PITCH FOR PROGESS

A Learning Activity for 6-8

Overview

McCain Pitch for Progress invites learners to step into the role of young innovators shaping the future of food and farming. Through this experience, learners explore how McCain Foods develops new products, integrates advanced technology, and supports sustainable agricultural practices. They also examine real challenges affecting the food manufacturing and farming industry today. Learners will choose one of three topics to pitch:

- **Product Development:** Propose a new potato product.
- **Technology Innovation:** Propose a new technology or process.
- **Sustainability Solution:** Propose an advancement in sustainable practices.

Working individually or in teams, learners identify a specific problem, develop an original solution, and prepare a compelling pitch, with the option to include a prototype. This experience blends literacy through research, writing, and presentation; science and technology connected to food systems and sustainability; entrepreneurial thinking; creativity and innovation; critical thinking and problem-solving; and real-world industry innovation. Inspired by the work of McCain Foods, it empowers learners to explore meaningful ways to improve farming practices and food manufacturing.

NB Curricular Connections

6-8 Learning Areas
English Language Arts: ○ *Strand:* Interactions – *Big Idea:* Interactions – Skill Descriptors: Summarize and present content to communicate facts, ideas, and opinions.
Science: ○ Strand: Learning & Living Sustainably - Skill Descriptor: Apply scientific and technological knowledge and an understanding of sustainable practices responsibly.
Technology: ○ *Strand:* Design Thinking Skills – *Big Idea:* Problem Solving – *Skill Descriptor:* Plan, execute (construct) and present a project within given parameters and with assistance
Personal Wellness: ○ *Strand:* Career Connected Learning – *Big Idea:* Experiencing Potential Career Pathways – *Skill Descriptor:* Engage in frequent and ongoing career-connected experiential learning to learn about preferred career pathways and develop personal competencies.

What You'll Need

Materials Needed:

- Paper, pencils, or digital note-taking tools
- Sticky notes or index cards for brainstorming
- Brainstorming and pitch graphic organizers
- Options for pitches (Google Slides, PowerPoint, Canva, poster board, Bristol board, video recording tools)
- Materials for prototype (optional)

Instructions

Introduction

Explain to learners that they will explore the challenges and innovations that are shaping the future of food products, technology, and sustainable practices. Over the course of this experience, they will choose a focus area, identify a problem, and then create an original solution with the option of a prototype.

Step 1: Exploring Product Development

Have learners think/pair/share to discuss how food has evolved. You've likely noticed new snacks and products appearing all the time, shaped by trends, consumer preferences, and advances in technology. Let's explore how and why these changes happen:

Pre-Video Discussion Questions:

- What new snacks or foods do you enjoy?
- How do you think food products changed over the past fifty years?
- Why do you think companies keep inventing new foods? What are they trying to achieve?

After this quick discussion, watch the following video from an industry expert from McCain, who will explain how they approach product development. Ask learners to listen for examples of challenges, innovations, or solutions mentioned by the expert.

Post-Video Discussion Questions:

- How does McCain develop new products from the initial idea to when they're on the shelf?
- What challenges does the food industry face in meeting consumer demands?
- What role do innovation and technology play in food production?
- Lastly, what do you imagine food production will look like in the future?

Step 2: Exploring Technology Innovation

Have learners think/pair/share and dive deeper into how technology and innovation shape the food industry.

Pre-Video Discussion Questions:

- What kinds of technology or innovations can be used to grow or manufacture food?
- How might science and technology be helping create new farming methods or food products?

Following the discussion, watch the following video from an industry expert from McCain, who will talk about the current technologies and innovations McCain uses in farming and food production.

Post-Video Discussion Questions:

- What farming technologies and innovative manufacturing processes does McCain use today?
- How does McCain develop and implement new technologies and innovations?
- Can you identify examples of McCain's latest technologies and innovations, and what impact they have had on food production?

Step 3: Exploring Sustainability Solutions

In this final step, have learners think/pair/share about sustainability in agriculture.

Pre-Video Discussion Questions:

- What farming practices help protect the environment?
- How might climate change affect the way farmers grow food?
- Why is sustainability important for food companies and farmers?

After our discussion, watch the following video from an industry expert from McCain, who will talk about their sustainable farming practices.

Post-Video Discussion Questions:

- What sustainable farming practices does McCain use?
- How does climate change create challenges for sustainable farming?
- Can you think of examples of sustainable practices at McCain, and how do they impact food production?

Step 4: Challenges and Solutions

Create three sections on separate chart papers with the following headings:

- **Product Development**
- **Technology Innovation**
- **Sustainability Solutions**

Identify Challenges / Needs

1. Write down challenges or industry needs and place them in the appropriate category.
2. Explain your reasoning:
    - Why is this a challenge/need?
    - How could we solve this challenge/need?

Brainstorm Solutions

After discussing challenges and industry needs, shift learners' focus to solutions/ideas. If learners need support generating ideas, encourage them to think about problems they notice in everyday life related to food, farming, or the environment.

1. Have learners record all potential ideas on their brainstorming graphic organizer. Learners may complete this individually or in small groups. Learners can capture all potential ideas in a format that works best for them, such as the graphic organizer, sketches, diagrams, written notes, or voice recordings.
2. Learners may revisit challenges to brainstorm solutions and ideas.
3. Explain your reasoning:
    - How does this solution address the problem?
    - Why do you think it could work?

Learners who need support may begin by completing prompts such as:
"A technology that could help farmers is..."

Step 5: Plan the Pitch

Invite learners to review solutions and ideas they have been exploring throughout the experience.

They may work individually or in small teams (2–4 learners).

Ask them to consider:

- Which challenge feels most meaningful or interesting?
- Which solution has the strongest potential for impact?
- Which idea could realistically be implemented?

Learners choose *one pathway*:

- **Product Development**
- **Technology Innovation**
- **Sustainability Solution**

Graphic Organizer

Provide each learner or team with the McCain's Pitch for Progress Graphic Organizer:

1. Title
2. Sketch
3. What Problem Does It Solve?
4. What Is Your Idea?
5. Who Benefits and How?
6. How Does It Work?

The organizer guides learners to structure their pitch. Learners may refer to earlier brainstorming notes for inspiration.

Title/Name

- Create a professional, meaningful, and memorable name.

Sketch

- Learners sketch their idea.

What Problem Does It Solve?

- Clearly define the specific challenge.
- Who is affected and why does it matter?

What Is Your Idea?

- Describe the solution in detail.
- Include key features, materials, or steps.
- Explain why the idea is effective and how it directly addresses the problem.

Who Benefits and How?

- Identify at least three stakeholders: farmers, consumers, the company, local communities, or the environment.
- Explain the positive impact for each group.

How Does It Work?

- Step-by-step explanation of the process or function.
- Include diagrams, flowcharts, or sketches to support the explanation.

Step 6: Creating the Pitch

Once the graphic organizer is complete, learners use it to prepare a 2-minute pitch. Learners prepare a 2-minute pitch explaining the problem, their solution, and the impact of their idea.

Suggestions for Pitches

Learners are encouraged to present their ideas in a way that best showcases their creativity and solution. Possible formats include:

- Poster boards or Bristol boards – Visually highlight the problem, solution, and key details.
- Digital presentations – Use tools like Canva, PowerPoint, Google Slides, or Prezi.
- Videos – Produce a short video to explain your solution creatively.
- Prototypes or models – Build a physical or digital model to demonstrate your idea in action. This can also be created to support the pitches above.

Make Meaning Activity

Please see the attached Make Meaning document (and slide) for several choices on how you and your learners can reflect upon today's activity. This is an important step in the experiential learning cycle.

Extension Activities

Prototype Enhancement

- Refine or expand your prototype with additional features or improved functionality. Test your idea in a small experiment or simulation to see how it performs.

Market Research

- Conduct a mini-survey to gather opinions on your product, technology, or sustainability solution. Analyze data to see how your idea could meet real consumer needs.

Community Connection

- Present ideas to local farmers, sustainability groups, or community organizations. Explore how real-world professionals tackle similar challenges.