	a business organization with specific business powers and responsibilities (p. 11)
exceeded (<i>v.</i>)	went beyond (p. 5)
finance (<i>n.</i>)	the business of managing money (p. 6)
mission statement (<i>n.</i>)	a sentence that outlines the goals of a company or organization (p. 10)
participants (<i>n.</i>)	people who take part in an event or activity (p. 10)
potential (<i>adj.</i>)	possible (p. 13)
present (<i>v.</i>)	to give something to somebody (p. 6)
presentation (<i>n.</i>)	a performance or demonstration put on before an audience (p. 12)
proposed (<i>adj.</i>)	offered or suggested (p. 14)
requirements (<i>n.</i>)	necessary items (p. 7)
stockholders (<i>n.</i>)	people who own part of a company (p. 11)
voting (<i>v.</i>)	expressing a choice (p. 14)

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