

Teacher Overview

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 for ourselves and others.

Students will collaborate with their classmates to examine the problems these vacant lots represent and ideate solutions. Student experience the process of identifying problems, empathizing with the market and ideating meaningful solutions.

When to Use This Lesson

This lesson can easily be plugged in at any time during the course. Using this lesson early in your program does allow you to address the importance of having an opportunity mindset so you can continue the conversation throughout the duration of your program.

Time



*Depends on class size.

BEFORE CLASS PREPARATION

- > Print one large vacant lot photo per small group. (11 x 17 or larger recommended)
- > Place Post-It notes, Sharpies or markers on table with one of the vacant lot photos.
- > Prepare to incentivize students with YE dollars for adding value to the class discussion.
- > Decide how students will be grouped for this activity.

MATERIALS

- > Vacant Lot Videos
 - Vacant Lot Intro Video (2:54)
 - Vacant Lot Close Video (:48)
- > Vacant Lot Photos
- > Vacant Lot PowerPoint
- > YE Dollars
- > Post-It Notes
- > Sharpies or markers

KEY TERMS

- > Opportunity Mindset
- > Transform

FOUNDATIONAL VALUES

- > Responsibility
- > Passion
- > Sound Judgment
- > Win-Win Focus

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- > PE LO1, PE LO3, PE LO4, PE LO6, I LO1, I LO2, I LO3, I LO4

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ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION

- > After placing students in small groups (groups of four is recommended), 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."
- > Say: "Today, you will engage in an activity that asks you to look at these vacant lots and storefronts with an opportunity mindset."

ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS

- > Tell students you are going to show them a short video that shows the world through the eyes of other young people like themselves.
 - As the video is playing, students should think about the following questions and be prepared to do the following in their group.
 1. Be prepared to discuss what you see, hear and feel while watching the video.
 2. 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?"
 - Play the "Vacant Lot Intro" video. (2:54)
- > Give students 5 minutes to discuss in their groups #1 and #2 above.
- > Have groups share out and discuss with the class.
- > Give each group 3 minutes to discuss possible solutions to the problem(s) illustrated in their photo.
- > Give each group 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.
- > Give each group 1-2 minutes to pitch the following to the class, including:
 - How they defined the problem.
 - How their solution to the problem will transform the community by creating value for themselves and others.
 - **Protip:** After students pitch their group's problem and solution, you may want to have additional conversation with students about their ideas using a "Yes and" dialogue. As groups share their ideas, allow other groups to provide "Yes and" feedback and build upon the ideas of their classmates.
- > Tell them you are going to show them 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 small group: "How important is mindset when viewing a problem?"
 - Play the "Vacant Lot Close" video. (:48)
- > Allow 3 minutes for the students to discuss the question in their groups.
- > Have groups share out what they discussed and have a class discussion on what an opportunity mindset is and the importance of having an opportunity mindset.
 - An opportunity mindset is seeing the potential solution(s) when viewing a problem. Individuals with an opportunity mindset don't see the vacant lot as only 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.
 - Opportunity mindset also requires seeing ourselves as being empowered to take action and solve the problem. We have the power to make the change.

ACTIVITY DEBRIEF

- > How does it make you feel when you see abandoned lots in your own 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 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?
- > Why is it important to remember to use Sound Judgment when brainstorming solutions?
- > How are opportunity mindset and Win-Win Focus related? Can you have an opportunity mindset without using Win-Win Focus?

SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITY

- > Vacant Lot Opportunity 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 Opportunity Mindset - Student-Centered Support"](#) under Lesson Resources for guiding questions and support.

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