

Explorers

Explorers review what worked, pitch what comes next, and leave with names, dates and real ownership.

Ages 14-18

Unit

Unit Forum

YouShape Award available

Run the session

Total: 1 hour 45 minutes

0:00	Arrival and check-in Kettle on. Chair confirms the agenda and what is being decided tonight.	LEAD
0:15	Review - Speedy Scouting Two rows, five minutes a pair: three things that worked, three that did not, three to improve.	REPRESENT
0:45	Generate and pitch - Dragon's Den Teams develop one idea each - cost, transport, permits, who is coming - and pitch it.	PLAN
1:15	Make it real - Hot Air Balloon For the winning idea: what makes it fly, who helps, and what is holding it back.	PLAN
1:35	Actions Put names and dates against every rope. The Chair writes them up.	LEAD
1:45	Closing Confirm what goes in the programme, who is booking what, and when the Unit hears back.	CLOSE THE LOOP

Volunteer cue: the point of the night is not just to collect opinions. Finish with a real decision, a clear next step and a date for when the section will hear back.

How to run each activity

Use this page alongside the timeline. The steps explain the practical set-up, what the facilitator says or does, and what must be recorded before moving on.

Arrival and check-in

0:00

1. Have the agenda, current programme, real budget figure and known constraints visible before people arrive.
2. The Chair opens informally, checks who is present and states the decisions that must be made tonight. Keep general notices short.
3. Confirm what has already been decided elsewhere and what the Unit genuinely owns.

Record: Record attendance, the decisions required and any fixed constraints.

Make it real - Hot Air Balloon

1:15

1. Draw a large hot air balloon. Write the chosen project in the balloon.
2. Add "what makes it fly" around the burner or inside the balloon: enthusiasm, skills, money, equipment, contacts or a strong purpose. Add people who can help as passengers or ground crew.
3. Write blockers as ropes or sandbags: cost, transport, booking deadlines, permits, numbers or safety issues. For each blocker, ask what would release the rope.

Record: Record supporters, enablers, blockers and the action needed to deal with each blocker.

Review - Speedy Scouting

0:15

1. Make two rows facing each other. Give each pair the same three prompts: what worked, what did not, and what should improve.
2. Run several five-minute rounds, moving one row along each time so people speak to different Explorers. Ask pairs to capture short notes rather than full minutes.
3. Use the final ten minutes to bring repeated themes back to the whole Unit. Group similar points and identify the two or three lessons that should affect future plans.

Record: Record repeated themes, not every individual comment.

Actions

1:35

1. Turn every unresolved rope or blocker into a specific action. Use the format: action - owner - deadline - budget if relevant.
2. Ask people to volunteer rather than the Chair allocating everything. Check that the owner has actually agreed.
3. Put the actions somewhere the Unit can see after the meeting - shared chat, noticeboard or next agenda.

Record: Record an owner and date for every action.

Generate and pitch - Dragon's Den

0:45

1. Split into small teams and give each team one idea to develop, either chosen from earlier suggestions or created now.
2. Use a simple pitch sheet: what is the idea; why should we do it; who is it for; likely cost; transport; permits/permissions; key risks or constraints; first step.
3. Give teams development time, then a short pitch and questions. The Unit chooses the strongest idea using agreed criteria rather than who presents loudest.

Record: Record each proposal, headline cost, constraints and the chosen idea.

Closing

1:45

1. Read back the final decision and show where it sits in the programme.
2. Confirm who is booking, contacting or costing each part. Name the next checkpoint or update date.
3. If something could not be agreed tonight, say exactly what information is missing and who will bring it back.

Record: Record what is now in the programme and the next update date.

Prep, record, close the loop

Before they arrive

- ✓ Agenda and the decisions that need making
- ✓ Real budget figure and known constraints
- ✓ Paper/notes for Speedy Scouting
- ✓ Pitch sheets or large paper
- ✓ Access to cost, transport and permit information
- ✓ Hot Air Balloon sheet / large paper
- ✓ Action list with owner and due date columns
- ✓ Kettle and mugs optional but strongly on-brand for the source plan

What to record

- ✓ Three things that worked / did not / should improve
- ✓ Each team's proposed idea and headline costs
- ✓ Winning idea
- ✓ What helps and what blocks it
- ✓ Owner and date for each action
- ✓ What is now in the programme
- ✓ When the Unit gets the next update

Facilitation notes

- Give the Chair the agenda and constraints before the meeting.
- Use real numbers rather than invented "youth choice" budgets.
- Volunteers should advise on safety/legal constraints without taking back the decision.
- Every action must have a named owner and a date before the meeting ends.

End-of-night check

- ✓ Did young people make at least one genuine decision?
- ✓ Did somebody young lead part of the session?
- ✓ Have you named what happens next?
- ✓ Have you said when you will update them?

Keep it going next meeting

Hand over the agenda

Ask an Explorer to chair the next Unit Forum. Give them the agenda, budget and constraints a week ahead; volunteers sit at the side.

Give them the real numbers

Show what a camp actually costs - site, transport, food and kit - so the Unit can make an informed decision.

Close the loop

YOU SAID

WE DID

WE COULD NOT YET

NEXT UPDATE

Use these four headings at the next meeting, on a noticeboard or in your parent/carer update. Showing what happened after young people spoke is what makes the next forum worth taking seriously.