

ACTION-BASED ACTIVITIES

TOPIC C2.3 : STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

THEME C2 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY



COMMUNICATION

LEVELS 1 & 2

ISSUED SEPTEMBER 2005

INSTRUCTIONS

WHAT DO I DO?

Use this booklet to help you:

- plan an Action-based Activity on the theme of Economic Activity
- carry out an investigation into the subject
- produce evidence needed for your portfolio.

NOTE: Use this booklet WITH the Learner's Planner and Guide.

WHAT IS ASSESSED?

Economic Activity is one of six themes you can choose for your Action-based Activity/portfolio work. It includes topics such as:

C2.1 Earning a Living

C2.2 Career Choice

C2.3 STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

COMMUNICATION

TOPIC C2.3 : STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

TOPIC C2.3 STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

This is an opportunity to explore the issues around the theme of *Starting Your Own Business*. This guide will take you step by step from getting started, to writing and checking your final pieces of work. Each step follows Part Two of your *Learner's Planner & Guide*, so read it alongside this booklet.



It's a good idea to follow this advice.



You must do this to get the qualification.



CHOOSING A TOPIC

Think about the topic "*Starting Your Own Business*" and things about it that you might like to study. Don't rush or you may miss something. One of the best ways to start is to *mindmap*.

TASK 1 GETTING STARTED MAKING A MINDMAP

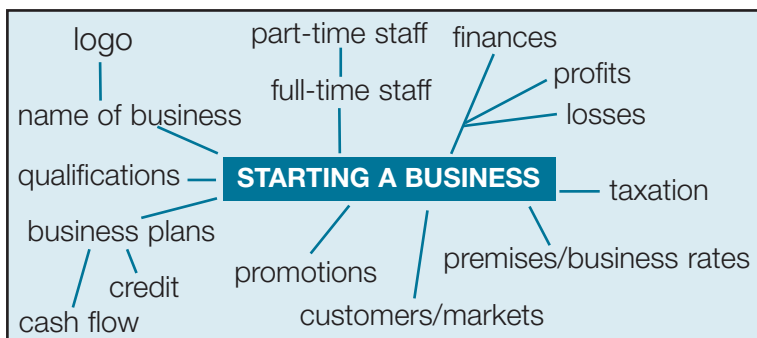
Allow about 20 minutes

On your own, or with a colleague, think about and talk about "*Starting Your Own Business*" and aspects of it you might like to study.

Work together to make a **mindmap** of the subject. You can find how to do this on page 5 of the *Learner's Planner & Guide*. You may want to think about:

- exactly what sort of business you would like to start
- your own interests, strengths and weaknesses
- qualifications needed
- training
- where to get information about starting a business
- talking with people who have already successfully started their own business.

PORTFOLIO EVIDENCE – You could copy and add to the unfinished example below. This could then go into your portfolio as evidence that you have thought about your chosen subject.



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Continued

TASK 2 FRAMING A QUESTION

Allow about 15 minutes

When you have made your mindmap, focus in on one or two ideas that:

- interest you
- will be easy to research and get information about (talk to your tutor if you are unsure).

Write these ideas down and then try to turn them into **QUESTIONS**. This will help when you write up your conclusions later. The examples in the box may help you do this.



Topic : Starting Your Own Business

Original Idea	Question
The right product.	How can I make sure that I have a product that people really want to buy?
Getting information	Where and how can I get the best information about starting up a small business?
Types of business	What are the differences between 'sole traders', 'partnerships' and 'limited companies'?
Finance, profits and sales	How important is a business plan and how and when do I raise capital and draw wages from the business?

In your portfolio, write down your chosen title/question.

Check with your tutor that it is okay. (Remember, you can always change it later if necessary.)

TASK 3 LOCATING RELEVANT INFORMATION

Allow about 10 minutes

Your next task is to locate relevant information for your portfolio. Check with your tutor that:

- there is enough information
- it is easily located
- it is of the right standard

TASK 4 ACTION PLANNING

Allow about 30 minutes



PLAN – It's a good idea next to draw up a plan of action. Make a table and on it write down what you intend to do and when you will do it by. Highlight key dates and deadlines (e.g. when you are giving a talk or having a discussion).

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**STEP
B**



READING TO OBTAIN INFORMATION

Reading and obtaining information are an essential part of the qualification and you must be able to show that you have collected, read and extracted information for **DIFFERENT** sorts of documents.

There are lots of ways of finding information on this subject such as:

- books and other resources in the library
- magazine and newspaper articles
- using the Internet
- interviewing people about the subject
- visiting a Bank (TSB) or Business Consultant.

TASK 5 READING AND FINDING OUT (to answer your question)

Allow about
1½ hours

Look for suitable documents to read. If you are studying for **level 2** communication skills they will need to be more than 500 words long.

TASK 6 RECORDING INFORMATION

Allow about
1½ hours

READ and MAKE NOTES from all documents that you think are helpful and relevant (the box below shows you how to write your notes).



Topic: 'Starting a business'

BBC News Business: "A Guide to start-up pitfalls"

Date: August 2003

Author: Laura Cummings

Source: www.news.bbc.co.uk

Main points in the article:

1. Persistence is a vital quality of any entrepreneur .
2. Start your business for passion, not money.
3. Choose something you really know about.
4. Find a mentor or guide who is already running their own business successfully – better still, work shadow if possible.
5. Get really expert advice on cash management.
6. Before you do anything else, build up sales and fill that order book.

Summary: Write up your notes in your own words.

This is a major piece of evidence.



ASSESSMENT Your tutor will assess that:

- the notes you have made are relevant
- you have clearly identified key points
- you understand what you have read.

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DISCUSSIONS

Taking part in discussions is an essential part of the qualification. For **LEVEL 1** you can take part in a one-to-one **OR** a group discussion. At **LEVEL 2**, it must be a group discussion. A discussion can be on any topic from the six Themes (See *Learner's Planner & Guide*, page 10).

Your **tutor** will need to observe and assess how well you do.

TASK 7

TAKING PART IN DISCUSSIONS ABOUT YOUR TOPIC

Allow about
1 hour

1. **Invite** colleagues to join you in a discussion about your chosen topic and fix a time and date when you will meet. Make sure your tutor is also able to be there if you want to be assessed.
2. **Plan** and practise for the discussion so you are properly prepared (see the box below).



PLANNING AND TAKING PART IN DISCUSSIONS

1. Think about what you will talk about – it's no good just having a chat! The discussion must be focussed on the subject.
2. Decide on a subject and a question to discuss e.g. "Debt collection is one of the biggest problems facing small businesses. But what is the best way to manage it?"
3. Agree a time and place for the discussion.
4. Set aside 15–20 minutes for the meeting.
5. Make sure your tutor is there to assess it.



ASSESSMENT Your tutor will assess you on:

- speaking clearly
- keeping to the point
- giving relevant information
- listening to others
- using positive body language
- keeping the discussion going.

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**STEP
D**



GIVING A TALK (Level 2 only)

At level 2 you must give a short talk to an audience (see your *Learner's Planner & Guide*, page 21 for detailed tips on how to give a good talk).

Although there are no hard and fast rules, a talk will normally follow the format given in the box below (in this case on the topic of "My chosen Career")



It is a good idea to prepare prompt cards and material (e.g. pictures, PowerPoint etc) to illustrate your talk.



1. Think up a **title** e.g. "I made my hobby my business"
2. **Introduction** – "My talk today is about my hobby and how I am about to convert it into a business."
3. **Main section** – take each of the main findings of your research expand on them.
4. **Conclusion** – "So, I hope I have been able to show that I am on the right track and soon hope to ..."
5. **Questions** – "Are there any questions or observations you would like to make?"

TASK 8

Allow about
2 hours

GIVING A TALK OF AT LEAST 4 MINUTES ABOUT YOUR TOPIC

Note: This task is only relevant if you are doing level 2.

Plan and prepare for your talk. Make sure the time and date is fixed and that your tutor can be there to assess it. Practise at home – it really does help!



ASSESSMENT Your tutor will assess you on:

- speaking and making your case clearly
- keeping to the point
- giving relevant information
- being well organised
- using positive body language
- answering questions clearly.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

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**STEP
E**



PLANNING AND WRITING DOCUMENTS

Your portfolio must contain at least two different written or word-processed documents (see pages 12–13 in your *Learner’s Planner & Guide*). At level 2, one of them must be over 500 words long.

TASK 9

Allow about
2 hours

PLANNING AND WRITING ONE TYPE OF DOCUMENT ON YOUR CHOSEN TOPIC

1. Check what you already have in your portfolio. You should have notes of documents you have read and information gathered. You may find that you have already written a letter or short report which you can use as evidence of writing!
2. Decide on **one** type of document you will produce. For example, you might include a report of interviews you have had with people to find out how they chose their careers or a letter to a careers officer. The box contains more examples:



EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTS YOU MIGHT WRITE ON ‘STARTING UP YOUR OWN BUSINESS’

Short documents:

- a letter to a bank’s small business adviser about loans
- a diary recording steps taken, thoughts and ideas
- a short report comparing possible types of business

Longer documents:

- an article for a magazine on how to choose a career
- a full report on interviews with successful small businesses
- a word processed illustrated leaflet on different examples of how people have turned their hobbies into successful businesses (e.g. brewing, jam making, web design)

3. Start **WRITING** one type of document on your chosen topic. You are strongly advised to use a computer to do this as this will:
 - enable you to redraft work quickly and easily
 - make your work look more professional
 - make spell checking easy
 - provide opportunities to include images, tables, charts, graphs etc. – you **MUST** include an **image**.
4. **PROOF READ** your work carefully.

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ASSESSMENT Your tutor will assess your work for:

- its relevance – sticking to the point
- its structure – it must be organised
- its style – easy to read and suited to the job

TASK 10 PLANNING AND WRITING A DIFFERENT TYPE OF DOCUMENT ON YOUR CHOSEN TOPIC

Allow about
2 hours

Repeat Task 9 for a different type of document on your chosen topic.



COMPILING THE FINAL PORTFOLIO

TASK 11 THE FINAL PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE

Gather together all your work and select from it the evidence needed to meet the requirements of the qualification.

(Your tutor will help you with this task).

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NOTES



STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS MORE ACTION-BASED ACTIVITY IDEAS

1. Think about a business you would like to start or hobby that you might convert into a business. Research the business in detail e.g. the qualities, skills, and experience required as well as the potential market for the product.
2. Arrange to visit and talk with someone who already has a small business producing a similar product or service. Produce a profile of the business.
3. Investigate several types of business producing different products or services e.g. mobile hairdressing; outdoor maintenance work; food or drink production. Compare business and partnership opportunities and consider the pitfalls.
4. Find an example of a small business you might like to run (eg; plumber or publican); produce a full report on it by undertaking activities such as:
 - reading about it
 - writing a letter to the firm requesting a visit
 - writing a full report on the interview with the business woman or man involved

Put all your prepared information in your portfolio.
5. Carry out a survey of small businesses in your area. Follow up with letters asking the firm to send you further details. Read the information and then draft a business plan to show what the business might involve over the period a month or a financial year.
6. Arrange to interview three people with very different kinds of business. Prepare your questions carefully so that you ask the same questions of each person. Focus your questions on the choices and decisions each person made when starting up their own business. Compare the three businesses.
7. Get in touch with a bank or business adviser and find out how easy or hard it is to raise capital or access grants when starting up your own business. Try your local authority or organisations such as 'The Prince's Trust' or 'Shell Livewire'.



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