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# Project Agriculture: Backyard Chicken Business

**Subject:** Integrated Studies (Project-Based Learning)

**Grade Level:** Year 11/12 Equivalent (17-year-old homeschool student)

**Duration:** One Week

**Focus:** This unit is designed for a student with dyslexia and dysgraphia, emphasizing hands-on, multi-sensory, and technology-assisted learning over traditional reading and writing. The final project is to create and present a business plan for a small-scale, sustainable backyard chicken operation.

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## Materials and Resources Needed:

- Computer/tablet with internet access
- Access to video streaming (YouTube, ABC iView)
- Digital tools:
  - Presentation software (Google Slides, Canva, or video editing app)
  - Spreadsheet software (Google Sheets or Excel)
  - Mind mapping software (optional, e.g., Coggle) or large paper/whiteboard
  - Speech-to-text and text-to-speech software (built-in accessibility features are great)
  - 3D modeling software (optional, e.g., SketchUp Free)
- Art/Craft Supplies:
  - Large paper or cardboard for design/poster
  - Markers, pencils, ruler
  - Cardboard boxes, tape, glue, craft sticks for physical model building (optional)
- Notebook or digital document for brainstorming and notes
- Calculator

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## Overarching Project: "My First Flock" Business Plan

Throughout the week, you will build a comprehensive business plan for a sustainable backyard chicken venture. On Day 5, you will present this plan as a digital slideshow or a pre-recorded video presentation. The plan will integrate all the learning from the week.

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## Daily Lesson Breakdown

### Day 1: Foundations - Chickens and Australian Agriculture

**Theme:** Understanding the animals and the industry.

#### Learning Objectives:

- **(Science)** Identify and compare three chicken breeds suitable for a backyard environment.
- **(HASS/Geography)** Describe two major sectors of Australian agriculture and one challenge they face.

- **(Maths)** Brainstorm and categorize initial setup costs for a small farm project.

### Activities:

1. **Engage (30 mins):** Watch a few short clips from ABC's "Landline" or a documentary about farming in Australia. While watching, use speech-to-text or a mind map to jot down key ideas, industries (e.g., wool, wheat, cattle), and challenges (e.g., drought, distance). Discuss what you found most interesting.
2. **Explore (60 mins):** Research three chicken breeds ideal for Australian backyards (e.g., Australorp, Isa Brown, Silkie). Use text-to-speech tools to help with reading articles. Create a visual comparison chart in Canva or a simple table, focusing on:
  - Picture of the breed
  - Temperament (friendly, flighty?)
  - Average eggs per year
  - Climate hardiness (good in heat/cold?)
  - Purpose (eggs, meat, or pet?)
3. **Plan (45 mins):** Open a new spreadsheet for your "My First Flock" business plan. Title the first tab "Setup Budget." Brainstorm all the things you would need to buy to start your flock. Create categories like "Housing," "Fencing," "Feeders/Waterers," and "Livestock." Don't worry about prices yet, just list the items.

## Day 2: The Homestead - Coop Design & The Farm Hand Life

**Theme:** Building a home for the flock and understanding the work involved.

### Learning Objectives:

- **(Design & Tech / Maths)** Design a functional chicken coop that meets the needs of 4-6 chickens, including key features and dimensions.
- **(Career Education)** List five key skills or daily tasks of a farm hand.
- **(HPE)** Identify the physical and problem-solving aspects of farm work.

### Activities:

1. **Research & Design (90 mins):** This is your main task for the day. Your goal is to design the perfect chicken coop.
  - Watch 2-3 YouTube videos on "DIY Chicken Coop Tours" or "What a Chicken Coop Needs."
  - Focus on essential elements: predator-proofing, ventilation, roosting bars (where they sleep), and nesting boxes (for laying eggs).
  - **Your Choice of Output:**
    - **Option A (Hands-on):** Build a model of your coop using cardboard, hot glue, and craft supplies.
    - **Option B (Digital):** Create a 2D or 3D digital model using software like SketchUp Free or simply draw it on a large piece of paper.
  - Label the key features and add approximate dimensions (e.g., "Roosting bar - 2 meters long"). Remember the rule of thumb: about 0.4 square meters of space inside the coop per chicken.
2. **Career Explorer (45 mins):** Watch a "Day in the Life of a Farm Hand" video. As you watch, use a voice recorder or speech-to-text to list all the different jobs they do. Afterwards, discuss: What skills do you think are most important for this job? Is it more than just physical strength?

## Day 3: Health and Safety First

**Theme:** Keeping you and your animals safe and healthy.

### Learning Objectives:

- **(Health / Science)** Create a checklist for a complete farm first aid kit (for both humans and chickens).
- **(HPE)** Conduct a safety audit of a designated outdoor area, identifying at least three potential hazards.
- **(The Arts / English)** Design a clear and visually communicative farm safety poster.

### Activities:

1. **Chicken Care (45 mins):** Research common, simple chicken health problems (like mites or heat stress). What are the signs? How can you prevent them? Based on this, create a "Chicken First Aid Kit" list. Use icons or images next to text to make it easy to read.
2. **Safety Walk (30 mins):** Go into your backyard or another outdoor space. Your mission is to perform a "Safety Audit." Look for potential dangers for people and animals. Examples: trip hazards, sharp objects, unsafe water sources, holes in fences. Take photos of at least three hazards you identify.
3. **Create (60 mins):** Design a "Farm Safety" poster. This is a visual task, not a writing one. Choose one of the hazards you found or a general topic like "Predator Proofing" or "Tool Safety."
  - Use Canva to create a digital poster or draw it on paper.
  - Use bold images, clear symbols, and minimal, large-font text. Think about what would be easiest to understand in an emergency.
  - This poster will be included in your final presentation.

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## Day 4: The Business of Farming

**Theme:** Making a plan and managing the money.

### Learning Objectives:

- **(Maths)** Complete a detailed budget for the first year of operation, including projected income and expenses.
- **(Technology / English)** Develop a visual weekly and monthly management schedule.
- **(HASS / Economics)** Analyze how a small local farm markets its products.

### Activities:

1. **Budgeting Deep Dive (60 mins):** Return to your spreadsheet from Day 1. Use websites for local hardware stores (like Bunnings) or farm supply stores to find real prices for the items on your list.
  - Fill in the costs for your setup.
  - Create a new section for "Monthly Ongoing Costs" (e.g., feed, bedding). Estimate these for one year.
  - Create a section for "Projected Income." Estimate how many eggs your chosen breed will lay per week. Research the local price for free-range eggs and calculate your potential monthly income.
  - Use formulas in your spreadsheet to calculate totals.
2. **Management Plan (45 mins):** How will you manage the farm day-to-day? Create a visual schedule. This could be a weekly calendar in Google Calendar, a visual checklist in Canva, or a

hand-drawn chart. Include daily tasks (feed, water, collect eggs), weekly tasks (clean coop), and monthly tasks (health check, restock supplies). Again, use icons and minimal text. You can add audio notes to explain the tasks.

3. **Virtual Field Trip (30 mins):** Find a local farm on social media (Facebook or Instagram) or find one at a local farmer's market online. How do they sell their products? What makes their farm special? Using speech-to-text, record a few sentences about their business model.

## Day 5: Presentation Day!

**Theme:** Sharing your plan with the world.

### Learning Objectives:

- **(All KLAS)** Synthesize the work from the week into a clear, organized, and persuasive presentation.
- **(English)** Orally present the business plan, explaining each component.
- **(Career Education)** Reflect on the viability of the project and the skills learned.

### Activities:

1. **Assemble the Project (90 mins):** Bring all your work from the week into one presentation (Google Slides, Canva, etc.). Create a slide for each component:
  - **Title Slide:** Your business name and a logo you design.
  - **Our Mission:** A short sentence about your goal (e.g., "To provide fresh, ethically-raised eggs to our local community.").
  - **The Flock:** Your chosen chicken breed and why.
  - **The Coop:** Add photos of your design/model.
  - **The Budget:** A summary or screenshot of your spreadsheet.
  - **Safety Plan:** Your farm safety poster.
  - **Management Schedule:** Your visual weekly plan.
  - **Conclusion:** Why your business would be a success.
2. **Practice & Record (45 mins):** Practice talking through your slides. You don't need a script! Just explain your thinking for each part. When you're ready, either present it live or, for a lower-pressure option, record a video of you presenting it (using a screen recorder like Loom or just filming the screen). The video should be 5-10 minutes long.
3. **Reflection (15 mins):** After presenting, have a conversation.
  - What was the most enjoyable part of this project?
  - What was the biggest challenge?
  - What is one skill you learned this week that could be useful in a future career?
  - If you had \$500, what would be the first thing you'd do to make this plan a reality?

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