5 DAYS OF CHANGEMAKING

PREPARING YOUR STUDENTS TO ENTER THE TIME FOR CHANGE YOUTH CHALLENGE
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WHAT IS CHANGEMAKING?

Changemaking is a mindset and an approach to life that addresses today’s pressing challenges and injustices through the application of four key abilities: conscious empathy, teamwork, changemaking leadership, and changemaking action.

Changemaking projects can be far-reaching and complex, like building a powerful social movement. Changemaking can also be local and focused, like reducing food waste in your school cafeteria. Your students can make a positive difference by spotting injustices and inefficiencies in their communities, brainstorming solutions, and taking action to address the problem.

This toolkit is designed to help your students turn their changemaking ideas into an action plan that will prepare them to apply for the Time for Change Youth Challenge.

WHAT IS THE TIME FOR CHANGE YOUTH CHALLENGE?

The Time for Change Youth Challenge is an opportunity for your students to exercise their changemaking muscles, giving them a platform to share their bold ideas, get connected to other innovative kids, and tackle problems that matter to them. Students in grades K-12 who attend First Book-eligible schools or community programs are invited to enter by submitting their idea and action plan to make an impact on an issue, large or small, that they care about. Through this virtual competition, students will have the chance to win up to $1,000 in seed funding to support their changemaking action.

This 5 Days of Changemaking guide is designed to help you prepare students to take action around issues they identify in their communities. Inside you’ll find classroom activities that you can accomplish on 5 consecutive days or spread cross several weeks. Objectives and time frames are listed for each day, and most activities take less than an hour. On the final day, your students will have the ability to submit their ideas to the Youth Challenge. For more information about the Youth Challenge, including deadlines and application requirements, visit the Ashoka website.

Visit First Book’s Time for Change resource page for an introductory guide, information about the key changemaking abilities (conscious empathy, teamwork, changemaking leadership, and changemaking action), and videos and stories to inspire young changemakers.

NEED TO FAST-TRACK YOUR STUDENTS’ CHANGEMAKING?

If you don’t have time to complete each of the activities for the 5 days, complete Day 4 and then direct your students to the online application.
DAY 1  BECOMING A CHANGEMAKER

40 minutes (Videos: 20 minutes; Discussion: 20 minutes)

THE PURPOSE OF THIS EXERCISE IS TO IDENTIFY THE QUALITIES OF A CHANGEMAKER AND TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO REFLECT ON WHICH OF THESE QUALITIES THEY SEE IN THEMSELVES.

DIRECTIONS

In this activity, students will discuss what it means to be a changemaker and learn about changemaking from young people making a positive difference in the world.

STEP 1 SHARE VIDEOS FEATURING YOUNG CHANGEMAKERS IN THE FIRST BOOK NETWORK:

Seeding Change: When a School Garden Becomes a Lifeline for Health Food Access

Making Financial Education Accessible

Linking STEAM to Changemaking: A Powerful Combination

STEP 2 BRAINSTORM: As a class, discuss these questions: What does it mean to be a changemaker? What skills do the students featured in the videos share that make them successful changemakers?

STEP 3 DRAW CONNECTIONS: Next, ask your students which of these attributes they possess and have them complete the What Is a Changemaker? worksheet.

Tell students that Day 2 will be an opportunity for them to think about the issues in their communities that could benefit from changemaking action.
DAY 2  UNDERSTANDING YOUR COMMUNITY

30 minutes (Map or worksheet: 15 minutes; Discussion: 15 minutes)  TIME

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this exercise is to encourage students to think critically and identify problems and strengths in their communities that can inform their changemaking projects.

DEFINING COMMUNITY

Changemakers solve problems for communities they care about. A community is a group of individuals who share common values, goals, or characteristics. Communities can be formed through geographic locations or shared interests, hobbies, identities, or affiliations.

Throughout this resource, we will use the word “community” broadly. Students are encouraged to focus their energy on communities that matter to them — anywhere they feel a shared identity with others. For example, a school community, neighborhood community, or sports team community.

DIRECTIONS

Ask students to pretend a visitor shows up in their community. The person knows nothing about them or their community. If they were to take this person on a tour of their community, where would they go? What are the “can’t miss” locations and activities? What are the “better to avoid” locations and activities?

If time permits, allow students to walk around the school and make notes about different locations. Then distribute the Visitor Map and ask students to draw areas of interest on the map.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS TO CONSIDER:

- Who would you introduce to the visitor?
- What is one thing a visitor should not miss?
- Where do you spend most of your time?
- Where do people gather?
- What is something everyone should know about your community?
- What is the coolest thing about your community?
- Are there parts of your school that are unattractive or not inviting?
- What are some of the things that could be improved?
- If you had a magic wand, what is one thing you would want to change about your community?
This activity engages students in critical thinking and self-reflection about their community by asking them to identify different aspects of their community and generate ideas for improvement.

Ask students to fill in the Community Assessment worksheet after reflecting on the people and places that define their community, its strengths and weaknesses, and what they wish they could change.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS TO CONSIDER:

- What are things you or your friends have complained about in this community?
- Are there parts of your community that you feel don’t reflect the values or needs of those in the community?
- Are there parts of your day that rarely go smoothly?
- If you were showing a new student around, is there a part of the community you would purposely not show them or tell them about?
- If you had a magic wand, what is one thing you would want to change about your community?

Tell students that Day 3 will give them the opportunity to dive deeper into the problems they just identified and gather input from other members of the community.
DAY 3 CONDUCTING EMPATHY INTERVIEWS

30 minutes (5-10 minutes per interview) TIME

OBJECTIVE

Students will consider the perspectives and experiences of others by interviewing up to three classmates and listening to their opinions. By the end of this exercise, students will have a window into the problems others identified as well as feedback about how the problem they identified at the end of Day 2 affects others.

DIRECTIONS

Print and distribute the Empathy Interviews worksheet. Ask students to pick three people in their class to interview. They can use these questions as a starting point and also write their own.

- What do you think is the best thing about our community?
- What do you think is the biggest problem?
- Why do you think this is the biggest problem?
- Do you also see this as a problem?
- Why do you think this is a problem?
- Who is hurt by this problem? How do you know who is affected?
- If you experience this problem, how does it make you feel?
- What would happen if this problem was never solved?

Explain to students that they will use the insight from these interviews to better inform their problem statement in Days 4 and 5.
DAY 4 CONNECTING PASSIONS & PROBLEMS

45 minutes

The purpose of this exercise is for students to brainstorm possible solutions to the top problems they have identified and to decide which idea they are most excited to put into action.

By the end of this activity, students should have matched the problem they want to solve with an idea they want to develop based on their interests and talents.

OBJECTIVE

DIRECTIONS

STEP 1 DEFINING PROBLEMS & PASSIONS
Print and distribute the Problems & Passions worksheet. In the first two columns of the worksheet, ask students to list the problems they focused on during previous lessons and activities and name the groups affected by these issues.

In the third column, ask students to identify their passions and skills that could be used to address the problem.

STEP 2 BRINGING AN IDEA TO LIFE
In the fourth column, students should connect the dots between the problems they identified and their passions/skills to come up with a practical solution that they can implement with the resources they have available.

Ask students to think through how they could realistically put their ideas into action by identifying what actions they could take in an hour, a week, and a month.

Tomorrow is the big day! Tell students that Day 5 is when they’ll create a project profile from all the work they’ve done so far and all the information they’ve gathered from their worksheets, interviews, discussions, and reflections.
DAY 5  CREATING A PROJECT PROFILE

By the end of this activity, students should have a well-defined vision, purpose, and plan and feel prepared to take action.

OBJECTIVE

Your students may be at different points in their changemaking journeys. Some may have a solid idea about their project plan and who will be part of their team, while others may still be searching for an issue.

If students are not ready to start building out their project plan, invite them to continue visualizing the problem, their proposed solution(s), and their passions. Either using the Project Profile Worksheet or a journal, invite students to reflect on the following:

• The problem I want to solve is...
• This problem affects...
• My vision for the future is...
• I am passionate about this because...
• Words and images that relate to the problem include...
• Once this problem is addressed, my community will feel...

This activity can be done individually, in pairs, or in small groups based on your students’ interests and progress thus far. Students should be encouraged to find others with similar problems and passions to see if they want to collaborate on designing a solution together. Share the Project Profile worksheet for students to use as they complete the following steps.

The Youth Challenge application will ask students to share why they are passionate about this problem and/or idea. These reflection questions can prepare them to answer that question confidently!

DIRECTIONS

STEP ➊ BRAINSTORMING A PROJECT NAME

Start with brainstorming project names. The name should be creative, catchy, and reflective of the project’s purpose.

The Youth Challenge application begins with asking students to share their project’s name.
STEP 2 DESIGNING THE LOGO

Next, have students design a logo, which is a visual representation of their project. It should be unique and memorable and convey the essence of their idea. Ask them to describe the logos of some of their favorite products for inspiration.

Examples of logos:

- Nike
- Apple
- American Red Cross
- Disney
- WWF
- Boys & Girls Clubs of America
- Olympic Games
- TikTok

In the Youth Challenge application, there is a space to upload a visual, such as a logo or banner, that represents their project.
STEP 3 CREATING A PROJECT STATEMENT

Ask students to describe their solution in one sentence. This statement should capture the essence of the project’s goals and the broader impact it aims to achieve.

Examples:

For Elementary School Students:

- Planting Smiles Garden: We’re going to create a beautiful garden at our school to make everyone happy and teach about taking care of nature.
- Kindness Cards: We’ll make special cards with nice messages and give them to people in our community to spread happiness and kindness.
- Clean-Up Crew: We’re forming a team to clean up our playground and keep it tidy, so everyone can enjoy a clean and safe place to play.
- Recycling Heroes: We’re going to learn about recycling and set up special bins at school to help save the Earth by recycling.

For Middle and High School Students:

- HydroHeroes Run: Organizing a charity run to raise funds and awareness for clean water for the purpose of providing accessible and safe drinking water to those in need.
- CyberKind Campaign: Establishing a student-led campaign to combat cyberbullying through education, awareness, and fostering a culture of online respect.
- Harmony Harvest: Creating a community garden initiative that promotes sustainable urban farming, fosters neighborhood unity, and addresses food insecurity.
- Buddy Bench: Initiating a ‘Buddy Bench’ project to combat loneliness and promote inclusivity, encouraging students to reach out and make new friends.

The project statement should feel realistic and achievable while staying true to their ambitions and creativity.
STEP 4 FROM IDEA TO ACTION

This step could also be a homework assignment.

Now that students have a vision for their projects, invite them to answer the following questions:

1. What is your goal?
2. Who will you need on your team?
3. How will you put your idea into action?

WRAP-UP

Once students have completed their project names, logos, project statements, and project summaries, encourage them to present their ideas to the class. Students can take turns displaying their project name, logo, and statement and explaining why their problem or cause matters to them and how they will take action.

By sharing with others, students will be able to receive feedback from their peers about their ideas and further refine their project plan before they start their application. For students who prefer to submit their application as a video, the exercise of presenting their project to the class is excellent preparation for recording the video submission.

It’s time to apply! For instructions about how to complete the application, visit the application guide.
APPENDIX

WORKSHEETS

WHAT IS A CHANGEMAKER?

VISITOR MAP

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

EMPATHY INTERVIEWS

PASSIONS & PROBLEMS

PROJECT PROFILE

EDUCATOR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & TIPS

EXAMPLES OF PROJECT IDEAS
## WHAT IS A CHANGEMAKER?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT SKILLS DO CHANGEMAKERS HAVE?</th>
<th>WHICH OF THESE SKILLS DO YOU POSESS?</th>
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<tr>
<th>HOW DO PEOPLE CREATE CHANGE?</th>
<th>WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHANGEMAKER?</th>
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<tr>
<th>WHO IN YOUR LIFE IS A CHANGEMAKER?</th>
<th>WHERE DO YOU SEE PEOPLE CREATING CHANGE?</th>
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VISITOR MAP

Pretend a visitor shows up in your community. This person knows absolutely nothing about you and your community. If you were to take this person on a tour of the community, where would you take them? What best represents your surrounding community?
## BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEATURES</th>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>FUTURE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the features and spaces that make up your community?</td>
<td>Why are you focused on this feature of your community? What effect does it have?</td>
<td>If you could change one thing about this feature, what would it be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ex: Library</em></td>
<td><em>Ex: There are few stories written by BIPOC authors or that feature BIPOC characters.</em></td>
<td><em>Ex: I would increase the number of books featuring BIPOC authors and characters and add more diversity in general.</em></td>
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### REFLECT:

| If you could do anything on your list above, what would it be? |
| Why do you care about changing this feature of your school or community? |
| Who could help you address this problem? Who could you talk to? |
# Empathy Interviews

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<th>Question List</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
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</table>
### PASSIONS & PROBLEMS

**BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS:**

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<tr>
<th>PROBLEMS</th>
<th>GROUP(S) AFFECTED</th>
<th>PASSIONS &amp; SKILLS</th>
<th>POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ex: Bullying</td>
<td>Ex: Younger students and other vulnerable populations</td>
<td>Ex: dance, cooking, writing songs, and making TikTok videos</td>
<td>Ex: I’ll create a campaign where I write lyrics to an anti-bullying song and record it on TikTok. Then, I’ll share it with the school community and challenge students to create their own TikToks about their experiences being bullied or why we should all stand up against bullies.</td>
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For inspiration, consider...

- What is the wildest idea out there?
- What is one thing that would be really fun for a whole group of your friends to do together?
- What is the silliest thing you could get your friends to do with you?
- What is something that would show your community how powerful young people can be?

### HOW COULD WE SOLVE THE PROBLEM...

| In one hour? | |
| In one week? | |
| In one month? | |
## Project Profile

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The Problem I Want to Solve Is...</th>
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<tr>
<th>Words and Images That Relate to the Problem Include...</th>
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<tr>
<th>This Problem Affects...</th>
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<th>Once This Problem Is Addressed, My Community Will Feel...</th>
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<th>My Vision for the Future Is...</th>
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<th>I Am Passionate About This Because...</th>
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It’s time to apply! For instructions about how to complete the application, visit the application guide.

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**PROJECT PROFILE**

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<th>PROJECT LOGO</th>
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<th>PROJECT SUMMARY</th>
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<th>MY GOAL</th>
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<th>MY TEAM</th>
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<th>MY 3 NEXT STEPS</th>
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It’s time to apply! For instructions about how to complete the application, visit the application guide.
EDUCATOR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & TIPS

What if my students can’t find any problems in their school or community?

Identifying a problem may seem overwhelming to students. Help them narrow their focus by considering these questions:

- Are there parts of your school that you feel don’t live up to the values of your school community?
- Do you notice things that feel unfair? What injustices do you see?
- Are there parts of your school day that rarely go smoothly?
- Is there a part of your day where you often feel upset or frustrated?
- If you had a magic wand, what is one thing you would want to change about the school or community?
- What are the parts of the day you feel most happy or at ease? How could you create more of these moments?
- Are there any activities in the school day that bring you joy? How could you grow or apply this activity to other areas?

What if my student has identified a problem, but it seems too massive (e.g., homelessness) to tackle?

Help students break down a big problem into more manageable components using these questions:

- How does this issue show up day to day for you?
- How do you know there is a problem? What do you see or hear that shows the problem exists?
- If you had to draw a picture of this issue, what would the picture look like?
- Can you give some specific examples of how this problem affects people in our community?
- How does this issue affect different age groups or demographics in your community?
- What factors contribute to or cause this problem?
- How does this issue make you feel when you think about it or encounter it in your daily life?
- Can you recall a specific incident or story that illustrates the challenges associated with this issue?
- Are there common misconceptions or things that people don’t fully understand about this problem?
What if students have problems coming up with passions and talents?

Passions are closely tied to identity. To help students name passions that resonate with their sense of self, ask them to reflect on these questions:

- What activities make you lose track of time because you enjoy them so much?
- If you could design your dream day, what would you do?
- If we were to ask your friends what you are the best at, what would they say?
- Are there groups or clubs you are part of outside of school? Church groups? Sports leagues? Other clubs?
- What compliments or positive feedback have you received from others about things you do well?
- Is there a particular subject or topic in school that you feel excited about or excel in?

What if they are unable to match a passion or talent with a problem?

To help students find connections between their passions and problems in the community, have them answer these questions:

- Are there any community members who could benefit from your skills or talents to solve a specific issue?
- What is the wackiest connection you could make from your list of problems and passions?
- Are there any ideas you have ever had about how to create change in the world? What are they?
- What did you learn from your empathy interviews? What did you hear that surprised you?
- What would be the easiest problem to match with a passion?
- Have you ever had an “A-ha” moment where you’ve thought, why has no one ever thought of or tried this before?
EXAMPLES OF PROJECT IDEAS

FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

Here are some ideas for social projects that elementary students can undertake to make a positive impact on their community:

- **Trash Cleanup**: Organize a community clean-up event to pick up litter and beautify local parks, playgrounds, or streets.
- **Kindness Rocks**: Paint inspirational messages or artwork on rocks and leave them around the community to spread positivity.
- **Book Swap**: Set up a book exchange station where people can donate and borrow books for free, promoting literacy and a sense of community.
- **Thank You Cards**: Create and distribute handmade thank you cards to local firefighters, police officers, teachers, or healthcare workers to show appreciation.
- **Community Art Project**: Organize an art project where children create colorful murals or paintings to decorate public spaces.
- **Senior Outreach**: Visit a local senior center and spend time chatting, playing games, or doing crafts with the elderly residents.
- **Recycling Initiative**: Promote recycling within the community by creating informative posters or bins for collecting recyclables.
- **Supporting Animal Shelters**: Collect donations for animal shelters — such as pet food, blankets, and toys — and deliver them to a local animal shelter.
- **Environmental Awareness Campaign**: Raise awareness about environmental issues, such as pollution or water conservation, through informational campaigns and interactive activities.
FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Here are some ideas for social projects that middle and high school students can undertake to make a positive impact on their community:

Climate Change & Environmental Justice
- Launch a recycling program in school and advocate for sustainable practices.
- Organize a community clean-up day where students can pick up litter on their school premises or nearby public spaces.

Literacy & Reading
- Start a Little Free Library in your neighborhood or school with used books for students to read.
- Create a reading buddy program for older students to read to younger students once a week.

Education Equity
- Establish a peer tutoring program within the school, where older students can volunteer their time to help younger students with their academic subjects.
- Establish a pen pal program between students from different schools or even across different communities.

Racism, Xenophobia & Inclusion
- Organize a cultural awareness fair to celebrate diversity and educate the community about diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Homophobia & Queer Rights
- Establish a safe space club or support group for LGBTQ+ students.
- Collaborate with local organizations to raise funds for LGBTQ+ causes.

Food Insecurity & Food Access
- Start a school-based food pantry or organize food drives to support local families in need.
- Create a community garden to grow fresh produce for donation to local food banks.

Homelessness & Housing
- Collaborate with local shelters to organize donation drives for essential items.
- Volunteer at homeless shelters and initiate campaigns to destigmatize homelessness.

Animal Cruelty & Animal Rights
- Raise awareness about responsible pet ownership through informational campaigns.
- Advocate for stronger animal welfare laws by writing letters to policymakers.

Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Conduct workshops or seminars on effective time management and self-care techniques for students.
- Create a support network or buddy system to promote peer support and mental well-being.
First Book and Ashoka are working to equip a generation of educators and young people with the abilities needed to take action to make sustainable change in low-income and historically excluded communities in the U.S. and in countries around the world.

**ABOUT FIRST BOOK**
Founded in Washington, D.C., in 1992 as a 501(c)3 nonprofit social enterprise, First Book is a leader in the educational equity field. Over its 30-year history, First Book has distributed more than 225 million books and educational resources, with a retail value of more than $2 billion. First Book believes education offers children in need the best path out of poverty. First Book breaks down barriers to quality education by providing its Network of more than 550,000 registered teachers, librarians, after school program leaders, and others serving children in need with millions of free and affordable new, high-quality books, educational resources, and basic needs items through the award-winning First Book Marketplace nonprofit eCommerce site. The First Book Network comprises the largest and fastest-growing community of formal and informal educators serving children in need.

**ABOUT ASHOKA**
Ashoka is the largest global network of leading social entrepreneurs—individuals with new ideas to systemically address the world’s biggest challenges and the entrepreneurial skill to transform those ideas into social impact. Over 40 years, Ashoka has supported more than 4,000 social entrepreneurs in more than 90 countries with solutions addressing society’s most pressing issues. Ashoka’s vision is a world in which Everyone is a Changemaker—a society that responds quickly and effectively to challenges, and where each person has the freedom, confidence, and societal support to address any social problem. For more information, visit [ashoka.org](http://ashoka.org).