

Researching a Company – (Lesson Plans for Levels B1-B2-C1)

This RMM (Ready-made mind map) approaches the use of mind mapping in a more project-based learning (PBL) direction. Using this RMM as a roadmap guides students to discovering the needed information about a company.

This will help your students to improve their interviewing skills – and help them to gain insight into a company. Additionally, they will learn how to ask the right questions at an upcoming interview or assessment centre.

Students who have never worked, or completed an internship, can benefit greatly from this learning cycle.



Introduction (Warm-up to PBL learning cycle)

You hear it all the time from career experts: "Research the company before you go into a job interview." But, what does that mean, exactly? Why spend time on company research?

These are five good reasons why it is worth researching a company:

1. Preparing for an interview is the main reason to research a company. Two of the most standard interview questions are "What do you know about us?" and "Why do you want to work here?"
2. Knowing specifics about the company's products, policies, and culture will show that someone is interested in the company and not just the position.
3. Companies need employees who can assimilate quickly into a productive role. This helps make the integration and orientation process smoother and quicker for all stakeholders.
4. Research helps applicants get information about a company's culture. How they *fit* will determine their future success and level of job satisfaction.
5. Remember – an applicant's objective is to be convincing when they say, "I want to work at your company."

Teachers can decide how they would like to approach the lessons and what the final product should be. I suggest tackling several skills at one time, which can be a very difficult process for some learners who have never worked with a PBL approach. Depending on your students, and their needs, I would recommend the following:

1. If listening skills is what you want to emphasise, then use the ***Listening, Writing, and Speaking Cycle***.
2. If reading skills is what you want to emphasise, then use the ***Reading, Writing, and Speaking Cycle***.

What should the PBL product look like?

Teachers have many possibilities when it comes to the finished PBL product. Whatever you choose, let your students have a voice in the final choice of the product as well. Allow them to be creative. The mind map will guide them through the whole process. The final product could be one of the following:

- An article about the company (250 to 500 words – depending on language level)
- A short video clip (about 5-8 minutes – Technophiles love this product)
- A PPT presentation (No more than 12 frames - no more than 8-10 minutes)
- A Pecha Kucha© 20X20 presentation
- A role play or simulation (great for group work or teamwork)

Part One: Introduction to researching a company

Listening, Writing, and Speaking Approach

1. Introduce the lesson by asking the prompt questions: “Why should you research a company?”, and “How can you research a company effectively?” (Visualize on the board or flipchart)
2. Task #1 is to find five answers to each question.
3. Interact with learners and visualize their responses to the questions. (10 to 15 minutes)
4. Afterwards, have them go to **YouTube** and find some clips which will bring them even closer to understanding the *why and how* of researching a company. (Team or Group work)
5. Task #2 is to find an additional five answers to the prompt questions.
6. Walk around the room to ensure they are not all listening to the same clips.
7. Make sure they are taking notes.
8. Have them present their findings to the class. (Class activity)
9. Compare their findings to what was discussed at the beginning of class.
10. This will set the learning process into motion and prepare the learners for the next step.

Reading, Writing, and Speaking Approach

1. Introduce the lesson by asking the prompt questions: “Why should you research a company?”, and “How can you research a company effectively? (Visualize the questions on the board or flipchart)
2. Task #1 is to find five answers to each prompt question.
3. Interact with learners and visualize their responses to the questions. (10 to 15 minutes)
4. Afterwards, have them go to **Google** and find an article which will bring them even closer to understanding the *why and how* of researching a company. (Team or Group work)
5. Task #2 is to find an additional five answers to the prompt questions.
6. Walk around the room to ensure they are not all reading to the same article.
7. Make sure they are taking notes.
8. Have them present their findings to the class. (Class activity)
9. Compare their findings to what was discussed at the beginning of class.
10. This will set the learning process into motion and prepare the learners for the next step.

Part Two: Get the research going! (Project-based Learning)

- Assign this as a project. Now, show them the mind map.
- Visualize the mind map on the wall, or pass several copies around for them to photograph with their personal device. (Smartphone, pad, or tablet)
- Ask the students what company they would like to research and why. Give them some think time.
- Every student will have a different response, and all responses are correct.
- Remind them to choose wisely. They cannot change their minds in the middle of the project.
- By using the mind map as a guide, students should be able to jump into the research part quickly.
- Give them time to start their research in class, but there will not be enough time for them to finish.
- That means integrating the FLIPPED CLASSROOM at this point – get them to do things outside of the classroom and have it ready to go for the next class. This optimises the in-class learning time.
- Act as their guide during this start-up phase.
- Walk around the room and assist them. Learners need feedback.
- Make sure that everyone understands the benefits of completing the project.
- Outline how you will assess the project before it presented. Learners need to know how they will assessed.
- I suggest allotting one week for the completion of the project.
- However, based on language level differences, some students may need more time.

Researching a Company

1 Who are they?
- history + growth
- core business/es
- business model

2 What are their...?
- products
- services

3 Who are their...?
- clients
- customers

4 Where are they located?

5 How many employees do they have?

11 misc./other

10 Corporate Involvement
- regional or global projects
- Event sponsoring
- exhibitions

9 Corporate Image
- what do they say about themselves?
- values + beliefs
- Mission Statement

8 Financial Health
- turnover
- money situation
- past + present
- future

6 Market Share
- in comparison to their competitors
- who are their competitors?

7 What has the company been doing lately?

