



For young people with special educational needs and disabilities

# Exploring personal strengths for employment

Age range: 14+

 **BARCLAYS** | LifeSkills



# Session overview

Time	Key learning outcomes	Resources
55-65 mins	By the end of the activity students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify their own strengths, interests and personalities</li> <li>Understand the link between skills, interests, personality traits and careers</li> <li>Demonstrate an understanding of how their personal strengths, interests and personality traits can help them find the right career for them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exploring personal strengths for employment presentation slides</li> <li>Exploring personal strengths for employment student worksheet</li> </ul>

It's recommended that lessons are repeated to ensure concepts are understood, and allow for skills to be built over time. Always start the session by agreeing ground rules with the group. For advice on this and other ways to establish a safe learning environment, [download the content guide](#).

This is one of a set of core lessons that have been adapted for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (also known as Additional Support Needs/Additional Learning Needs). Adaptation has been completed with the support of specialist careers provider Talentino, and tested with staff and students at several different special schools.

# Contents

Activities	Time	Page
Activity one: Exploring skills, interests and personality traits	40-50 mins	3
Activity two: Linking skills, interests, personality traits and careers	10 mins	5
Summary	5 mins	5

# Activity one

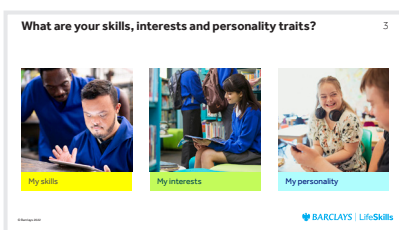
## Exploring skills, interests and personality traits

Depending on your class, you may need to scaffold the activities in this lesson through discussion or the use of programs such as Communicate in Print.

### 1. What do skills, interests and personalities mean?

- To introduce the terms which are the focus of this lesson, work with the students to describe someone well-known. You could either pick a character or person you know will engage or interest your class, or you could ask students in pairs or groups to pick a person themselves
- Have a discussion as a class or in groups about who the well-known person is. Describe that character – what does the person seem like? For now, take the descriptions as one list, on a flipchart or whiteboard
- Once you have described the person’s character, ask or support the students to group the descriptions in to the three groups on the whiteboard:
  - What the person is good at (skills)
  - Something the person likes to do (interests)
  - The type of person they are (personality traits)
- Explain the terms based on the descriptions that the students generated. You could come to these definitions through student discussion or provide them, depending on their developmental levels:
  - **Skills:** these are things that a person is good at, such as their problem solving abilities or their determination to stay positive
  - **Interests:** something that a person likes to do. This is an activity that a person enjoys doing. It could be anything; it doesn’t have to be an incredible talent, just something someone enjoys doing like reading or food
  - **Personality:** The way someone is, that makes them different from everyone else. This is a more difficult definition to understand and the other two terms are closely linked to it. It is a combination of characteristics that make up who you are. The list will be slightly different from person to person and it makes you different from everyone else for example, being enthusiastic or patient
- Show **slide 2** and explain that our skills, interests and personality combine to make us who we are

### 2. What are your skills, interests and personality traits?



- Having clarified the terms, you will then support the students to identify their own skills, interests and personalities. Show **slide 3** and discuss how the diagram shows the different aspects of themselves that the students are going to explore

# Activity one

## Exploring skills, interests and personality traits (cont'd)

### Extension

- Use the '[Wheel of Strengths' tool](https://barclayslifeskills.com/wheelofstrengths) to explore skills in more detail (barclayslifeskills.com/wheelofstrengths). You may want to review the interactive tool before using it with the group to ensure it is appropriate
- Alternatively you could use the tool during activity 2, after they've defined their own characteristics. It is a game in which you:
  - Select descriptions from a list of skills, interests and personalities (these can be found on the first screen of the tool)
  - Click 'spin'
  - Look at a list of possible job roles generated based on the combination of characteristics chosen

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### 3. What are skills?

- Ask students to look at the statements on **What are my interests and preferences? student worksheet** and rate how much they agree with each statement (1 tick = very little, 5 ticks = very strongly) by ticking the boxes
- Often in these types of exercises it is useful to ask students to consider other people's skills as well as their own, so they can support each other in finding their skills, so you may want to provide each student with two answer sheets. This peer review element is especially useful for students who have a lack of confidence
- Ask students to put their own skills in order, starting with the strongest

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### 4. What are interests?

- Using the cards from **What are my interests and preferences? student worksheet**, students should circle up to six words or phrases that they feel interest them. It helps to do this in pencil until students are certain of their choices. If you are cutting the cards up, make sure you print them one sided
- Alternatively, ask students to go through the cards and decide which activities interest them. They should place the cards in two piles, for 'yes' and 'no'. They should discard the 'no' pile and repeat the exercise for the 'yes' pile until they have reduced their 'yes' cards to six. Working in pairs could be useful: one person reads them out for their partner who will keep or reject them

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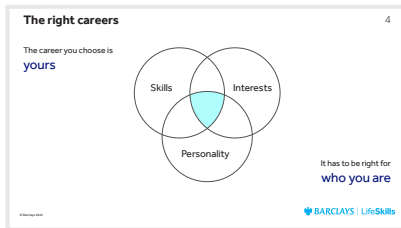
### 5. What are personalities?

- Using **What are my interests and preferences? student worksheet**, ask students to work with a partner who knows them. Give them time to identify and justify up to six words from the sheet that best describe their own personality traits
- The partner must listen and identify any they don't agree with or any that have been missed
- Alternatively, ask students to do this for their partners instead of themselves
- If needed, you could suggest a sentence framework to support students to describe their personalities e.g. I know I am \_\_\_\_\_ because I \_\_\_\_\_, or, I believe I \_\_\_\_\_ because people say that \_\_\_\_\_

# Activity two

## Linking skills, interests, personality traits and careers

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



- Use **What are my interests and preferences? student worksheet** to bring together all the characteristics that the pupils have generated about themselves
- Show **slide 4**. Discuss with students how a good career choice uses all three aspects students have explored: skills, interests and personality traits
- Discuss whether the students have thought about any jobs during the exercises they have completed. Show them the slides and explain that:
  - The career to suit you will complement and use all your skills, interests and personality traits
  - Everyone is different and as such, everyone will want a slightly different career
  - When deciding about different job roles, always think about yourself
- If not used already, use the 'Wheel of strengths' tool to explore how understanding their skills, interests and personality traits can help guide students towards the future job roles

### Extension

Students swap their final activity sheet at random, then take turns to read them out to their group or class. Their classmates can see if they can identify each other and, based on each person's attributes, brainstorm career ideas for them. You could identify each student using a unique number, so they get their completed sheet back at the end.

## Summary

- Recap what the terms skills, interests and personality traits mean
- Show **slide 5** and explain how you can use what you know about your skills, interests and personality to help you choose a career
- Discuss whether any of the students would like to investigate planning a career based on any job roles that were found using the 'Wheel of strengths' tool
- If useful, provide copies of **Getting to know myself student summary** to summarise what has been covered in this lesson

# Exploring personal strengths for employment

## What are my skills?

Your skills are what make you good at particular tasks. This is a list of some important transferable skills and examples of how you may demonstrate them.

- Rate how much you agree with each sentence by ticking boxes. One tick means it sounds nothing like you, while five means it describes you perfectly
- Add up your total for each skill and list them on Student Sheet 1.4 with the highest scoring first

Skill	Not at all	Lots	Number of ticks			
<b>Enthusiasm and initiative (Pro-activity and staying positive)</b>						
I show enthusiasm and do things properly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
I am willing to learn and improve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Communication and literacy (Communication skills)</b>						
I listen well and make sure I understand instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
I am clear and concise when I talk or write	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Time management and organisation (Organisational skills)</b>						
I plan what to do and finish on time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
I am careful and pay attention to detail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Numeracy (Problem solving and analysing skills)</b>						
I can use maths to solve everyday problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
I can work with tables, graphs and data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Problem-solving and creativity (Problem solving and creative thinking skills)</b>						
I can usually work out what's wrong	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
I can come up with ideas and take action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Teamwork (Teamwork skills)</b>						
I work well with others and do my fair share	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
I help others and respect differences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Negotiation and decision-making (Decision making skills)</b>						
I can share my ideas and take on board other views	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
I can use the facts to make good choices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>

# Exploring personal strengths for employment

## What are my interests and preferences?

Choose the six words or phrases that best describe you or your interests. Either mark your choices on the table below, or cut out the cards and sort them into piles of things you're interested in and things you're not interested in – your teacher will tell you which to do.



using technology	working by myself	planning
helping others	managing	machines
presenting	thinking tasks	working indoors
using words	persuading	instructing
calculating	health	nature
children	using science	routine
busy places	solving problems	quiet places
using numbers	caring	nature
helping customers	working outdoors	learning
business	arts	food



being sociable	organising	animals
using computers	practical tasks	variety
vehicles	music	being creative
working in a factory	images	analysing
making things	buildings	looking at details
finding out	the bigger picture	leading
driving	working with money	politics and current affairs
using my hands	repairing	designing
achieving goals	shop work	putting things together
describing	using tools	having ideas
fitness	sports	working in a team
being active	people	researching things



# Exploring personal strengths for employment

## What's my personality like?

Choose the **ten** words or phrases that best describe you.

adventurous	organised	ambitious
flexible	patient	calm
focused	persistent (keeps trying)	caring
friendly	polite	cheerful
hard-working	positive	clean
has initiative (can get things started on your own)	practical	considerate
healthy	punctual (does things on time)	empathetic
helpful	realistic	good at working with others
honest	reliable	copers with change
imaginative	responsible	creative
interested	self-confident	determined
leads others	self-disciplined (can control yourself)	can follow rules
makes an effort	serious	does what's right
behaves in a grown-up way	social	enterprising
will do something without necessarily being told to do it	thoughtful	enthusiastic
neat and tidy	trustworthy	finishes things
observant	willing to work	

# Exploring personal strengths for employment

## Getting to know myself

Use the information from **What are my skills?**, **What are my interests and preferences?** and **What's my personality like?** **student worksheets** to complete these tables, showing your key interests, strengths and personality traits.

My interests:	

My skills:	

My personality:	

# Exploring personal strengths for employment

## Getting to know myself summary

One way to be happy at a job is to make the most of it. You can choose to do your best and do a good job for your colleagues and/or customers.

But another way is to find a job that suits you. To make a good career decision, you need to know the facts about you.

- What are your skills?
- What skills can you use best? How do they help you, and others?
- What are your interests?
- What things interest you? What kinds of task do you like doing best?
- What's your personality like?
- How would people describe you? When are you 'at your best'?

### How do you find a career that is a great match for you?

The most suitable jobs for you are those that combine all three key areas: your skills, interests and personality.

There isn't just one perfect job for each of us. Take the time to understand your skills, interests and personality, and you'll discover that there are many jobs that are a good match for you.

