**Activity 4 – My dream work experience!**

Work experience provides an opportunity for young people to experience the work place, to better understand if a particular career is right for them and prepare them for the demands and expectations of the working world. Employers expect job applicants to have an impressive set of qualifications, the edge to make sure they stand out amongst the competition, and are increasingly looking for candidates with relevant real life experience. The world of work is changing continually and at an unprecedented pace, and with so much competition for entry level jobs, apprenticeships, and graduate employment, it’s important for young people to stand out from the crowd.

Work experience gently introduces young people to the world of work, and is especially helpful to students that are unsure of which career or pathway they want to pursue. Despite the many advantages associated with getting a university education, for students not planning on going to university, getting a job or doing an apprenticeship could be a consideration. Apprenticeships are a good alternative to university, and allow young people to study towards a qualification while learning on the job and earning a salary at the same time. Apprenticeships are available in hundreds of areas, from animal care and construction to retail and sports. Gaining work experience through an apprenticeship can help young people develop skills that employers value such as communication, self-motivation, teamwork and taking responsibility.

Qualifications serve as a passport for young people to explore opportunities in education, training and work. As a general rule, the more qualifications young people gain throughout life (e.g. further education and higher education), the less important their GCSE results become. When it comes to finding a job, most employers will look at qualifications\*, but will look at a candidates CV more favourably if they have work experience. It is important for students to remember that many of the skills valued in both higher education and future employment can be developed through work-related activities.

*\*Most companies will expect young people to have at least 5 GCSEs (including English, Maths and Science) with minimum of grade 4/5 which is the level likely to be required for many careers and higher education courses (the new GCSEs are graded 9 (highest grade) to 1 (lowest grade)). This is also the case for apprenticeship programmes, where students are required to have certain grades at GCSE. (e.g. most advanced apprenticeships ask for around five GCSEs with minimum of grade 4/5, including English and maths).*

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| **Prior learning – This can be used as a stand-alone lesson guide, or to follow on from Lesson 2 – Hertfordshire’s growing employment sectors**  |
| **Lesson aim** | This session should encourage students to think about their skills and how they could match them with a work experience placement they would like to do |
| **Lesson outcomes** | Students will be able to:* understand the importance of work experience to career planning
* understand the steps needed to find and secure their next work experience opportunity
* consider the skills and qualities sought by employers
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| **Brief for students** | **Teacher activity and notes** |
| **Starter activity**10 minutes | **Activity 1 - Why is work experience so important for career planning?**Ask students to consider reasons why work experience is important.Class discussion - students to share ideas of why work experience is so important for career planning. | **Activity 1 - Why is work experience so important for career planning?**Students to note down reasons they think work experience is important.Class discussion – Teacher to facilitate a class discussion, inviting students to share ideas of why work experience is so important.Students can add to their list of reasons.Benefits of work experience for young people: * makes for a really valuable addition to a student’s CV
* can demonstrate they have the attitudes and skills
* can convince employer’s, apprenticeship providers, and universities that the students want to learn more
* can help students decide whether they are suited to a particular occupation or career
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| **Main activity**25 minutes | **Activity 2 – My dream work experience!**[Work Experience: step by step guide (hopinto.co.uk)](https://www.hopinto.co.uk/explore-careers/resources/work-experience-step-by-step-guide/)Using the step by step guide to getting relevant work experience, work through steps 1 and 2 to secure your dream work experience placement.You should aim to have the name of at least 2 possible employers you could contact to guarantee a work experience placement.  | **Activity 2 – My dream work experience!**[Work Experience: step by step guide (hopinto.co.uk)](https://www.hopinto.co.uk/explore-careers/resources/work-experience-step-by-step-guide/)Ask students to focus on steps 1 & 2 of the 7 step guide to getting relevant work experience. Students should aim to have the name of at least 2 possible employers you could contact to guarantee a work experience placement.Teacher input may include the following:* Asking students to consider a job they would want to do when they are older
* Supporting students who don’t know what job they want to do in the future
* Asking students to consider their interests/passions/skills
* Identify the top 3 skills that would matter in this job
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| **Summary activity**10 minutes | Discussion – do students have a better understanding of the process to find a work experience opportunity?What should you do during an interview? | Revisit aims for the session and ask the students to highlight what they have learned.Teacher to invite input from students, and sum up findings from Activity 2.Discussion – ask the students if they feel they have a better understanding of the process to find a work experience opportunity. |
| **Adapting the lesson to your needs/ next steps** | **Follow-up activities*** Students to continue to work through steps 3-7 of the guide.
* Following students’ work experience placements, they should update their CV’s and add new skills/experience gained based on their diary entries.

**What should students do during an interview?**Preparing for work experience placements/an interview* Identify what you should do before hand to prepare for an interview, and what you should do during the interview

Understand the skills/qualities sought by employers and show how these are relevant in the interview process**Competency questions** * Used by employers to explore candidates’ transferable skills during the recruitment process for jobs or apprenticeships
* Explain the STAR model and outline how it helps people answer competency questions in an interview situation
* Students could research the STAR (situation, task, action, and result) approach to answering competency questions. This is an important skill that students will need to use in their CV, interviews and application forms
* Students can practice answering competency questions using their own skills and experience (e.g. turn-taking in pairs) and this activity will help students understand how they could answer competency questions
* Students can consider which of their own skills and experiences they can draw on in order to do so (e.g. How will you overcome obstacles?)
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