

FAMILY GUIDE



The Grade 5 and Grade 8 Capstone

What to expect

A real project, not a test.

An optional invitation to design, build, and present something that matters.

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The invitation

What it is

At the end of Grade 5 and again at the end of Grade 8, learners have the option to complete a Capstone: a real project your child designs, builds, and presents instead of a test.

Optional means optional

Choosing not to take part does not affect your child's transcript, portfolio, or progression. A Capstone is an invitation, never a requirement.

Why this matters

Entrepreneurship, problem-solving, and presenting an idea with confidence are useful wherever life leads: a future business, a job interview, further study, community work, or simply the confidence to stand up and explain an idea clearly.

A worksheet can introduce parts of that work. Building something real, learning from what changes, and answering thoughtful questions brings the parts together.

Two equally valid directions

Enterprise

A product, service, or business idea with a real problem, a workable plan, and honest numbers.

Social impact

A project designed around a community or environmental need, with a realistic plan for making a difference.

The project may also be a blend: a business that does real good. What matters is that your child identifies a genuine problem and builds an honest plan to address it.

Grade 5 and Grade 8

Grade 5

Usually a small business, product, service, or community idea that a learner can explore and explain clearly.

Grade 8

A larger systemic or social-enterprise problem, supported by deeper research, stronger financial thinking, and a multi-year view.

A learner may build on their Grade 5 Capstone at Grade 8 or begin again with a completely new idea. Both paths are equally valid.

Choosing and building

Choosing an idea

Start broad. Let your child brainstorm freely before worrying about whether an idea is “good enough.” Then narrow the list together to three to five ideas worth a closer look.

Do a little research and notice which ideas still hold your child’s interest after the first burst of excitement. Genuine curiosity a week later is often a better sign than enthusiasm on day one.

Before settling on an idea, ask:

- Does it still interest them once the initial excitement wears off?
- Does it fit comfortably within what your family is willing to spend?
- Can your child realistically take it on with guidance from you, another teacher, or an expert where that help is useful?
- Is the problem clear enough that your child can explain why it matters?

Help is part of real work

A Capstone does not have to be completed entirely alone. Asking for useful guidance, finding expertise, and changing course when evidence suggests it are all part of building something real.

What your child works through

1. Problem

Name the real need, frustration, or opportunity.

2. Idea

Describe the response and who it is for.

3. Plan

Work out the steps, resources, people, and timing.

4. Numbers

Explain costs, pricing, funding, savings, or measurable impact.

5. Action

Build, test, organize, research, or run a small version.

6. Reflection

Say what happened, what changed, and what your child learned.

The final pitch

When ready, your child prepares a 5-to-10-minute video or written pitch covering the problem, the idea, the plan, how it was carried out, challenges along the way, and the final result.

Ivy Waters sends participating families a private submission route, the relevant dates, and the ceremony instructions for their cohort.

Presentation and distinction

The Capstone Ceremony

Ivy Waters holds community Capstone Ceremonies live over Zoom. Ceremonies are planned for early June for Northern Hemisphere families and early December for Southern Hemisphere families. Participating families receive the exact date, access details, and submission timeline directly.

If your child submits a video and joins the ceremony, the pitch can be played to the group before questions. Families receive clear audience and participation details in advance.

Questions can flex

The question-and-answer element is a chance for your child to explain the choices behind the project. It is not a test of speed or performance.

- A learner who prefers preparation can receive the question topics in advance.
- A learner who does not want live questions can submit written answers.
- A learner may present in any language they are comfortable using.
- A family may ask for another reasonable format when disability, access, time zone, or wellbeing makes the standard format a poor fit.

What verified completion means

Verified completion means Ivy Waters confirms that the learner:

1. submitted a video or written pitch;
2. explained the project, process, and result; and
3. completed the question-and-answer element live or in an agreed written format.

Ivy Waters does not grade whether the idea is commercially successful or whether the delivery is polished. Verification confirms that the Capstone was completed.

Transcript notation

Once verified, the learner's record carries the notation "Completed with Capstone Distinction." Ordinary Capstone evidence or an unfinished submission does not create the distinction.

Building on an earlier project

A bracelet stall at Grade 5 might become a more developed business at Grade 8, with thoughtful sourcing, proper margins, and a social contribution. A neighborhood book-swap might grow into a wider reading program. Starting fresh is just as valid.

Making it work for your child

Presentation formats

Your child can present in the setting that helps them do their best work:

- directly to camera;
- to family and friends at home;
- live to a pod or co-op, with that presentation recorded; or
- in a written format when presenting on camera is not the right fit.

A recorded pod, co-op, family, or friend presentation can serve as the submitted presentation. Ceremony participation and the question-and-answer format are agreed with Ivy Waters for the learner.

Any language

Your child may present in the language they are most comfortable using. There is no requirement to pitch in English. Ivy Waters will confirm practical arrangements for review and questions before submission.

Privacy and sharing

Use only the personal detail the project needs. A child's first name and country are usually enough. Avoid specific home addresses, exact locations, full names of other children, or unnecessary customer and neighbor details.

Ivy Waters uses submitted pitch material to review the Capstone and, when the family chooses ceremony presentation, to support that event. It is not published publicly without guardian permission. Any optional public sharing, including a public video channel, requires a separate, explicit family decision.

Budget

A strong Capstone does not require spending money. Choose a scale that fits comfortably within your family's budget. Research, prototypes made from materials already at home, interviews, plans, service projects, and small trials can all show serious work.

The right level of challenge

The project should stretch the learner without consuming family life. Scope can be reduced, a prototype can replace a full launch, and the plan can change when reality teaches something new.

Timing and Grade 5 ideas

When to start

A good time to begin deciding is when your child joins Ivy Waters or starts Grade 5 or Grade 8, whichever comes first.

As a rough guide, allow at least:

Grade 5: three months

Enough time to choose, build or test a small idea, prepare the pitch, and reflect.

Grade 8: five months

More time for systems research, a larger plan, stronger numbers, and deeper revision.

These are guides, not deadlines. Go at the pace that is right for your child and use the cohort dates Ivy Waters sends to your family.

Grade 5: enterprise ideas

Solve a small annoyance

A travel accessory, labeling system, or practical fix for something that repeatedly goes wrong at home.

Run a simple stall

A craft or food idea with real pricing, costs, and a profit margin.

Offer a service

Pet care, plant watering, or teaching a younger learner a useful skill.

Reuse materials

A product made from materials that would otherwise be discarded.

Create a small club

A monthly recipe card, bookmark, sticker, or mini book-box idea.

Test before scaling

A prototype or one-day trial that reveals what the full idea would need.

Grade 5: social-impact ideas

- A neighborhood cleanup or recycling drive with a plan for keeping it going.
- A little library or book-swap for other children.
- A fundraiser with a clear explanation of how the money will be used.
- Reading buddies, basic coding, or another skill shared with younger learners.

Grade 8 ideas and next steps

Grade 8: enterprise and social enterprise

Reduce waste

A composting, recycling, repair, or reuse system for a home, co-op, or neighborhood.

Link profit and purpose

A business that connects what it sells with a transparent contribution to a related cause.

Improve access

A low-cost product or service designed for a group that cannot easily access it today.

Connect local producers

A small marketplace or directory for makers, growers, repairers, or other local providers.

Grade 8: social-impact ideas

- A campaign about a real local issue such as water access, plastic waste, or food insecurity.
- A mentorship or tutoring program pairing older and younger learners.
- A food-waste or water-use reduction project with a plan for participation and measurement.
- A community guide to recycling, free services, or low-cost family activities.
- An analysis of a real supply chain or local business, with practical ideas for making it fairer or more sustainable.

Ideas are prompts, not a list to choose from

These are illustrations to help a family begin. Your child's project can take another form entirely if it begins with genuine interest and a real problem.

What happens next

Ivy Waters contacts Grade 5 and Grade 8 families directly to ask whether they would like to participate in that year's Capstone. This guide is here so you know what to expect before that conversation. There is nothing to submit or decide until your family receives the cohort invitation.

Questions about format, timing, budget, privacy, or access are welcome at support@ivywaters.com.

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