



Drone Exploring: Career Spotlights

Independent Contractor — Club

Overview: Some drone pilots don't work for one company. Instead, they run their own small business, combining several kinds of jobs like wedding videos, sports games, and personal family projects to earn money. In this session, youth explore different ways a person could someday earn money with a drone, and practice brainstorming and pitching their own simple drone business idea.

OBJECTIVES

- Introduce youth to the idea of freelance and independent drone work as a possible future path.
- Explore different services a person could offer using a drone (events, sports, personal projects).
- Practice brainstorming and pitching a simple business idea through a hands-on activity.
- Build awareness that earning money with a drone requires growing up, getting trained, and following rules.

SUPPLIES

- Flip chart or whiteboard and markers
- Index cards for brainstorming
- Sample photos or video clips of drone footage from weddings, sports events, and family projects
- Printed handouts: Ways to Earn Money with a Drone and Pitch Your Drone Business

ADVISOR NOTES

- Be clear that legally getting paid to fly a drone requires being at least 16 and holding an FAA certificate. This session is about exploring future possibilities, not earning money now.
- Encourage entrepreneurial thinking: there's no single "right" business idea, and combining a few different services is common for real freelancers.
- Keep the tone playful and idea-focused rather than getting into legal or financial detail (that's covered in the Post-level version of this session).
- Consider inviting a guest speaker (a local freelance drone photographer or videographer or small business owner) to share how they combine different jobs. See Optional Extensions.
- If no guest speaker is available, Advisors can run the entire session using this outline and the resource links below.

SESSION OUTLINE

- **Welcome and Icebreaker** (10 min)
 - "Dream Job:" Ask youth what event or moment they'd most want to get paid to film someday (a wedding, a big game, a family trip).
- **Safety Moment (Rules Come Before Money)** (10 min)
 - Anyone who wants to get paid to fly a drone must be at least 16 and pass an official FAA test first.
 - Even a small business must follow safety and privacy rules just like any other drone pilot.
 - Ask: "Why do you think the rules are the same whether someone is flying for fun or flying for money?"
- **Mini-Lesson: Ways People Earn Money with a Drone** (15 min)
 - Discuss different services: wedding and event videos, sports game highlights, family portrait sessions, holiday videos, and helping local businesses promote themselves.
 - Explain that many freelancers combine several of these services instead of doing just one, so they have steadier work throughout the year.
- **Activity: Business Idea Brainstorm** (15–20 min)
 - In small groups, use index cards to brainstorm at least 5 different things a person could get paid to film with a drone.

- Sort the ideas into categories: events, personal or family, and community or business.
- **Activity: Pitch Your Drone Business (20 min)**
 - Using the Pitch Your Drone Business handout, small groups design a simple business: a name, the service(s) offered, and who would want to hire them.
 - Groups prepare a short pitch to present to the rest of the group.
- **Wrap-Up Share-Out (10 min)**
 - Groups pitch their drone business ideas, and the rest of the group gives friendly feedback.

REFLECTION SECTION

Advisor Note: Some sample questions are below. They are designed to help the participants apply what they have learned to their own interests. You are welcome to use these questions or develop your own.

Focusing Questions

- What was your favorite business idea your group came up with?
- Which service would you most want to offer if you started a drone business someday?

Analysis Questions

- Why might combining a few different services (weddings, sports, family projects) be smarter than offering just one?
- Why do you think the same safety rules apply whether someone is flying for fun or for pay?

Generalization Questions

- Where else in life could combining a few different skills or ideas create more opportunities?
- What's one skill you'd want to build now that could help you run a business later, drone-related or not?

Challenge: This week, notice one local business or event and think of one way a drone could help promote or document it.

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

Guest Speaker: Invite a local freelance drone photographer and videographer or small business owner to share how they combine different kinds of jobs, in person or by video call.

Advisor-Led Option: If a guest speaker isn't available, Advisors can run this session using the outline above and the resource links below. No outside expert is required.

Resource Links: Search "how drone photographers make money" on a video platform for kid-friendly explainer videos.

Group Extension: Design a simple logo or flyer for your group's drone business idea.

Handout: Ways to Earn Money with a Drone

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Read through the categories below before starting your brainstorm.

Events

Weddings, sports games, festivals, and community events often hire drone photographers or videographers for aerial coverage.

Personal and Family Projects

Some people pay for drone photos or video of family portraits, holiday gatherings, or special moments like graduations.

Community and Business Projects

Local businesses, farms, and nonprofits sometimes hire drone operators to help promote their property or events.

Combining Services

Many freelance drone operators offer more than one of these services so they have work throughout the year.

Handout: Pitch Your Drone Business

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With your group, design a simple drone business idea and fill in the details below.

Business Name	Service(s) Offered	Who Would Hire You?