

# Competition

## Lesson Plan

  
SkillsUSA®

 Middle School  
MOMENTUM





## **Competition**

Lesson Plan

**SkillsUSA Customer Care**

CALL: 844-875-4557

EMAIL: [customercare@skillsusa.org](mailto:customercare@skillsusa.org)

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# SkillsUSA Competition

## Activity 1: Thrive Through Competitions

**Goal of the Activity:** Identify benefits of competition and list SkillsUSA competitions.

**Activity Overview:** Students will compete in a collaborative design competition. They will discuss the benefits of competition including the development of Personal Skills, Workplace Skills, and Technical Skills Grounded in Academics. Then watch a SkillsUSA Championships promotional video. Students will view a list of SkillsUSA middle school competitions and ultimately select one that they might want to participate in this year.

**Middle School Momentum:** SkillsUSA Competitions

**Time Required:** 55 minutes (if time is limited, shorten the design times of the competition rounds or only complete two of the three rounds)

**Suggested participants:** All middle school students

**Materials Needed:** Lesson PowerPoint Slide deck (optional), paper, measuring tape or ruler (optional), stopwatch (optional), and A/V equipment.

### Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. Identify several benefits of competition
2. Select one SkillsUSA Competition to learn more about and try this year.



### Facilitation Instructions

**Part 1: Spark interest and set the stage (3 minutes)**

**Say:** “Each new year, we make resolutions and set goals. What are some resolutions you have made, or resolutions others have made?” (allow for several responses)

**Do:** Show a picture of a winning SkillsUSA competition team from your chapter or use Slide 3 from the lesson PowerPoint.

**Say:** “I want you to have an experience like these students this year. Not necessarily winning a medal, although that would be nice, but having the opportunity to compete through SkillsUSA. SkillsUSA competitions let students sharpen their skills and there are numerous benefits.”



## Part 2: Collaborative design competitions (40 minutes)

**Say:** “*Competition is not a zero-sum game of winners and losers. The competition process drives the development of Personal Skills, Workplace Skills, and Technical Skills Grounded in Academics. Today you will work in teams to design the best paper airplane. Each round, I will give you a different challenge and evaluation criteria.*”

### **✂ Activity: Round One: Fastest Airplane**

1. Divide students into groups of three or four.
2. Give each group a stack of paper.
3. Announce the round one goal is to make the fastest airplane and they will be evaluated over from the start line to the finish line.
4. Give a time limit of five minutes.
5. Monitor groups as they design and fold their planes.
6. After five minutes, race the planes against each other by having one representative from each group stand on the start line and race the planes at the same time.

**Say:** “*This competition motivated your teams and helped you mobilize your team and resources to accomplish the goal. Now, your teams will redesign your planes.*”

### **✂ Activity: Round Two: Furthest Flight**

1. Announce the round two goal is to make the plane fly the furthest.
2. Give a time limit of five minutes.
3. Monitor groups as they redesign and fold their planes.
4. After five minutes, test the planes against each other by having one representative from each group stand on the start line and launch the planes at the same time.

**Say:** “*This competition had a different objective, to design a plane that went the farthest versus going the fastest. This required a different approach. Your teams embraced calculated change and fostered creativity and new ideas. Next, your teams will do another redesign.*”

### **✂ Activity: Round Three: Team Flight**

1. Announce the round four goal is get your team’s plane to the finish line, without physically touching the plane; this includes that you may not throw the plane to start the competition.
2. Give a time limit of five minutes.
3. Monitor groups as they plan.
4. After five minutes, test the planes one or two groups at a time.

**Say:** “*This round of the competition required immense teamwork to succeed. It challenged some assumptions as your previous designs might have completely failed in this round. The Essential Elements of teamwork and adaptability/flexibility are necessary for competitions in sports, business, and academia.*”

**Do:** Show image of the SkillsUSA Framework or use Slide 9 from the lesson PowerPoint

**Say:** *“Which SkillsUSA Framework components and essential elements did you practice today? Explain.”* (allow a few responses)

**Say:** *“What did you learn about design or physics with each new challenge?”* (allow a few responses)

**Say:** *“How did your strategy change from round to round?”* (allow for a few responses)

**Say:** *“How did your team work together to solve these problems?”* (allow for a few responses)

**Say:** *“Was winning the only valuable part of this activity? What else did you gain?”* (allow for a few responses)

**Say:** *“Competition is a powerful learning tool. It lets us practice the SkillsUSA Framework. The benefits are much bigger than a medal.”*

### **Part 3: SkillsUSA Championships Promotional Video (5 minutes)**

**Say:** *“Let’s see what competition in SkillsUSA looks like.”*

**Do:** Show the SkillsUSA Championships [promotional video](#); also linked on Slide 10 of the PowerPoint slide deck.

**Do:** Discuss the students’ reaction to the video.

### **Part 4: List of SkillsUSA Middle School Competitions (3 minutes)**

**Say:** *“There are 115 different national competition areas. Middle School students may compete in some of these.”*

**Do:** Show students the list of [middle school competitions](#) or use slides 11-13 of the slide deck. Point out areas that your chapter has participated in, specific competitions that you think the class might be interested in and/or areas tied to your CTE area.

### **Part 5: Closing (4 minutes)**

#### **✍ Activity: SkillsUSA Competition Resolution**

1. Have each student share aloud one competition they would like to try this year.
2. Then have each student think about the benefits of SkillsUSA competition, and complete the statement about one thing they will learn or practice through the competition: “This year I will ...” Students should write down their competition resolution.

**Say:** *“SkillsUSA competitions are just one way that SkillsUSA helps you grow and become career ready.”*



### Tips For Success:

- ✓ Keep the Groups small; no more than four Encourage Students to try a SkillsUSA competition.
- ✓ Emphasize the benefits of competition and help students remember that everyone wins when they become career ready.
- ✓ Practice using the language of the SkillsUSA Framework so the Essential Elements and Descriptors become part of daily classroom conversations.

### Conclusion:

SkillsUSA offers numerous opportunities for students to sharpen their skills through competitions. There are many benefits of student participation. There are specific competitions for middle school students.

### Expand your Skills:

The [Competitions](#) section of the SkillsUSA website includes an overview and competition descriptions. [Specific technical standards](#) and rules are housed in SkillsUSA Pathful.





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