

Lesson Plan: The Great Interest Exploration

Subject: Personal Development, Life Skills

Age Group: 10-14 (Optimized for a 12-year-old named Ted)

Time Allotment: 45-60 minutes

Materials Needed

- Large sheet of paper or whiteboard
 - Markers or pens in at least 3-4 different colors
 - Sticky notes (optional, but helpful)
 - Timer (phone or kitchen timer)
 - "Interest Explorer" Worksheet (template provided within the lesson)
 - Access to the internet for brief research
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Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Identify at least 5-10 potential personal interests through brainstorming.
 - Organize and categorize these interests to discover personal patterns.
 - Create a simple, actionable plan to explore one new interest this week.
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Lesson Structure

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

Hook: The "Free Day" Scenario

Educator says: "Hey Ted, imagine this: You wake up tomorrow and it's a completely free day. No schoolwork, no chores, no appointments. You also have a magic wallet with enough money to do something fun. What's the very first thing that pops into your head to do? Don't think too hard, just what sounds awesome?"

(Listen to the answer and discuss it for a moment. This gets the mind warmed up for thinking about preferences.)

Stating the Objectives

Educator says: "That sounds like a great day! Today, we're going on a mission called 'The Great Interest Exploration.' The goal isn't to pick a job or a career, but just to explore all the cool things that you might enjoy. By the time we're done, you'll have a map of your possible interests, see what kinds of things you're naturally drawn to, and have a solid plan to actually try one of them out."

II. Body (30-40 minutes)

Activity 1: The Brain Hurricane (I Do, We Do - 10 minutes)

I Do (Modeling - 2 min):

Educator says: "First, we need to get all the ideas out of our heads and onto paper, with no judgment. This is a 'Brain Hurricane.' I'll go first to show you. *(Take a large sheet of paper, write 'My Stuff' in the middle)*. I'm just going to write down anything that I find even slightly interesting. For example: 'making good coffee,' 'learning about ancient Rome,' 'watching sci-fi movie trailers,' 'how GPS works,' 'fixing a wobbly chair.' See? The ideas can be big or small, serious or silly. The only rule is: no idea is a bad idea."

We Do (Guided Practice - 8 min):

Educator says: "Okay, your turn! Here's a big sheet of paper for you. I'm setting a timer for 5 minutes. Your mission is to fill this paper with as many things as you can think of that are fun, cool, or interesting. Think about:

- What do you look up online?
- What kind of videos do you watch?
- What's your favorite part of a movie or video game? (Is it the art? The story? The strategy?)
- If you could learn any skill instantly, what would it be?

Ready, set, go! Let's both write at the same time and just get all our ideas out there."

(Educator participates as well to make it a shared activity. Offer verbal prompts if Ted gets stuck, e.g., "What about sports?" "Any cool science facts you've heard lately?")

Activity 2: The Interest Sorter (I Do, We Do - 10 minutes)

I Do (Modeling - 3 min):

Educator says: "Great, look at all these ideas! Now, let's find the patterns. I'm going to look at my list and group things together using colored markers. I'll circle 'making coffee' and 'fixing the chair' in **green** because those are about **MAKING or FIXING** things. I'll circle 'learning about ancient Rome' and 'how GPS works' in **blue** because those are about **FIGURING OUT or LEARNING** things. And I'll circle 'watching movie trailers' in **orange** because that's about **EXPERIENCING STORIES**. We're basically creating our own categories."

We Do (Guided Practice - 7 min):

Educator says: "Now let's look at your map. Grab some colored markers. Which ideas on your list seem like they belong together? Let's start with one. *(Point to an item, e.g., 'building in Minecraft')*. What else on your list feels like that? Maybe 'LEGOs' or 'drawing characters'? Let's circle them all in the same color. What should we call that group? We can use my categories or invent our own! Some common ones are:

- **MAKING:** (Art, building, coding, cooking)
- **DOING:** (Sports, hiking, physical activities)
- **THINKING:** (Puzzles, strategy games, science questions)
- **HELPING:** (Volunteering, teaching a friend, caring for pets)
- **EXPERIENCING:** (Reading, watching movies, listening to music)

(Work together with Ted to group all or most of his brainstormed items into 3-5 categories.)

Activity 3: The Deep Dive (You Do - 15 minutes)

Educator says: "This is awesome. You can already see the *types* of things you're interested in. Now it's time to become a detective. Pick two or three interests from your map that seem the most exciting to you right now. For each one, you're going to fill out an 'Interest Explorer' worksheet. This will help you figure out what that interest is *really* about and how you could actually try it."

Success Criteria: A successfully filled-out worksheet will have an answer for at least 4 of the 5 questions, with question #5 having at least two ideas.

You Do (Independent Practice): "You can use the internet to help you find answers for the questions. Take about 15 minutes to fill out one sheet for two different interests."

Worksheet: The Interest Explorer

Interest Name: _____

1. **What is it about this that's cool to me?**
(Example: For 'making video games,' is it the coding, the art, the music, or the story?)
2. **What are some things people DO in this area?**
(Example: For 'cooking,' they shop for ingredients, follow recipes, invent new dishes, plate food beautifully.)
3. **Who is someone (famous or not) who does this? What can I learn from them?**
(You might need to do a quick search for this one!)
4. **If this was a superpower, what would it be?**
(Example: For 'playing guitar,' the superpower might be 'mood control' because music affects how people feel.)
5. **What are 3 tiny, easy things I could do THIS WEEK to try it out?**
(Be specific! Instead of "learn to code," write "watch a 10-minute 'Intro to Python' video on YouTube" or "try a lesson on Code.org.")
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

III. Conclusion (5 minutes)

Recap and Reflection

Educator says: "Alright, let's wrap up our mission. What did we do today? We started with a giant Brain Hurricane of ideas, then we became detectives and found patterns by sorting them into

categories, and finally you did a deep dive to see what a few of those interests are all about. What's one surprising thing you learned about your own interests today?"

(Allow Ted to share his worksheets and reflections.)

Action Plan and Reinforcement

Educator says: "This is the most important part. An idea is just an idea until you do something with it. Look at your 'Interest Explorer' sheets. Of the small, easy steps you wrote down, which one sounds like the most fun to do? Let's pick ONE to do in the next two days. How about we put it on the calendar right now? Remember, the goal isn't to become an expert overnight. It's just to try something, see if you like it, and learn more about what makes you, you."

Assessment

- **Formative (During Lesson):** Observe Ted's engagement during the brainstorm and sorting activities. Listen to his reasoning for how he categorizes his interests. Ask clarifying questions like, "What makes you group those two together?"
 - **Summative (End of Lesson):** The completed "Interest Explorer" worksheets serve as the main assessment. Do they demonstrate thought and research? More importantly, can Ted clearly articulate a specific, actionable first step he will take to explore an interest, showing he has met the final objective?
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Differentiation and Adaptability

- **For a Learner Who is Stuck:** If the blank page is intimidating, use a deck of "interest cards" with pictures (e.g., a camera, a soccer ball, a computer, a mixing bowl) to spark ideas. You can also do the brainstorming verbally while you write down the ideas for them.
- **For a Learner with Many Interests:** Challenge them to find connections *between* their categories. "How could you combine your interest in drawing with your interest in video games?" Then, have them create a mini-project plan for that combined interest.
- **Classroom/Group Adaptation:** This lesson works great in a group. Do the "Brain Hurricane" on sticky notes. Then have students group their sticky notes on a large wall, creating a massive, collaborative "Interest Map." They can then form small groups based on shared interest categories to complete the "Deep Dive" activity.