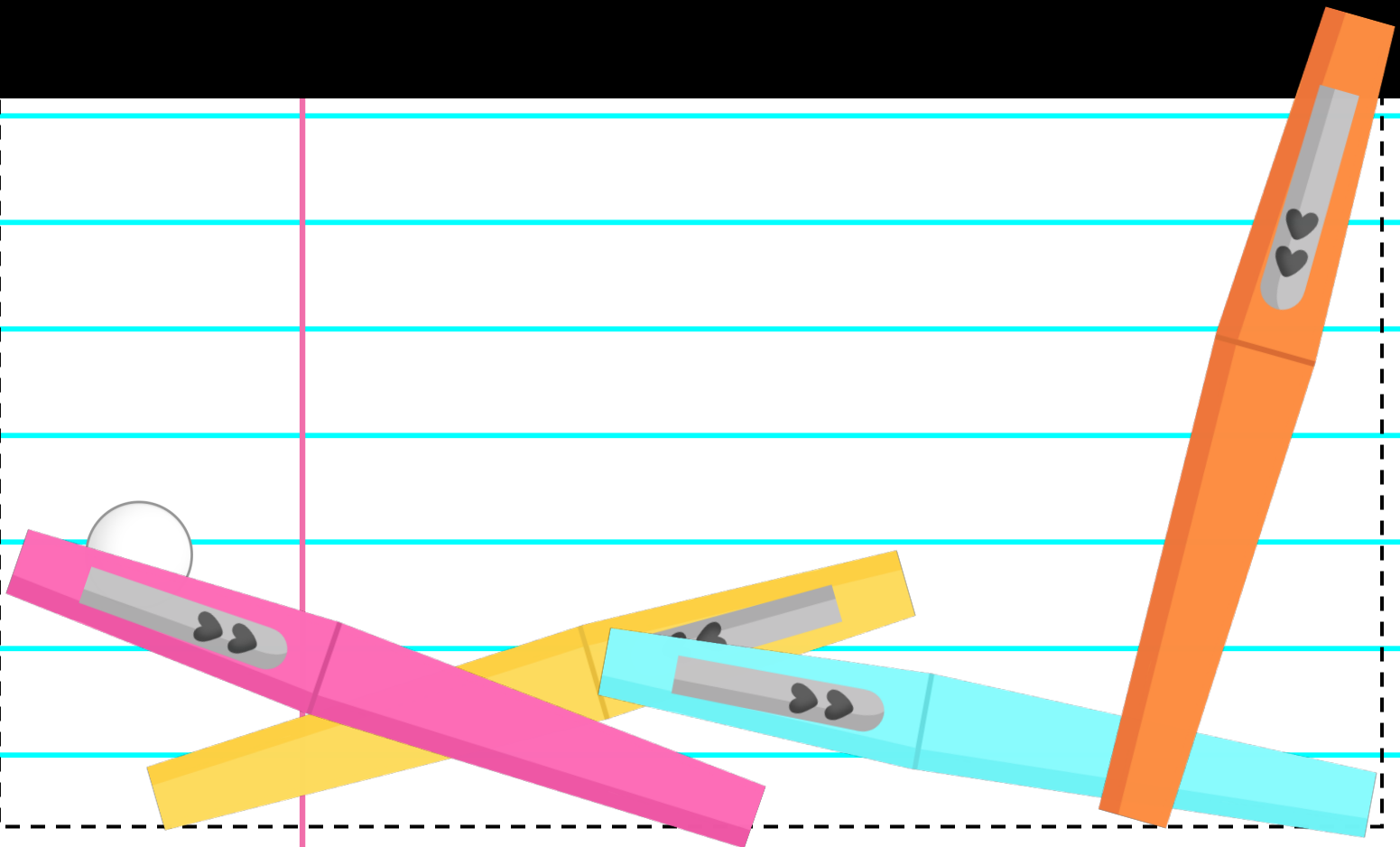# How to Start Your Own
TPT Business

My Story
(and a warning)

I started my Teachers Pay Teachers store, Not So Wimpy Teacher, back in 2013. I had a lot of digital scrapbooking experience, and I used this skill to learn how to create resources for my students. Since I had very little school-purchased curriculum, I had no choice but to make or buy my own materials. I set a goal to make $20 per month in my TPT store so that I could use that money to purchase $20 of resources for my students. That's it. I had no plans of creating a business.

It only took a few months for me to realize that I had set a goal that was way too low. As I put more time and energy into my resources, the cha-chings started to multiply. I started to dream about the big things that I might be able to do with my little store. Within a year, I was able to take my kids on our first family vacation.

But, here's the thing: TPT is not a get-rich-quick scheme! (Read that one again because it's really important.)

Yes, people have made great money on TPT. And you can make great money too. I'm all in on you setting some goals and dreaming big. Do you want to pay off your student loans? You can do it! Do you want to take your kids on a magical trip to Disney World? You can make that happen! Do you want to retire from teaching and spend more time with your spouse, children, or parents? Heck yeah! You can do that too.

The thing is, you will have to put in the work. You won't create one resource and become an instant millionaire. This guide is not your winning lottery ticket. It takes time, effort, and a willingness to learn.

As you get started, my best advice to you is to set aside time on your calendar every week for your new business. It might just be 30 minutes or an hour! Make this time a priority and use it to create resources and to learn from others. Don't feel guilty about the time you aren't spending on your business. Being intentional with your time will help to keep this new adventure fun!

♥ Jamie

Creating the Store

Niche

One of the easiest ways to be successful with your online business is to choose a niche and stick to it. There is a temptation to create a little of everything. However, being known for something will attract a loyal customer base that will come back to your store over and over. When choosing a niche, think about the subject or topic that you are most passionate about. What lights you up as a teacher? What could you talk about every single day without getting bored? Is it math? Science? Organization?

Once you have chosen a subject, be sure to nail down the grade level that your resources will be targeted toward. I recommend starting with just one grade level. You can always add another grade level if and when you want to down the road, but staying focused on one level will lead to better quality resources and repeat buyers.

Name

Naming your store is a whole lot like naming a child. You want to take some time to pick a name that will grow with your business. Changing your store name later is possible, but not recommended.

Here are a few things to consider:

- ✓ Consider a name that helps buyers know what your niche is.
- ✓ If you want to use your name, be certain it is an easy name to spell.
- ✓ Only include a grade level if you are certain that you will only be creating for that grade level.
- ✓ Check to be sure no one else is already using the name (or something super similar) on TPT.
- ✓ Check to be sure that the name is not already trademarked. (There are free trademark search tools available online.)

Creating the Store

Logo

You will need a circle logo button to upload into your TPT profile. You can change this logo later if you need to, so don't spend too much time overthinking it. Here are some tips to make the logo creation easier.

- ✓ Do a Google or Pinterest search for color pallets to help you choose a color combination that you love.

- ✓ If you are using any clipart in the logo, be certain to check the artist's terms of use to make certain they allow their work to be used in commercial logos.

- ✓ Consider hiring a graphic designer from a site like Fiverr to create the logo. This can be done very inexpensively and will save you lots of time and stress.

Pro Tip

You will get to choose whether you want to be a Basic Seller or a Premium Seller. Choose Premium right from the start! This will cost $60 per year, but it means that you will receive 80% of all sales. A Basic Seller only receives 55% of sales. You will make back the $60 very quickly with the extra sales commission!

Creating the Resources

What to Create

Sometimes it can be hard to decide what resources to create because TPT already has tens of thousands of resources. It is difficult to make a resource that is completely unique and never been done before. But, here is the good news, no one has made a resource just like you would make it. You have your own unique style and creative ideas. There may be thousands of task cards on TPT, but yours will be slightly different because **you** are different.

Here are a few tips when choosing the resources you want to create:

✓ **Resist the temptation to search through TPT to get ideas**. You never want to copy another resource or even use another resource as your inspiration. Violating someone else's copyright is not a good way to start your business.

✓ **Make the resources that you would or will use in your own classroom.** If it works with your students, then it will work with other classrooms.

✓ **The first resource that you upload to your store will need to be a freebie**. This does not mean that the resource should be your worst work. It's quite the opposite! The freebie should show off your style and what teachers can expect when they purchase resources from the rest of your store.

Creating the Resources

How to Create

There are many ways to create resources. Try not to be too tough on yourself at first. You are just starting a new adventure. You are at the beginning. Your resources won't look the same as someone else who is several miles into their adventure. Just be open to learning and growing.

Here are a few tips to get you started on the right foot when it comes to resource creation:

- ✓ There are several programs that you can create resources in, but the most common is PowerPoint. It's easy to layer images and text and then save the final resource as a PDF.

- ✓ I buy all of my clipart and fonts on TPT. Choose a couple clipart artists that you love and some fonts that are easy to read. Using a similar style in all of your resources will make creation easier and help to establish a branded look. Make sure that you own a license to use all clipart and fonts commercially.

- ✓ The best resources include everything a teacher could possibly need when using the resource. Include things like teacher directions, answer keys, ideas for differentiation and/or ways to organize the materials.

- ✓ Have someone else edit every single one of your resources. I learned this lesson the very hard way as I wasted tons of time fixing both silly and complex errors later.

- ✓ Flatten and password protect all of your resources. This will help to protect your work and it is usually a requirement when using clipart and fonts created by other artists.

Creating the Resources

Uploading Resources

You've created a cute and super fun resource- but you're not done yet! Spending some time preparing your resource for your store will result in considerably more revenue for you. When uploading your resources, you want to make sure you have done all that you can do to help teachers find the materials when they come to the site and search. As sellers, we are always learning and adapting to help increase our search engine optimization, but here are some tips that will make a big difference:

- ✓ **Name your resource** something that a teacher who needs your resource would search for. Skip the cute names. For example, instead of calling a resource "Monster Math," consider naming it "Multiplication Math Fact Game."

- ✓ **Create a cover** for your resource that is easy to read and will stop someone from scrolling. Cluttered covers are often passed by when customers are searching.

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> When uploading your resources, you want to make sure you have done all that you can do to help teachers find the materials when they come to the site and search.

Jamie Sears

Creating the Resources

Uploading Resources, cont.

✓ **Create a preview** for every paid resource that you create. Most teachers will not buy a resource that does not include a preview. This is your opportunity to show off what is included in the resource. It helps buyers to determine if the level or the activity will be a good fit for their students.

✓ **Take your time writing a quality resource description.** I used to rush this and I missed out on a great opportunity! In the description be sure to tell readers who the resource is for, what problem it solves, exactly what is included, and give some suggestions for how the resource can be used in the classroom.

✓ **Tag only the appropriate grade levels.** If you made the resource for fourth grade, then only tag fourth grade. Resist the urge to tag the surrounding grade levels unless it is truly a great fit.

Pro Tip

Don't undervalue your work! Teachers can and will buy quality resources. When a resource is priced super low, it is human nature to assume that it is not a quality product. There is no magic formula for pricing a resource. The best thing you can do is to take some time to think about the problem your resource solves and how much that solution would be worth to you as a teacher.

About the Author

Hi, I'm
Jamie Sears

I'm a fun-loving mom, wife, entrepreneur, and forever a teacher at heart.

After several years in the classroom, my passion to make learning fun and effective for students and teachers alike inspired me to start Not So Wimpy Teacher.

Now I have the honor of serving over 250,000 2nd-5th grade teachers around the world by providing easy-to-use, hands-on resources, and engaging professional development that helps students love learning and teachers love teaching.

I'd love to connect with you! You can find me on all the platforms below or email jamie@notsowimpyteacher.com!