Exploring personal strengths for employment

Age range: 11-16

BARCLAYS | **LifeSkills**

Session overview

Time	Key learning outcomes	Resources
60 mins	By the end of the activity students will be able to: • Recognise three key elements of their personality. • Understand that societal trends, like automation, AI, and ambitions for net zero are helping to influence the future world of work and what this means in the context of skills development. • Explain how different job roles require a range of skills, interests and personality traits. • Identify ways of building an accurate self-image that can guide successful career choices.	• Exploring personal strengths for employment student worksheet. • Exploring personal strengths for employment presentation slides. • **Skill Up Icebreaker** activity. • **Wheel of strengths** tool.

Remember that you can refer to the guiding principles for establishing a safe learning environment in the Appendix section of the LifeSkills content guide. This includes suggestions for signposting students to further support. The content guide can be downloaded **here**.

National Autistic Society

LifeSkills is pleased to have worked with The National Autistic Society to ensure the following lesson plan can be adapted to suit the needs of autistic students.

If teaching a lesson including autistic students, here are some key considerations when undertaking the following activities:

– Many autistic people can struggle with icebreakers, because of the social interaction/communication aspect – which can then cause high anxiety.

– Team games: These can be a challenge for many autistic people – not knowing what to expect, having to socialise maybe, feeling judged etc – causing high anxiety in many instances.

– Identifying skills, interests, personality traits: Many autistic people may find it challenging to be able to identify these. Support may be needed as some may feel awkward and embarrassed talking about themselves. Some support may also be needed to understand what personality traits are all about and what they need to consider. If a student isn't sure, avoid making them feel embarrassed or awkward around their peers and explain (if needed) respectfully and diplomatically.
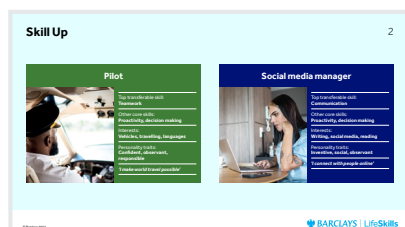
Contents

Activities	Time	Page

Activity one

Linking skills with employment

### 1. Try this icebreaker (10 mins)

- **National Autistic Society guidance:** Many autistic people struggle with icebreakers. Team games can be a challenge for many autistic people – not knowing what to expect, having to socialise maybe, feeling judged etc – causing high anxiety in many instances. To bring to life how different people's personal strengths relate to their job roles play **Skill Up**, a short team game which gets students guessing different jobs based on the skills needed for them. The instructions and playing cards are available to download from the lesson page.

- **Slide 2** shows two example jobs from the card game to talk through if needed.

- After playing 'Skill Up', find out what students think the link is between people's job roles and their personal strengths, including skills, interests and personality traits.

- Ask students to describe how they feel when they are doing something they are really good at or are really interested in and make a mind map on the board of all the words. Discuss how it might make them feel if they were doing a job that used their skills, interests and personality traits – they can use the words on the board to help.

2. How recognising our skills can help us make good career decisions

- Ask students to explain what they think 'aspiration' means, and summarise their suggestions by explaining that our aspirations are ambitions or goals that we hope to achieve. Most people have aspirations, but they might be short term, long term, ambitious or easily achieved. Discuss the examples below and draw out the type of aspiration each one could be:

  – To achieve a good grade in my English GCSE.

  – To build good relationships with my managers when I start my apprenticeship.

  – To own my home before I turn 30.

  – To set up a successful business with lots of employees.

  – To get a promotion during my first year in a job.

  – To get my dream role protecting animals and nature against the effects of climate change.

- Highlight the difference between realistic aspirations (aims that you can achieve if you have the right skills and attitude) and more ambitious aspirations (those you can work towards but might need to break into smaller goals or have an alternative plan for).

- Ask students who are comfortable to share some of their aspirations for life after leaving school. These could be further education, training, an apprenticeship, or entering the world of work.

- Explain that identifying their strengths will help guide students towards rewarding job roles, even if they haven't previously thought much about industry or job role preferences. Remind them of the words that described how they feel when they do something they are good at.

Activity one

Linking skills with employment (cont'd)
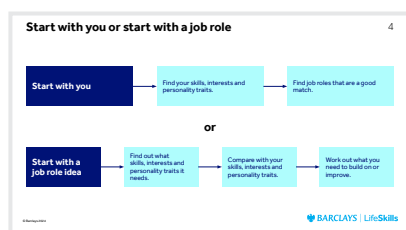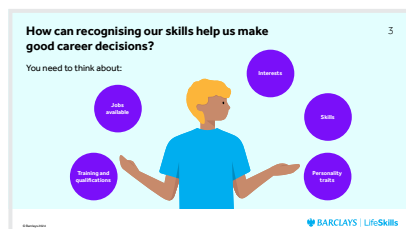
- Print off or show copies of **slide 3** and discuss the difference between interests, skills and personality traits. To check their understanding, ask them to match problem solving (skill), sport and fitness (interest), and enthusiastic (personality trait) to each of the terms.

- Explain that when aspiring to a particular job or industry, it's important to also think about the jobs that are available and whether any specific qualifications or training are required. Some might require qualifications before starting whilst others might have on-the-job training.

- Show **slide 4** and help students understand that they can use information about themselves in two ways:

  – They can reflect on themselves and use what they discover to find careers that might be a good match. This can work well if they're not sure what they'd like to do, or have two or more ideas but can't make their mind up.

  – Students who already have a strong career preference can find out more about it, reflect on their own qualities and identify what they might need to build on or improve to make it a rewarding and achievable choice.

- Now encourage your students to think about the link that global trends have with what employers are looking for and what that means for skills. Ask your students if they can think of any world trends which might be shaping the future world of work? These could include advancements in technology like AI and immersive technology, also climate change and the move to net zero. Ask your class what impact they think this will have on skills.

Extension

If you'd like students to further consider the main stages and key decisions needed for making a successful transition into employment, take a look at the **Journey to your career lesson**.

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3. How can my skills, interests and personality traits help me choose a job?

- **National Autistic Society guidance:** Identifying skills, interests, personality traits – Many autistic people may find it challenging to be able to identify these. Support may be needed as some may feel awkward and embarrassed talking about themselves. Some support may also be needed to understand what personality traits are all about and what they need to consider. If a student isn't sure, avoid making them feel embarrassed or awkward around their peers and explain (if needed) respectfully and diplomatically.

- This activity will help students to identify their skills, interests and personality traits and how they can use these to explore job roles that they might find rewarding in the future. You can use the slides and the worksheets to complete this, then in step 4 try using the **Wheel of strengths** online tool. You can do this either as a group or individually to see where students' skills, interests and personality traits could take them.

![Barclays LifeSkills logo]

Activity one

Linking skills with employment (cont'd)
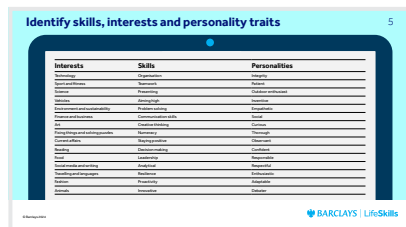
Identify students' interests

- Explain that finding a job that you enjoy often means that it links to your interests. These could be hobbies or activities you do in your spare time, school subjects or clubs.

- Using **slide 5** and ask students to highlight the interests they have, or add any that are missing, using their worksheet.

Identify students' personality traits

- Working with a partner, if they feel comfortable, now ask students to look at the list of personality traits and select five traits they think their partner demonstrates.

- After discussing them and identifying any they agree with or any that are missing, they should also record them on their sheet.

- As part of the lesson students have been looking at skills including core transferable skills. Ask if anyone knows why core transferable skills are so important. Outline that they are particularity valuable for the future workplace as they can be used across different industries in nearly every role. As mentioned earlier, certain trends will impact society and jobs available, however, it's predicted that core transferable skills will be in high demand and will be utilised as job roles and industries change.
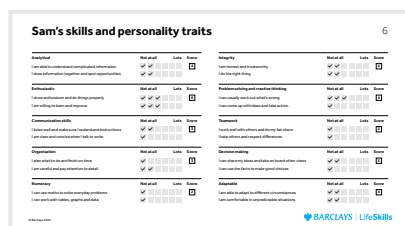
Identify students' skills

- Start by asking students to think back to the 'Skill Up' activity and list some of the skills they explored. These could include listening, presenting, problem solving, adaptability or leadership.

- Show **slide 5** again. If they are comfortable doing so, ask students to work with a partner who knows them to discuss the skills and choose five that they think they are already confident about. If you are working with an older or more able group, you can ask them to include an example of a time when they demonstrated this skill.

- The partner must listen and identify any they agree or don't agree with or any that have been missed, before the pair swaps over .

- They can use the **Getting to know myself student worksheet** to make a note of the ones they have selected.

- From the remaining skills, ask them to select the skills they think they need to improve the most, and record these on their sheet.

Activity one

Linking skills with employment (cont'd)

4. Using the 'Wheel of strengths' tool

Sam's skills and personality traits

- The **Wheel of strengths** inspires students to look at which future job roles might be a good match for their skills, interests and personality traits, as well as suggest which skills they might need to improve to achieve their career ambitions. It can also be used to showcase job roles they might not have heard of and help them understand what they need to do to get there.

- The tool can be used in different ways:
  - **Option 1:** If you have access to computers/tablets, students can input the skills, interests and personality traits they identified earlier in the session into the tool to explore suitable job roles. If you can't access the tool in the classroom, they can work through the tool at home if they are aged 14 and over.
  - **Option 2:** Work through the tool at the front of the room by using Sam's case study to identify a set of skills, interests and personality traits that will generate some suitable job roles. If you have time, you can ask students to research the roles that they would like to find out more about. Start by printing or displaying **slide 6** and inviting students to look at Sam's answers and assess his strengths and areas for improvement.
  - **Option 3:** Using the skills that students identified as areas to improve, input examples from the group into the tool alongside suggestions of interests and personality traits. This will reveal jobs that might be a great match if these skills are developed. You can walk through the tool on a screen at the front of the group, or use computers/tablets if available.

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5. Bringing it all together

- Once you have completed the 'Wheel of strengths' tool either as a group or individually, generate discussion about their findings. Were there any results they found surprising? For students who already have a job or industry in mind, do the suggested job roles confirm their choices? Were there any jobs they would like to find out more about?

- Students can share their thoughts with the class, record them on a flipchart or graffiti wall, or on their worksheet.

- Remind students that the tool is not conclusive and if the results don't indicate a good match with their current aspirations, this isn't a problem. However, they might still like to investigate further, so they can focus on anything they might need to change or improve in order to succeed on their chosen path.

- Discuss how each industry contains a variety of job roles. An industry may be appealing to a student, but they may not find all job roles in that industry interesting. Explain that once working, people may change job roles within an industry or even switch industries and that's an example of why core transferable skills are so valuable.

- This tool includes a selection of roles but there are many more available. Remind students that it's important to think about the jobs which will be in demand in the future, and what impact global trends will have on this, for example, jobs are likely to be adapting and more roles may offer opportunities to help lessen environmental impacts.

- Discuss the importance of keeping these ideas up to date as students grow, mature and develop their skills, interests and traits.

Activity one

Linking skills with employment (cont'd)

Try next

- To explore more about choosing a career path that matches with their personality traits, students can use the test in the 'Personality type' section of the **Practice online assessments** tool. This tests them on the ways their key behaviour traits and preferences, to help identify jobs more suited to their personality type.

- If students can't access a computer or tablet individually, work through questions with the group from the front of the classroom.

- Explain to students that lots of employers today use online tests like these to check their abilities, judgment skills and personality type – normally as the first step once they've applied for a job.

- You might also want to educate students that jobs are likely to be adapting and more roles may offer opportunities to help lessen environmental impacts as companies move towards meeting their net zero targets. In this context, core transferable skills, such as leadership and communication, are likely to be integral to those changes.

Exploring personal strengths for employment

Getting to know myself

Complete this sheet, showing your key interests, skills and personality traits.

My interests:

My skills:

My personality: