



Help Your Students Build Upon Their Ideas With an Idea Canvas

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What is an Idea Canvas?

An idea canvas is a diagram that is used to design the strategy needed to execute an idea.

There are nine interdependent sections on a typical idea canvas. In each section, there is space to describe a different factor that affects how the idea could be developed and deployed.

The concept of an idea canvas has its roots in the work of Alexander Osterwalder and Ives Pigneur. These academics turned entrepreneurs developed the "Business Model Canvas," which has become an essential tool for entrepreneurs bringing a new idea to market.

Why is it Valuable?

- It is a highly visual, easy to use road map for how to improve and implement an idea.
- It provides structure and direction without being overly prescriptive. This is because it is organized around a series of fluid questions and relationships rather than rote instructions.
- It focuses attention on the influence of the context in which the idea will be viewed and used.
- It encourages discussion around the multiple forms of value offered by the idea.

VIDEO RESOURCE

[Click here](#) to see the Business Model Canvas explained in 2 minutes.

Idea Canvases in Your Classroom

Use an idea canvas to structure brainstorming sessions.

- This works particularly well in the early stages of group projects.
- Have students fill in a blank canvas, or use it to structure a discussion.

Post a copy of an idea canvas in your class.

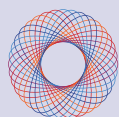
- Use it as a reference point when leading class discussions - do the ideas raised in the discussion consider the larger context outlined by an idea canvas?

Work with your students to customize an idea canvas.

- What new ways of organizing ideas can you come up with as a group?
- Ask your students to consider the importance of how they generate ideas.

Plan one of your lessons using an idea canvas.

- Use this exercise to carefully consider the different forms of value you are offering your students.
- What new insights can you arrive at using this approach?



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Sample Idea Canvas

Provide students with a diagram like the one below.

- Download a blank template for this idea canvas [here](#).
- It is also useful to recreate this diagram on a large piece of chart paper or a whiteboard to allow for greater collaboration as it is filled in.



What Success Looks Like

Relationships between ideas are understood

- Each time they add new information to the canvas, students discuss how it influences other sections.

Ideas change throughout the activity

- Rather than simply filling in each section, students continually refine their ideas in response to new information added to the canvas.

The process is evaluated

- Students describe which aspects of this activity worked well for them, generate hypotheses regarding why some aspects didn't, and propose new ways of using the activity to make it more effective for their purposes.