



THE LITTLE LAUNCHERS EDUCATORS GUIDE

Book Discussion about Real Kids with Real Businesses

The Little Launchers book series is the first children's picture book series that showcases the true stories of real kid entrepreneurs who have started and continue to manage real businesses.

In this **Educators Guide**, you'll find classroom exercises aligned with **Common Core State Standards** for English Language Arts. With this curriculum guide, you'll be able to integrate business education in your classroom using nonfiction picture books that feature real kids with real businesses.



Written for an audience of 5-10 years old, the four-book series features the biographical stories of four young entrepreneurs who founded successful companies that live on today. Each faces his or her own obstacles in starting up, and all four ultimately realize the ups and downs of entrepreneurship.



In the first book, readers follow the journey of **Sebastian Martinez**, a five-year-old who turns his love for socks into a business that not only offers wacky socks for kids and adults alike, but also enables him and his brother to finally evade the school dress code! Sebastian's company donates thousands of proceeds to kids-for-kids causes, such as the American Cancer Society, Live Like Bella, and Autism Speaks.



The second book chronicles the story of **Rachel Zietz**, a young lacrosse player who takes an entrepreneurship course and realizes she can blend the worlds of business and fun by creating a lacrosse equipment company. Rachel's products are distributed nationally in retailer DICK'S Sporting Goods, and her company recently designed a special product line with her favorite childhood lacrosse star, Casey Powell.



Book three highlights the work of teen entrepreneur **Jason Li**. Conflicted by the amount of electronics waste that Americans produce annually, Jason founded an electronics repair and recycling company that helps lessen human impact on the world. His new company ended up earning him enough money to not only pay for his own lunch, but also hire employees and help his parents out.



The final book is about accessories designer **Gabrielle Goodwin**, who at seven years old joined forces with her mother to invent and patent a new kind of hair barrette, so that she'd stop losing all her hair bows at school! Her products have been sold in all 50 U.S. states and worldwide and can be found in retailers including Walgreens and Target.

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Sebastian Creates a Sock Company

By Erica Swallow, illustrations by Li Zeng

Five-year-old Sebastian Martinez, with the help of his older brother, Brandon, turns his love for socks into a business that not only makes wacky socks, but also enables the duo to finally revamp the school dress code. Teach kids about entrepreneurship and creativity.

Standards

- **RL.2.1** Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- **RL.2.3** Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
- **RL.2.5** Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.
- **RL.2.7** Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.
- **W.2.3** Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

Before Reading

- Talk to your students about self-expression. How do clothes express parts of who we are? Ask students to share details about what they're wearing today and what that expresses about them.
- Discuss the importance of connecting what we do with what we value most. Ask students to talk about when they know they are inspired. What happens, physically and emotionally?
- Ask students if they've ever been inspired by an art project. Did they keep going somehow, even after the project was done? What about being inspired by other things in their lives?

During Reading

As you are reading, stop to ask your students the following questions:

- Sebastian has a lot of socks! Ask the students if they collect anything.
- At first, Sebastian “didn't know how to react” to the uniform policy news. How did he feel at first? What does he end up doing? What changes the way he feels and acts? (RL.2.1, RL2.3, RL2.7)
- Using the text and illustrations, what are some clues that Sebastian is inspired? (RL2.7)

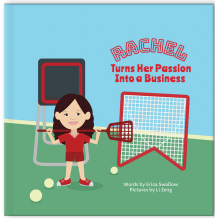
After Reading

Here are some tasks and questions you can ask after reading the story:

- Sebastian's business all started from an art project. What were the steps to starting his business? (RL2.1)
- How did Sebastian's family help him start his business? What were the roles of his mom, dad, and brother Brandon? (RL2.1)
- Provide students with the journal topic of *Sebastian's family helps him start his business. Write about a time a family member, teacher, or friend helped you do something important.* (W2.3)

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Rachel Turns Her Passion Into a Business

By Erica Swallow, illustrations by Li Zeng

Teen lacrosse player Rachel Zietz takes an entrepreneurship course and realizes she can blend the worlds of business and fun by creating a lacrosse equipment company. Teach kids about entrepreneurship and follow their interests and passions.

Standards

- **RL.2.1** Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- **RL.2.3** Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
- **RL.2.5** Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.
- **RL.2.7** Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.
- **W.2.3** Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

Before Reading

- Have students examine the book cover. Ask them what they think will happen based on the cover illustration. What is Rachel's passion? How might she turn it into a business? (RL.2.7)
- Ask students to share their top passions. What are they interested in? What gets them excited?
- Tell students that as they read, focus on the character's internal feelings and external actions.
- Explain to them that their internal feelings are the feelings that they keep inside. Their external actions are the actions that come out. Create a chart to keep track of this.

During Reading

As you are reading, stop to ask your students the following questions:

- What clues do the illustrations give us about how Rachel feels throughout the story? (RL.2.7)
- What do we learn about Rachel in the first couple of illustrations? (RL.2.1, RL.2.7)
- Who are some of the people that help Rachel start her business? (RL.2.1)

After Reading

Here are some tasks and questions you can ask after reading the story:

- Have students identify the theme of this story by analyzing the details in the text and illustrations. (RL.2.1, RL.2.7)
- Why was Rachel so nervous at the beginning of the story? What changed by the end, and why? (RL.2.1, RL.2.3, RL.2.5)
- Ask students to share experiences aloud about times when they felt nervous about something but eventually overcame their nerves. Allow students to write a personal narrative about this topic and their experience. (W.2.3)

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Jason Saves the Environment with Entrepreneurship

By Erica Swallow, illustrations by Li Zeng

Problem-solver Jason Li has been on a mission to pay for his own lunch since he started school, and he's finally found an idea that helps him do just that while saving the planet. Teach kids about social entrepreneurship and environmentalism.

Standards

- **RL.2.1** Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- **RL.2.3** Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
- **RL.2.5** Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.
- **RL.2.7** Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.
- **W.2.1** Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Before Reading

- Build student's background knowledge on entrepreneurship. Allow students to share brief examples of entrepreneurship in the community or in the world at large. Does anyone know someone who has started a business?
- Discuss "saving the environment." What are some of the environmental issues students know about? What are some ways that students are living in environmentally-friendly ways?

During Reading

As you are reading, stop to ask your students the following questions:

- What inspired Jason to start earning money so young? (RL.2.1)
- Jason has a lot of business ideas. What are some of those ideas? (RL.2.1)
- What does Jason do when the first few don't work out? What adjectives would you use to describe Jason? (RL.2.1, RL.2.3)
- Discuss "e-waste" (electronic waste). Where do broken phones end up? Using context clues from illustrations and from the book's text, why is e-waste harmful for the environment? (RL.2.1, RL.2.7)

After Reading

Here are some tasks and questions you can ask after reading the story:

- Jason is a real kid, and this story follows his life. Ask students to imagine if Jason visited their school. One student would need to give an introduction of Jason and his life. Challenge students: using this story as a primary source, recap Jason's story to introduce him for the speech. (RL.2.5)
- Provide students with the journal topic of *What level of responsibility should kids have in saving the environment? What about adults?* (W.2.1)

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Gabby Invents the Perfect Hair Bow

By Erica Swallow, illustrations by Li Zeng

At five years old, Gabby can't stop losing her hair bows everywhere she goes. She and her mother join forces to invent a new kind of bow that doesn't fall out. But will it work? Teach kids about entrepreneurship and the power of problem-solving.

Standards

- **RL.2.1** Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- **RL.2.6** Acknowledge differences in points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.
- **RL.2.7** Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.
- **W.2.2** Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Before Reading

- Talk to your students about problems. We all have them. Prompt the class to make a list of problems they've had this week. Write them on the board (leave space to write solutions after the reading). When the conversation ends, tell them that this book may give them inspiration on how some of them could be solved.
- Gabby is the only "inventor" in the series with a patented product. Discuss the difference in an inventor and entrepreneur. Discuss the concept of a patent (the sole right to exclude others from making, using, or selling an invention) and why it is so exciting for a young inventor to have one.

During Reading

As you are reading, stop to ask your students the following questions:

- What are some of the skills Gabby needed to start her business? (RL.2.1)
- What do you think excites Gabby most about starting a business? Use examples from the text and illustrations to support your answer. (RL.2.1, RL.2.7)
- Who do you think has the bigger problem? Gabby or Mrs. Goodwin? Why? How do you think they each feel about collaborating together as a mother-daughter business team? (RL.2.6)

After Reading

Here are some tasks and questions you can ask after reading the story:

- Assign students an essay in which they write about three things that helped Gabby start her business. Have them back up each point with examples from the text and illustrations. (W.2.2, RL.2.7)
- Go back to your "problems" list on the board. As a class, brainstorm solutions and write them next to each problem. How might Jason solve them? After the discussion, summarize the importance of having a growth mindset and an eye for *solving* the problems we see around us. (RL.2.1)