

Building Language Skills

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Section: **BUSINESS, A11**

Each week, this lesson will share some classroom activity ideas that use the newspaper or other NIE resources. You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some classrooms may be able to use this as a worksheet and others might need to ask and answer the questions in a class discussion.

Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for all of your students.

Materials you will need for this lesson: The Seattle Times print replica, computer or smart board, pencils or pens, paper

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will read an article, and develop their stance on taxing sugary drinks in order to hopefully lower consumption and reduce health problems.

Pre- Reading Discussion:



- What do you see in these pictures? Where do you think these pictures were taken?
- What do you think the article will be about? Are there any clues in the picture?
- Do you like to shop for clothes? What are your favorite places to shop?

- Do you ever shop online? What websites/companies are your favorites? Why?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A *context clue* is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

Write your guess and then look up the definition and write it below your guess. How close did you come to the correct definition?

A year after Lake started Stitch Fix in her apartment, the company had a small office in San Francisco where every Monday all employees helped package and ship out “fixes” — the boxes of clothing sent to clients. Lake **concedes** she made some risky bets during this time, such as trusting that clients would pay for the clothing they kept.

Concede Guess:

Concede Definition:

Reading Comprehension:

1. How does Stitch Fix work?
2. Katrina Lake, 34, is the founder and chief executive of Stitch Fix, a San Francisco clothes-shopping startup that brought in \$730 million in revenue in the fiscal year ended last July.
3. Stitch Fix is regarded as one of the few major success stories in the subscription shopping world. What components make it so successful?
4. She tackled the pre-med curriculum but ended up majoring in economics. Why?
5. But being risk-averse meant she wasn't going to quit her job and launch a startup. So she decided to buy herself time. What did she decide to do?
6. Lake started working on Stitch Fix during her second year at Harvard. Her academic research told her what important pieces of information?
7. In the early days of Stitch Fix, Lake asked friends of friends in the Boston area to fill out style surveys. What would she do then?
8. She initially faced resistance when she tried to raise money to fund her company. Why?
9. Who made a big investment which enabled Lake to officially launch her company?
10. Demand kept growing. At one point, the company had a _____-year waitlist.

11. Eventually, the company opened warehouses to manage inventory and hired executives from what companies to set up a more sophisticated (and less risky) payment system.

Group Discussion Questions/Journal Prompts:

But what her family lacked in entrepreneurial spirit they made up for in creativity, she said. “Creativity was definitely a big part of our household, and I remember always writing stories and being encouraged to be creative.”

- What sparks your creativity?
- Are you encouraged to be creative in your home? In what ways?
- What is *entrepreneurial spirit*? Why is it an important trait in the business world?

She knew she wanted to be on the cutting edge of the retail industry. But bricks-and-mortar retailers weren’t the answer. So she decided to find out who was.

- What is a “brick-and-mortar” store?
- Why are many stores going out of business?
- Why are online sites gaining popularity?

“As a consumer, you don’t want to choose from a million pairs of jeans,” she said. “You just want the one pair that’s going to fit you and look great on you. There was such a great opportunity there. What consumers wanted was not reflected in the marketplace.”

- Do you agree with Lake’s assessment of what consumers wanted? Why or why not?

Lake attributes Stitch Fix’s success to having the right team and always putting the customer first.

In the summer of 2012, she said the company made the wrong prediction about what kinds of clothing clients would want and had to write off a ton of inventory. “You might guess that our audience is coastal, Coachella-going, early tech adopters,” she said. “But our clients were moms who were like, ‘I need longer hemlines because I volunteer at my son’s preschool, and I want to wear a fun summer dress but it needs to be appropriate.’ And we had a backless Coachella romper for her.”

Instead of sending out clothing that wouldn’t be an appropriate fit for its clients, Stitch Fix asked clients to wait.

“The inventory just wasn’t right for the customer, so we sent it back to the vendor or donated it,” she said.

The company took a hit but gained the trust and loyalty of many customers.

“Customer-centricity is unbelievably important,” she said.

- What do you think “customer-centricity” means?
- Why do you think it’s so important and why it helped Stich Fix succeed with its customers?