



## EDUCATOR GUIDE

# Discover Venture Valley

*Discover Venture Valley* offers interactive and real-life learning experiences to help students in grades 6–12 explore the world of entrepreneurship and consider ways in which they might bring a business idea to life.

### How do students access the game?

*Venture Valley* is available through the [Apple App Store](#), [Google Play](#), and [Steam](#).

## ABOUT THE VIDEO SERIES

Throughout “*Practice Makes Profit*,” a [three-part video Topic Series](#), students dive into entrepreneurship and what it takes to start and successfully operate a business. They will be introduced to a wide range of topics, including starting a business, how data can be used to inform an entrepreneur’s decisions, and the different ways entrepreneurs earn income through their businesses. The series complements the engaging [Venture Valley](#) video game, which challenges students to create and operate businesses in a simulated environment.

## USING THE VIDEOS IN YOUR CLASSROOM

The videos in this three-part Topic Series can be used in a variety of ways depending on the needs of your students and device access. They were developed with flexibility in mind, and can be used in any order, or independently. Additionally, while the games are a great companion to the game, playing the game is not a prerequisite for using the videos in your class. This guide provides additional resources for two approaches to using the videos.

- **Watch and Discuss:** Watch one or more of the videos in class or assign students to watch independently. Invite students to participate in a follow-up discussion and/or written assignment. Use the discussion and research questions provided for each video or create your own. The prompts encourage a variety of writing styles, including making arguments and supporting claims, producing informative/explanatory text, and composing narratives.
- **Classroom Activity:** Each video has an accompanying classroom activity that should be completed in 45–60 minutes. The video is an integral part of each activity which also includes objectives, standards, key vocabulary, and detailed implementation strategies. Instruction is divided into the following sections:
  - **Engage:** An opening activity or discussion captures students’ interest in the topic.
  - **Explore:** Students watch the video and delve into the entrepreneurial concepts using a variety of instructional techniques.
  - **Extend:** Discover additional opportunities to further student understanding and make connections to other disciplines.
- **Venture Valley Connect:** For students who have played [Venture Valley](#), each classroom activity includes a capture sheet with opportunities for students to make connections between the game and entrepreneurial concepts. These capture sheets can be used with or without fully implementing the classroom activity.



## VIDEO & ACTIVITY OVERVIEWS

### Video 1: *Entrepreneurship Today: One Idea | Two Very Different Businesses*

#### Overview

*How do entrepreneurs develop their business ideas?*

In [this video](#), students learn how two entrepreneurs take very different approaches to a similar business idea. The first entrepreneur starts a traditional dog-walking business and expands it with additional locations and employees. The second finds limited success with his first concept and pivots to a less traditional, but still successful, business model.

#### Entrepreneurship Concepts

- Business formation
- Risk-taking
- Product/service differentiation
- Start-up costs

#### Discussion Questions/Writing Prompts

- The video featured two entrepreneurs with very different business approaches. Who do you think is more likely to be successful in the long run: Candice with her traditional dog-walking service or Joey with his social media fame?
- Have you ever considered starting your own business? If so, what product or service would you provide?
- What opportunities do you see in our community to market a new product or service? What problem(s) would your product or service help to solve?
- What interest or passion do you have that could lead to an entrepreneurial venture in the future?

#### Research Questions

- Who is the entrepreneur behind one of your favorite brands? Consider the products and services you or your family use on a regular basis. Conduct research to find out who started the business, including when, where, and how the business was established.
- Who are the entrepreneurs in our local community? Identify and interview a local entrepreneur. Find out how they got their start and what challenges they encountered along the way.

#### Venture Valley Connections

- Select a business you have encountered in [Venture Valley](#). What products or services do they offer? What background, experiences, or interests might a person have that opens this business?
- Explore <https://venturevalleygame.com/build-your-business/>. What business would you add to those offered in the game? How would the business be different from others in the game? What initial products or services would you offer? As players progress in the game, they have the ability to upgrade the business with additional products or services. How could a user expand the business you are suggesting as they move ahead in the game?



### Associated Classroom Activity: Make the Pitch

In [this activity](#), students begin by brainstorming a list of businesses in a short amount of time. After watching the *Entrepreneurship Today* video, they discover that businesses can take different forms. In small groups, they use a business springboard concept to consider different businesses a person could start and then narrow their list to one business idea. As a group, they prepare a short pitch to describe the business to would-be investors. As other groups pitch their ideas, students contemplate which they would choose to invest \$5,000 in seed capital. Finally, students discuss the characteristics they believe entrepreneurs should possess in order to be successful. The lesson is correlated to the following national standards:

#### Correlation to National Standards

- Common Core Standards for English Language Arts: Writing
- National Standards for Financial Literacy
- National Standards for Business Education

## Video 2: *Boom or Bust: The Power of Being Informed*

### Overview

*What happens when entrepreneurs use data to power their decisions?*

In [this video](#), students meet two young entrepreneurs, Ethan and Isabella, who are both running ads to promote their upcoming food truck specials. While Ethan bases his decisions on hunches and personal preferences, Isabella uses data from multiple sources to inform her decisions. Knowing that a spice-eating challenge was trending on social media led her to select a pizza featuring spicy pepperoni—an ingredient that she knew she could purchase at a lower cost than some alternatives. Isabella's review of past sales also showed that pepperoni-based slices were a top seller. In the end, her analysis pays off with record sales and profits. Meanwhile, Ethan's special on clam pizza was a flop.

### Entrepreneurship Concepts

- Cost of goods and services
- Marketing
- Profit
- Sales

### Discussion Questions/Writing Prompts

- What information did Isabella use when selecting the product she would place on sale and advertise?
- What products or services have you seen advertised recently? Where did you see the advertisement? Did they make you want to purchase the product or service?
- What do you think about when you see an item on sale at a store or a special offered online? Does an item being on sale encourage you to purchase it?



- How do you think businesses decide which products to advertise and when? Can you think of certain items that seem to be advertised more than others?
- Online ads are often “served up” to users based on websites they have visited, searches they have conducted, and their physical location. How does this information help businesses target their ads to the customers they hope to reach? Is it fair to consumers to see ads based on other data on their devices?
- An entrepreneur has decided to create an ad to market one of their company’s products. Which should they promote and why: an already popular product or one that is less well known? What are the pros and cons of each decision?
- Isabella used information about past sales and the costs of the ingredients when deciding to advertise her spicy pepperoni pizza. How did this information drive her decision?

### Research Questions

- Imagine you recently started your own business. You are deciding how much money you should budget for marketing and how that money will eventually be spent. Research typical marketing expenses and create a prioritized list of potential expenses.
- Think of a product or service you use and create a proposal for an ad campaign. Make sure you find out what company is behind the product or service. Who do you think is their target customer, i.e. the person they are hoping will purchase the product or service? Consider any specific characteristics of the target customer when developing your proposal.
- Many businesses send their products to online “influencers”—YouTubers and others with large followings on social media—in hopes that they will use them and share them with their followers. Select a product or service to market. What would you look for in an influencer to promote it? Consider at least four influencers and explain what each could offer in marketing the product or service you selected. If you could only select one, which would it be and why?
- Most new entrepreneurs have to do their own market research to start. One source of data for new businesses is Google. Explore [Google Trends](#). Start with some of the examples and then search for terms that interest you. How could this resource and the data it provides be useful to a new business? What other data sources can you find? Consider [these sources](#) from the Small Business Administration.

### Venture Valley Connections

- Information plays a big role in [Venture Valley](#). You can easily view data on sales, profit, pricing, and more. As you progress in the game, you can view feedback from customer reviews as well. How did you use this information while playing the game? What decisions did you make as a result of this information?
- Take a screenshot of one of the data dashboards you can view within the game for each business. Examples include the revenue summary, overhead expenses, products/sales, market and customer base, and profit and loss (P&L) details. Explain the information that is provided on the screen and describe how a player can use it to make adjustments during the game.

### **Associated Classroom Activity: Putting the “Inform” in Information**

In [this activity](#), students begin by watching and discussing an animated video about entrepreneurs using information to make business decisions. In small groups, students choose examples of data from several categories and consider how the information might be used in a real-world setting. Then, they choose one of these examples and offer recommendations about how this data could be visually represented. Students present and discuss their work. Options are provided for continuing the lesson with the use of [Venture Valley](#) and/or other extensions possibilities. The lesson is correlated to the following national standards:

#### **Correlation to National Standards:**

- Common Core Standards for Mathematics
- Common Core Standards for English Language Arts: Writing
- National Standards for Business Education

## **Video 3: When Business Takes Off or Doesn't: An Entrepreneurs Decision to Pivot**

### **Overview**

*What happens when a business doesn't do as well as expected?*

In [this video](#), students discover that two entrepreneurs have a similar idea: delivering groceries via drone. Morgan takes a “go big or go home” approach with very large drones that are capable of delivering large loads. Sawyer, on the other hand, wants customers to see many small drones carrying loads all over town. The problem: Sawyer's smaller drones have a hard time keeping up with the demands of large loads. Soon, Morgan's business is booming while Sawyer's is struggling to stay afloat. Sawyer chooses to pivot, changing how the company markets its services. Instead of delivering full loads of groceries, the company will now focus on making quick deliveries of smaller items. Both business models end up being a success.

### **Entrepreneurship Concepts**

- Competition
- Market share
- Product/service provided
- Pivot

### **Discussion Questions/Writing Prompts**

- The video features two businesses that begin as competitors. Morgan's approach ends up being better than Sawyer's, however. What competing businesses can you name? Do they offer similar products or services and market them to the same customer base? How does each one differentiate itself to gain customers?
- If you were Sawyer, what other ideas could you have pursued to compete with Morgan?



- There's a quote by a singer named Jimmy Dean that says, "I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination." How does this quote apply to the situation in the video? To business in general?
- Have you ever faced a challenge and needed to make a change in order to meet your goal? What was it and what did you do?

### Research Questions

- Some businesses make changes that work out well. Some end up a disaster. Investigate what happened when Coca-Cola changed its formula and introduced New Coke in 1985. Can you locate another example of a business pivot that didn't end up working out as planned?
- At the end of the video, Sawyer considers whether or not to sell the business to Morgan. Locate an example of a company buying another one. What happened next—both for the company that purchased it and the entrepreneur(s) that sold. One famous example is Facebook buying Instagram. What others can you find?

### Venture Valley Connections

- Competition is the name of the game in [Venture Valley](#) as you go head to head against other entrepreneurs running similar businesses. How can you differentiate your business and get ahead of the competition?
- As you gain experience playing [Venture Valley](#) you have the ability to expand and grow your businesses. Select one of these decisions and outline at least three pros and three cons of the decision to expand.

### Associated Classroom Activity: *To Pivot or Not to Pivot?*

In [this activity](#), students begin by matching modern businesses to their previous product or service and discover how many pivoted to new ideas over time. A scenario based on a video game company is presented and students are asked which path the company should take: stay the course with its current game, expand the game, create a new game, or sell it and take the profits. In small groups, students consider the company's decision from various points of view. Each team selects one member to represent them in a fishbowl discussion in which participants advocate for their perspective. After the discussion, students reconsider their personal opinion about what the company should do. Options are provided for continuing the lesson with the use of *Venture Valley* or other extension possibilities.

The lesson is correlated to the following national standards:

#### Correlation to National Standards:

- Common Core Standards for English Language Arts: Speaking and Listening
- National Standards for Business Education: Entrepreneurship



## PLAYING VENTURE VALLEY WITH STUDENTS

[Venture Valley](#) is a competitive business strategy video game designed to encourage young people to explore the world of entrepreneurship and business expansion. The *Discover Venture Valley* resources can be used in conjunction with the game or independently. Learn more about the game and how to use it with students below and on the *Venture Valley* website.

### How can students play *Venture Valley*?

The answer to this question will depend heavily on students' access to devices. In a one-to-one environment, students can access the game from individual devices and play at their own speed. If devices are limited, consider playing as a class with the game displayed for all students. Allow students to take turns at the "controls" of the game and pause frequently for the class to provide input into gameplay decisions.

### Should educators play the game first?

Absolutely. As with any educational content, educators should preview the game and become familiar with the content. The [Venture Valley](#) website offers tutorials and other support for those who are new to the game. Not an experienced gamer? Consider asking a colleague, friend, or family member to help you get the hang of *Venture Valley* before using it with students.

### What other resources are available from *Venture Valley*?

In addition to the resources in *Discover Venture Valley*, the *Venture Valley* website offers background information on the [game](#) and [characters](#), assistance getting started [playing the game](#), and a [glossary](#) that can be useful in explaining unfamiliar terms.

### How long does it take to play the game?

Great question! The answer is: it's up to you! You can play for a short period of time or extend gameplay for longer. As players persist in the game, additional game maps can be unlocked. Consider introducing students to the game in class and encouraging them to play more on their own. Or, assign students to complete specific aspects of the game and then compare notes and/or use the **Venture Valley Connect** capture sheet in each classroom activity to engage in a class discussion.

### Is *Venture Valley* a solo game or is it played in groups?

*Venture Valley* has various game modes. Players can choose to play in solo or multiplayer mode. Team play is also encouraged to have students collaborate on best practice and strategy for game play. The multiplayer mode is competitive in nature. The game is also esports enabled.

### Who created the game?

*Venture Valley* is a project of [The Singleton Foundation of Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurship](#), a non-profit with the mission of inspiring entrepreneurship and making financial competence a reality for everyone. In addition to *Venture Valley*, the foundation offers educational content directed at GenZ, millennials and young adults through [Million Stories Media](#).