

LESSON 4

Your Customer and Your First Market Research

60 minutes (2 periods)

From Idea to Customer

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Identify your ideal customer as one specific person, not a vague crowd. Learn the difference between needs and wants, build a customer persona, and draft five survey questions to test your assumptions before the next lesson.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Distinguish between customer needs and wants, and explain how both drive purchasing decisions.
- Create a detailed customer persona that captures identity, goals, frustrations, and behaviour patterns.
- Design open-ended survey questions that gather actionable customer insights.
- Recognise that early market research can validate or challenge initial business assumptions.

BEFORE THE BELL

- Print page 04_customer_persona and page 04_market_research_form from the Mini Business Portfolio (one copy per student, or have them open digitally).
- Have the smoothie cart worked example visible (on screen or printed) for reference during the interview drill.

Your Customer and Your First Market Research

HOW THE LESSON RUNS

introduction	Getting Started
content	What You'll Learn
activity	See It Done: a School-yard Smoothie Cart
worksheet	Build Your Customerpersona
worksheet	Draft Your Marketresearchform
content	Think About It
summary	What's Next

TEACHING MOVES

- Both interview-drill modes (solo written and paired) build the same skill. Circulate during the pair version and listen for students who fill silences (coach them to wait) or interrupt (coach them to listen first). For solo students, scan their two written answers, a one-word reply means they need a nudge to elaborate.
- When students work on their persona, push hard for specifics on 'Goals' and 'Pains'. 'Wants to look good' is too vague; 'wants to walk into school in something her friends will comment on' is actionable. Same rule for hangouts: 'TikTok' is weak; 'follows three specific GAA accounts' is useful.
- The 5 adapted survey questions are the in-class deliverable for the market research worksheet, not a homework task. Before the bell, scan that every student has filled all 5 slots in Step 1 of their worksheet. At the start of the next lesson, ask each student to read their adapted Q1 aloud to a peer (or to you) before they administer the survey, this catches leading language and vague phrasing early.
- Use the 'Think About It' section as either a short whole-class share-out or a quiet 60-second think. The second prompt ('If research says your idea doesn't solve a real problem, what's your move?') is crucial: it primes students that real research can, and should, change the plan.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Students define their customer too broadly ('teenagers', 'students', 'busy people'). Remedy: ask them to name their persona and describe one specific detail about how they spend a lunch break.
- Students write closed questions ('Do you like smoothies?') instead of open ones ('What do you normally drink at break?'). Remedy: remind them that closed questions end the conversation; open questions start it.
- Students feel paralysed about who to survey. Remedy: offer a prompt list (one parent, one sibling, one teacher, one classmate, one shop assistant on the way home) and reassure them that five responses is enough to spot patterns.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: If a student didn't lock a business idea in the previous lesson, let them use the smoothie cart from step 3 for today's persona, and ask them to pick their own idea by the next lesson so the Business Model Canvas isn't a struggle.
- Support: If a student struggles to lock their persona, offer them the smoothie cart persona as a template and ask them to swap in the details of their own business (names, interests, hangouts, problem solved).
- Support: For students who find the survey-question task daunting, provide two or three worked examples (e.g. 'What problem are you trying to solve right now?' or 'When was the last time you felt stuck with this?') and ask them to adapt one rather than write five from scratch.
- Extension: Challenge students to design one 'follow-up' question they would ask only if the first answer hints at a specific pain point. This introduces the idea of branching logic in customer research.