

In this lesson, students will learn about entrepreneurship and common characteristics shared by entrepreneurs. They will also be introduced to four of North Dakota's greatest entrepreneurial successes.

## Supplies

- David Houston: "[David Houston: Genius of the Prairie,](#)" *North Dakota Horizons*
- Lawrence Welk: "[How An Accordion-Playing Big Bandleader Named Lawrence Welk Became The Richest Celebrity On The Planet 50 Years Ago,](#)" *Celebrity Net Worth*
- Harry Hayashi: "[Harry Hayashi and the Rainbow Gardens,](#)" *Prairie Public*
- Norma Baker-Flying Horse: "[This Indigenous Mom's Love for Fashion Led to a Business,](#)" *Parents*

## Setup

- Make copies of or have digital access to the articles above for the students.

## Objectives

- Students will be able to explain what an entrepreneur is.
- Students will identify some of the characteristics that successful entrepreneurs have in common.
- Students will learn about at least four entrepreneurs from North Dakota.

## Background

An entrepreneur is an individual who takes the initiative to start a business or organization. The individual creates a new product, service, or business concept. There are many sources that identify the characteristics of an entrepreneur, and each varies slightly. According to one source, [Harvard Business School](#), entrepreneurs typically share multiple characteristics such as a willingness to take risks, innovative thinking, curiosity, adaptability, decisiveness, persistence, and comfort with failure.

Entrepreneurs are responsible for organizing resources, making strategic decisions, and managing the day-to-day operations of their ventures.

North Dakota history is full of successful entrepreneurs including David Houston, Lawrence Welk, Harry Hayashi, and Norma Baker-Flying Horse. Since North Dakota became a state, there have been entrepreneurs that have become successful on the national and international levels.

## Activity

1. Tell the students that they will be learning about highly successful entrepreneurs from North Dakota.
2. Ask "What is an entrepreneur?"
3. After some discussion, share a definition with them.
4. State the following: "According to one source, [Harvard Business School](#), entrepreneurs typically share multiple characteristics such as a willingness to take risks, innovative thinking, curiosity, adaptability, decisiveness, persistence, and comfort with failure."
5. Introduce the students to Harry Hayashi, Norma Baker-Flying Horse, Lawrence Welk, and David Houston as four very successful entrepreneurs.
6. Have the students choose one of them (or you choose an individual for the students). While reading, have the students annotate on the page the characteristics of entrepreneurs as provided by Harvard Business School in No. 4 above.
7. Lead a discussion about the four entrepreneurs and the characteristics identified by Harvard Business School.
  - a. How many characteristics did each individual have?

- b. Which characteristic seemed to have the greatest impact on the individual's success?
- c. Do you feel the characteristics identified by Harvard Business School made the individual a success or do you attribute their success to something else?

## **Extension**

1. Have the students research new businesses in North Dakota and identify the characteristics of an entrepreneur. Students could compare their findings and guess which new business might be the next "big thing" for North Dakota.
2. Have students research another entrepreneur from North Dakota who has been successful.
3. Have students interview local business owners and determine if they have the characteristics listed by Harvard Business School.

## **Reflection questions**

1. What entrepreneurial characteristics do you have? Do you think you could start a new business and be successful?
2. What might be a business that is needed in our community or in the state?