

Lessons in Business

Warning: This worksheet contains a video which includes sensitive topics such as sex, drugs, and prison which may be uncomfortable or offensive for some people. If these topics are not suitable for you, please tell your teacher.



1. Read the dialogue and answer the following questions.

Marco: Hey, Luana, have you thought any more about that business plan you were working on?

Luana: Yeah, I've been doing some research and I think I have a solid idea. But I'm struggling with putting it all together.

Marco: Have you considered reaching out to a business coach or mentor for some guidance?

Luana: I have, but I'm not sure if it's worth the investment. I'm trying to save as much money as possible.

Marco: I understand, but sometimes you have to spend money to make money. A business coach could help you avoid costly mistakes and set you on the right path.

Luana: That's a good point. I guess I just don't know where to start.

Marco: Well, first you need to figure out your target market and competition. Then, you can start developing your product or service and creating a marketing strategy.

Luana: I've been working on those things, but I'm still not sure if it's enough.

Marco: It's important to remember that creating a business plan is an ongoing process. You can always refine and improve it as you go.

Luana: That's true. I just feel like there's so much I don't know.

Marco: That's where a business coach or mentor can really help. They can provide you with valuable insights and advice, and help you avoid common pitfalls.

Luana: Okay, you've convinced me. I'm going to start looking for a business coach.

Marco: That's great to hear. Remember, investing in your own education and skills is never a waste of money.



1. What is the main topic of the dialogue?
2. What is Luana struggling with?
3. Why does Luana hesitate to hire a business coach?
4. What are some important steps to consider when creating a business plan?
5. Why does Marco recommend seeking the help of a business coach?

Gerunds and Infinitives

A *gerund* is a verb form that ends in "-ing" and functions as a noun.

For example, "Working hard is important in a professional environment."

In this sentence, "working" is a gerund that functions as the subject of the sentence. *Gerunds* are often used to talk about activities or actions.

An *infinitive* is "to verb" and also functions as a noun.

For example, "To succeed in business, you need to be able to communicate effectively."

In this sentence, "to succeed" is an infinitive that functions as the subject of the sentence. Infinitives are often used to talk about goals, purposes, or intentions.



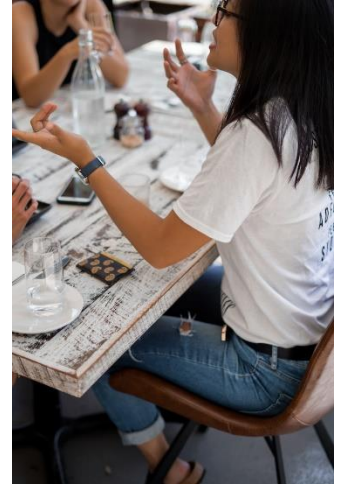
2. Fill in the blanks with the gerund or infinitive form.

1. Our company is planning _____ (feature) a new product line at the trade show next month.
2. I'm sorry, but I'm not sure I'm capable of _____ (figure out) this problem on my own.
3. We need to focus on _____ (learn) new skills to stay competitive in today's market.
4. The CEO tends _____ (pay) a higher bonus to employees who meet their sales targets.
5. The marketing team is responsible for _____ (promote) our brand to potential customers.
6. The finance department is in charge of _____ (clean) up the company's financial records.
7. The HR department is responsible for _____ (nurture) a positive work environment for employees.
8. I offered _____ (spend) some time with our new clients next week.
9. I don't want _____ (leave) the company, but I feel it's time to pursue other opportunities.
10. We need someone who manages _____ (work) in a fast paced environment.



3. Discuss the following with your partner

1. What do you think are some of the most important skills or traits for success in business?
2. How could the traits from question 1 be applicable to life in prison?
3. What business traits would be useful in prison?
4. What challenges might someone transitioning from prison to the outside world have? What about someone entering prison from the outside world?
5. What do you think are some of the biggest misconceptions people have about life in prison?
6. What skills do you think someone might learn in prison that could be applied to the business world?



4. Match the vocabulary and phrases with their definitions.

1. dope game	<i>f</i>
2. fly straight	
3. teeming	
4. promotional incentives	
5. focus-group testing	
6. territorial expansion	
7. reliving the glory days	
8. marked up	
9. risk-reward trade-off	
10. ex-offenders	
11. re-offend	
12. hustle	

- a. People who have been released from prison after serving a sentence
- b. Rewards offered to encourage people to buy a product or a service.
- c. To commit a crime again after being released from prison
- d. Full of
- e. Increasing the area or market that business operates in
- f. A slang term for the illegal drug trade.
- g. Testing a product or a services with a group of people to get feedback.
- h. A slang term referring to thinking/reminiscing about past success
- i. Ways to make money, often through unconventional or illegal means
- j. Increased in price
- k. The idea that a potential reward should be weighed against the risk involved
- l. A slang term referring to living a law-abiding life.



5. Discuss the following questions in a group or with your partner.

1. Can you explain the concept of the *dope game*? How is it similar to or different from other businesses? Is it an issue in your country?
2. How do companies use *promotional incentives* to attract customers? Can you think of an example?
3. How do companies use *focus group testing* it to improve their products or services?
4. Can you think of a company or brand that has successfully *expanded its territory*?
5. Can you think of a product or service that you have seen *marked up* significantly?
6. Why do you think many *ex-offenders re-offend* within five years of leaving prison? What can be done to try to reduce the *re-offending* rate?



6. You are going to watch a video called *Lessons in business... from prison*. Before watching the video discuss the following question.

1. What do you think is meant by the title of the talk?



7. Watch the video *Lesson in business... from prison* and answer the following.

1. Who is B.J. and what was his vision for the future?

.....

.....

2. What business concepts did the inmates in prison talk about that were similar to those taught in a first-year MBA class?

.....

.....

3. How do prisoners pay for their own life in prison and why is it hard?

.....

.....

4. What are some of the hustles prisoners use to survive in prison?

.....

.....



Discuss the following with your partner.

1. What is the *shared value* approach that Porter describes?
2. Give an example of a company that has implemented this approach and what impact it had.
3. What are some of the challenges and criticisms of this approach?
4. Do you agree with Porter that businesses can be a force for social good? Why or why not?
5. Can you think of any other examples of businesses contributing to social progress?
6. On the other hand, can you think of any high-profile cases of entrepreneurs who have been sentenced to prison for white-collar crimes like fraud or embezzlement? What were the circumstances?





9. Extra task: Practice more gerund and infinitives.

1. The company is committed to _____ (help) local communities through charitable donations.
2. The IT department is responsible for _____ (run) our company's computer systems smoothly.
3. The logistics team is seeking _____ (buy) goods Japan.
4. The CEO is interested in _____ (merge) with a similar company to expand our market share.
5. The company is hoping _____ (make) a profit, even during difficult economic times.
6. The legal department strives _____ (fight) against any form of discrimination in the workplace.
7. The company has promised _____ (learn) from its mistakes.
8. The pilot is capable of _____ (fly) the plane in all kinds of weather conditions.