



Making the most of now

In today's competitive job market, it's important that young people practice their professional development skills early on to help them put their best foot forward and reach their future goals. The resources in this section will direct students on the different ways they can make the most out of present opportunities, build their experience, and develop transferable skills, ready for when they enter the world of work.

The key topics covered are:

→ Staying positive in challenging times

Positive thinking is an important ingredient to building a successful life. The resources on this page provide a guide to help students focus their mind and bring positivity into their life.

→ Top tips for productivity

Working effectively and efficiently is an important skill for the modern workplace. This page explores how young people can learn how to manage their time effectively and make every moment count.

→ Building your online network

With the rise in online learning and working, online connections matter now more than ever. This page will teach students how to make the most of their time online, to increase their network, and stand out to employers.

→ Improving your employability

We are all learning and developing throughout our careers, particularly at the early stages. This page helps students discover ways to boost their employment prospects by making the most out of their free time and maximising their chance of securing their dream role.

→ Using your creative skills

Thinking outside the box is an important part in moving projects and organisations forward. This page explores the importance of creativity as a core transferable skill and explains how young people already use it in their everyday lives.

→ Benefits of volunteering

Volunteering comes in many different shapes and sizes. The resources on this page look at the benefits of volunteering for young people; including supporting worthy causes, developing key employability skills and building valuable work experience in the process.

We recommend exploring each page with your students; using the written content and user-generated videos to facilitate discussion and questions.

At the end of each page, you will also find a range of activities that you can work through with your students, or set as self-study, in order to apply what they've learnt into practice and reinforce the key teachings from the website.

Each set of activities ranges from a short activity which should take no more than 30 minutes, through to portfolio activities which are longer, project-based tasks.

Need some help on where to start?

We've put together a lesson plan to show how the content from the website can be used to build a one-hour careers lesson – perfect for PSHE/Form time!



Introduction 5 minutes

Demonstrate the M&G Skills for Life website and signpost students to the different resources available to support them in this lesson and when completing self-study.

Explain the aims and objectives of the lesson. For students to:

- Understand key employability skills that they will need in the future.
- Identify different ways to develop skills before they enter the workplace.
- Practice putting their skills into practice by addressing a social issue in their local community.

Write a community code to create a safe space for open and honest discussion in today's lesson.



Short activity 10 minutes

To start this lesson, work through the short activity from the page '**Improving your employability**'.

Ask students to make a list of their current hobbies and interests.

- For each, ask them to list the transferable skills they gain from doing this activity to talk about at an interview or on their CV.

For example, if they play in a sports team then they have demonstrated communication skills by training/playing with others on their team, as well as time management to fit the sport around their studies.

- Next, ask them to think of any additional hobbies or interests that can help plug any gaps or build on existing skills.

Focusing on opportunities for personal development is important now and throughout a person's professional career.



Main activity 40 minutes

Now that students have started to think about their skill set, move on to look at ways in which they can gain experience for the workplace and evidence their skills in real-life situations.

The next activity will prepare students to practise some of these important skills in real-life situations - helping them stand out from the crowd when they enter the job market. It is taken from the PSHE activity from the page '**Benefits of volunteering**'.

Select a local cause that students would respond to. A new homeless shelter, a food drive, digital devices for schools, to provide a few examples.

- Split students in groups and ask them to create a pitch to bring the issue to the attention of the local council.
- Ask students to present their pitches to the group, and provide constructive and positive feedback.

At the end of this activity, breakdown the skills that students have used to address the social issue and bring it to the attention of their local council.

These are examples of how they've applied their skills to a real-life situation and will teach students how to frame their skills and experience in a way that is suitable for an interview question.



Summary 5 minutes

Provide a summary of today's lesson and congratulate students for practising their employability skills.

Identifying and making the most of professional development opportunities is an important skill for life. It is something that we all need to understand and develop throughout our careers.

Set students homework to explore the '**Making the most of now**' resources in their own time and complete one or more of the activities from each page.

If you're using the Skills for Life student workbook with your students, make sure that they record their work for you to review. Each activity completed will earn them points which will accumulate to an award (Bronze, Silver, Gold).