



TOY COMPANY

A writing and speaking simulation in which students develop toys for the children and youth market

AMY BUMPUS, the author of TOY COMPANY, received both her B.A. and M.A. degrees from Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington. While teaching sixth grade in Jefferson Elementary School in Spokane, she developed TOY COMPANY.

Copyright ©1997

Interact

10200 Jefferson Boulevard

P.O. Box 802

Culver City, CA 90232

www.teachinteract.com

ISBN 978-1-57336-220-7

Samples are provided for evaluation purposes. Copying of the product or its parts for resale is prohibited. Additional restrictions may be set by the publisher.

All rights reserved. Only those pages of this simulation intended for student use as handouts may be reproduced by the teacher who has purchased this teaching unit from **Interact**. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording—without prior written permission from the publisher.

PURPOSE

In TOY COMPANY students face a situation in which they must learn and demonstrate how they can write and speak descriptively and persuasively. Your students are upper level managers in a toy company. As teacher you are the CEO, the chief executive officer. As the simulation unfolds, everyone realizes the importance of writing and speaking skills. Throughout the unit students have opportunities to refine these writing and speaking skills as they learn them. Specifically, students will experience the following:

● Knowledge

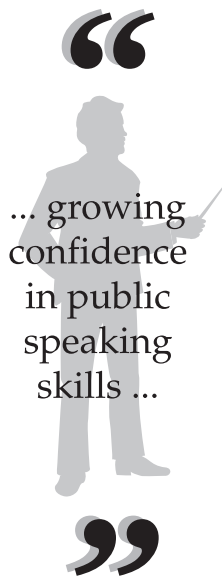
1. how a company must have a mission statement and structure
2. why skills important for success in school are also important for success in the business world
3. why working in a group often stimulates the flow and refinement of ideas
4. what the process is by which something moves from idea stage to product development

● Attitudes

1. appreciation of descriptive speaking and writing
2. desire to develop the power that results from forceful, persuasive speaking and writing
3. satisfaction that comes from developing an idea and seeing it through to completion
4. acceptance of the amount of time it takes a group to process an idea and then move it along until it becomes a finished product
5. pride in growing confidence in public speaking skills

● Skills

1. contributing as a part of a team to achieve a common goal
2. writing and speaking descriptively
3. writing and speaking persuasively
4. drawing conclusions based on observations
5. speaking willingly in front of a group of peers—without having to be coaxed to do so
6. applying creative and imaginative thinking to a “real world” setting



OVERVIEW - 1

Getting organized The focus of TOY COMPANY is on descriptive and persuasive speaking and writing. Focusing on these skills in a simulation allows the students to learn and apply useful skills while they are having fun. TOY COMPANY begins as students are divided into cooperative units known as project groups. Each group has three to five members, with four being ideal. Each member in a group receives a title and job description.

Creating a new company Students first read page 1 of their Student Guides. You then explain to them that a wealthy business woman named A. C. Bumpus is beginning a new toy company, more broadly based

than her successful bicycle company. She expects her new managers (your students) to work with you, their **CEO** (Chief Executive Officer) to make some key first decisions. Your class then works as a sort of “committee of the whole” and creates, with your guidance, a company **name**, **mission statement**, **logo**, and **motto** such as those for the imaginary company on the left. These four elements they create reflect their new company expectations for both the products they will design and for the employees

who manage the company. Having created the four elements, the class next decides what kind of toys they will be design, produce, and sell.

Brainstorming for ideas Next, working in their separate project groups, students brainstorm different toy ideas. Once the group agrees on an idea, students begin placing their idea on paper. They first write a description of their toy, both what it looks like and what it does.

Gathering key information Students now are taught how to gather information from reading printed material, from making observations, and from interviewing people. They use the simulation’s prepared forms while acquiring this information. Then, working in project groups, they prepare a presentation to be given at a company board meeting.

Showing prototypes Having the groups show a non-working prototype



Peaceful toys ... Peaceful children ... Peaceful world

We dedicate ourselves to creating toys which will bring the world’s children closer together and thus help make a safer world for children yet to come.

“
... how to
gather
information ...

”

OVERVIEW - 2

is very effective during the description part of the presentation. Since not all toy ideas can be developed this way because of difficulty in acquiring materials and/or tools, time for this is not discussed in the Daily Directions, but it should be easy to find time for the students to create a prototype if creating one is possible. *Having a non-working prototype of the toy can be a very valuable part of the board meeting presentation and the trade show promotion. I highly recommend including this as a part of the student's learning—if possible.*

“
... that
highlights
their
product's
top three
selling
points ...

Making group presentations Groups are responsible for developing a presentation that highlights their product's top three selling points. At least one of the points must be based on market research that the group has conducted. After members have organized the top three selling points into a persuasive essay, they begin practicing for the presentation. Students are taught that the purpose of the presentation is to demonstrate the toy's potential to be a top selling toy. Each member of the group must assume responsibility for at least one part of the presentation. Groups are encouraged to consider presenting visual aids, such as a diagram of the product or a graph of the market survey information.

”

Holding the trade show TOY COMPANY culminates with a trade show. This is the opportunity for the students to showcase their work for their parents, other students, other teachers and your principal, as well as local media. Those attending the trade show will act as toy buyers who come to the show to order toys for the upcoming year. Each project group sets up a booth in a large room. During the trade show, the students display the prototype of their toy and any other visual aids used during the board meeting. As visitors stop by each booth, students give them brief information about the product and the product's selling points. After the visitors have seen all the booths, they place their “orders” for the three toys that they feel will be most successful in the marketplace. These orders are tallied, with a reward/bonus (which you determine) going to the groups responsible for the top-selling toys.

TEACHER ROLE - 1

CEO You, the teacher, are the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Toy Company. The nature of this simulation allows your students to get very excited and involved. This excitement provides a special learning opportunity. The more you, as the teacher, encourage this enthusiasm, the greater the potential for learning.

Teaching
tip →

You should choose which individuals join each group of 4–5 students. Try for personality, ethnic, boy-girl, and ability blends which you sense will work together best.

Cooperative groups Because working in cooperative groups is an important part of TOY COMPANY, it is important that the groups be carefully put together. Making students aware, from the very beginning, of individual as well as group responsibilities will help set the stage for success. Students have the “real life” opportunity to work with others to accomplish a common goal. TOY COMPANY provides an excellent opportunity to teach this skill. The end product of each group—the presentation—will be most successful and effective if each group member meets the expectations.

Writing effectively Teaching students to write and speak persuasively and descriptively is the main purpose of this simulation. The persuasive writing format is adapted from the **FIRST STEPS** writing program which Interact publishes. The introductory paragraph is a brief description of the product. Each of the next three paragraphs details a selling point and supports that selling point with facts. The final paragraph is a summary emphasizing the toy’s strongest selling point.



FIRST STEPS

Grades 3-6

An interactive step-by-step writing and speaking program for young students

- Students first master the lower level WRITING FRAMES and the easier writing formats such as the Narrative and Autobiographical essays.
- Once they have worked successfully in their study pairs and quads and have written easy FIRST STEPS essays, they are introduced to writing and speaking four more challenging formats. (See Tabs 4–7 in the outline on the right.)
- Next they collaboratively use the **Student Guide’s WRITING RUBRICS AND ESSAYS**, helping one another organize, write, and speak solid essays. They increase their understanding by comparing the RUBRIC levels with their own writing and speaking levels. Finally, they set goals to achieve so that they become better writers and speakers.

Multi-tab Teacher’s Guide and 35 24-page Student Guides

Call (800 359-0961) for samples and information.

9-Tab Personal Notebook

- 1: Introduction
- 2: Narrative Essay
- 3: Autobiographical Incident Essay
- 4: Report of Information Essay
- 5: Persuasive Essay
- 6: Contrast Essay
- 7: Problem Solving Essay
- 8: Special Applications
- 9: Appendices

TEACHER ROLE - 2



See that students practice all these skills: projecting by lowering their voices and speaking from the diaphragm ... achieving good stance and eye contact ... speaking from (not reading from) an outline. (You must model these skills continually—particularly whenever you are role-playing the company CEO.)

Speaking effectively Spend considerable time building students' confidence that they can speak in front of a group. Students are often expected to speak without ever having been taught how to do so.

Of course, throughout the day whenever students are playing the TOY COMPANY simulation, your speech and demeanor must reflect an accomplished, "tough love" CEO who wishes to help employees do their best both for their company and for themselves.



You get to dress up a day in advance of the big board meeting in "power clothes" to model for your students how boys as well as girls must "dress for success" during the board meeting.

SET UP DIRECTIONS - 1

Before you begin to teach this simulation, prepare in the following ways:

- Initial understanding** Read through this Teacher Guide and the Student Guide before introducing TOY COMPANY to your class. When you introduce the simulation, be prepared to give the class a “picture” of what it will be like. The more clearly you can explain the simulation, the easier it will be to help get the class excited about the project.
- Time allowance** Plan for how many days you have to give to the simulation. The unit outline calls for a total of 18 days. See the UNIT TIME CHART on page 13. Each day of instruction should take about one hour. Of course, a teaching week often is interrupted; consequently you may not get all the time for TOY COMPANY that you had planned for 5-day sequences. Consider allowing for at least two days more than the 18 days provided for in the UNIT TIME CHART.
- Handouts and Display copies** Pages 29-48 are “master” pages. You duplicate certain ones for handouts to students or to their project groups; you duplicate others to use in order to make display copies. Here is a suggested plan so that you can have this task completed before the simulation begins:



Whenever a “master” is referred to in TOY COMPANY teaching directions, it is labeled in bold ink (e.g, **M19** = Master 19).

The comments on the right suggest which masters to use as handouts and which to use as display copies. Of course, you may duplicate any master for both uses if you wish.

Note well: In the **Handouts** column the number in parentheses following the master # represents how many you should duplicate for handouts either to each student or to each project group.

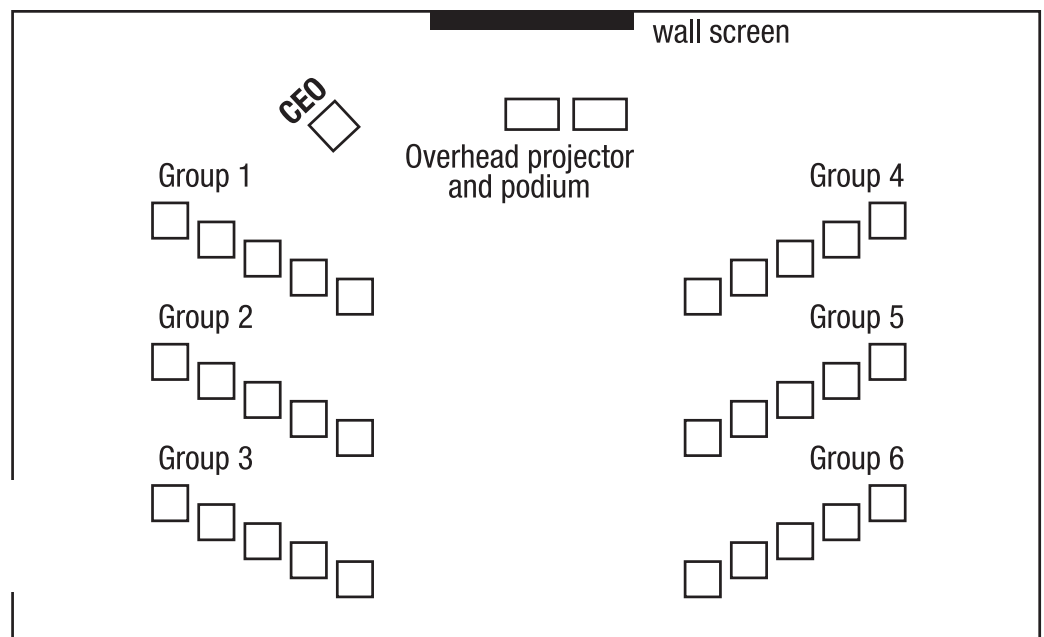
Handouts (Duplicate the number in parentheses.)	Overlays (Duplicate 1 copy)
	M1 Company name, motto, etc.
	M2 Peaceful Toys Co.
M3 (class set)	M3 I D Badge
M4 Brainstorming Ideas (2 per group)	
M5 Pros and Cons (1 per student)	
M6 Pre-Write Notes (1 per group)	
	M7 Product Description
M8 Product Review (1 per group)	
M9 Performance Review (1 per group)	
	M10 Market Survey
M11 Observation Form (1 per group)	
M12 (1 per group)	M12 Graph Examples
	M13 Persuasive Essay Model
M14 (3-4 copies for “artistic” students)	M14 Trade Show Invitation
M15 Presentation Review (1 per group)	
M16 Board Meeting Notes (2 per student)	
	M17 Trade Show Diagram
M18 (number attending the Trade Show)	M18 Buyer’s Register
M19 Group Evaluation (1 per group)	
M20 Individual Assessment (1 per student)	

SET UP DIRECTIONS - 2

4. **ID badges** Students love wearing ID badges. The directions for creating them are quite specific on master 3. However, you can have students create them any way you wish if you desire to change the model given. Above all, see that the badges are large enough to be seen from a distance. *Encourage project group members to help one another do an A #1 job!*
5. **Supplemental materials**
 - a. Gather some catalogs with both good and bad examples of product descriptions. Showing students examples of product descriptions from a catalog helps to reinforce the purpose of writing a good product description.
 - b. If you have access to any surveys, bring them in to share with the class.
 - c. Additionally, if your school has a mission statement, it may be very interesting for the students to become aware of it.
6. **Board meeting** If possible, make arrangements for other facilities for the board meeting and the trade show. The board meeting will be more realistic if it can be held in another room. The trade show can take place in the classroom, a hallway, or a multipurpose room.
 - a. **Room arrangement** Set up the room in such a way that all students can easily see the front of the room. If you are using your classroom, work to make it as different from everyday as possible. If you are in another room, either desks or tables (e.g. in a lunch room) will work fine. Below is a suggested room arrangement. If a podium is available, it can help students' presentations. However, *if you plan to use a podium, have the students practice with it prior to the board meeting. This same guideline applies if a microphone is to be used.*



Your board meeting will seem even more official if it can take place in a room other than your classroom.



PEACEFUL TOYS (OVERLAY) - MASTER 2

Peaceful Toys



Peaceful toys ... Peaceful children ... Peaceful world

We dedicate ourselves to creating toys
which will bring the world's children
closer together and thus help make a
safer world for children yet to come.