

Careers & futures

LYMM HIGH SCHOOL



**LYMM HIGH SCHOOL VIRTUAL
FUTURES PROGRAMME 2020**

Name _____

Form _____

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INTRODUCTION

Over the next year you will all be making some major decisions about your futures. Some of you will choose University for your next step, some may go down the Apprenticeship route and others may be looking at College options. You may even be considering taking a year out to work, travel or volunteer. Whatever you do, you are making the first step towards your career and your future.

The summer term of Year 12 is a time when we normally have the opportunity to help you develop a greater understanding of the world of work – through CV sessions, how to apply for a job, mock interviews and of course work experience. Covid-19 has unfortunately put a stop to these face-to-face sessions so we have had to think of an alternative – so we bring you your virtual careers programme!

Using a mixture of existing online resources, we will give you the opportunity to work through the job application cycle. From self analysis and identifying your key skills and attributes to planning your CV and application form, to taking part in a virtual mock interview and learning about other selection methods that employers use. You will even follow a virtual work experience session.

Most of the content will be delivered through Barclays Life Skills website (you will need to register to use the website and access each session). This booklet should support those online sessions and is intended to help you to work through each stage. Look out for the hyperlinks throughout to bring you

straight to each online session. Please take notes and complete each section thoroughly. You will be expected to bring your completed booklet and CV to school in September – so don't lose it!

We have chosen the content carefully and tried to make sure that everything is relevant to get you work ready! Good Luck!

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

When thinking about careers and your future it is really important to spend some time analysing what makes you tick as a person. What are your strengths and weaknesses? What are your passions and interests? What type of person are you? You need to be the number one expert in you.

Doing some analysis really helps you to think about what career or industry might be most suitable for you. Have a look at the following lists – try and highlight a minimum of two up to a maximum of seven in each list that you think best reflects you.

| Interests | Skills | Personalities |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Technology | Organisation | Integrity |
| Sports and fitness | Teamwork | Patient |
| Science | Presenting | Outdoor enthusiast |
| Vehicles | Aiming high | Inventive |
| Environment | Problem solving | Empathetic |
| Finance and business | Communication skills | Social |
| Art | Creative thinking | Curious |
| Fixing things & solving puzzles | Numeracy | Thorough |
| Current affairs | Staying positive | Observant |
| Reading | Decision making | Confident |
| Food | Leadership | Responsible |
| Social media and writing | Analytical | Respectful |
| Travelling and languages | Resilience | Enthusiastic |
| Fashion | Proactivity | Adaptable |
| Animals | Innovative | Debater |

The lists are not exhaustive – are there any other words you can think of to describe yourself?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

The lists have been used by Barclays Life Skills to determine the wheel of strengths. Use the interactive tool to build your own [wheel of strengths](#). Completing the wheel of strengths will allow you to be matched to some job roles. What three roles have been suggested for you?

1.

2.

3.

Developing new skills may open up new and exciting career paths. Have a look at how your options may change when different skills sets are applied. What could you do to improve your skills offering?

SKILLS FOR WORK

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Employers place a lot of emphasis on finding candidates with the right skills and competencies for their organisations. Depending on the career sector and profession you choose to work in, there could be very specific skills, abilities and knowledge needed to do the job.

Complementing these are general competencies and behaviours that are essential for successful working.

These are the key employability skills – the core skills that will make you effective at work, whatever job you do. They are sometimes known as transferable skills because you develop them over time and take them with you as your career develops; think of them as your passport to career success. You'll need to draw on your work experience to give evidence of these skills.

Some of these skills you will already be starting to demonstrate through your school career but

you might not be aware of them or necessarily know the correct terminology. In this section you will discover some of the key language around skills that are relevant to work and find which skills you already offer.

Using the [Dictionary of skills](#), explore some of the skills and attributes and their definitions. In the box below summarise 5 of these skills or competencies and give an example as to how you have demonstrated them.

| | Skills/competencies | Example |
|----|---------------------|---------|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |
| 5. | | |

LISTENING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

[Listening and Problem Solving skills](#) are two skills that you should already be confidently displaying. They are some of the most highly valued skills by employers. Watch the two short videos to see how important they are in the context of work.

Additional notes:

“Think of transferable skills as your passport to career success.”



PERSONAL SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis

You are most likely to succeed in life if you use your talents to their fullest extent. Similarly, you'll suffer fewer problems if you know what your weaknesses are, and if you manage these weaknesses so that they don't matter in the work you do.

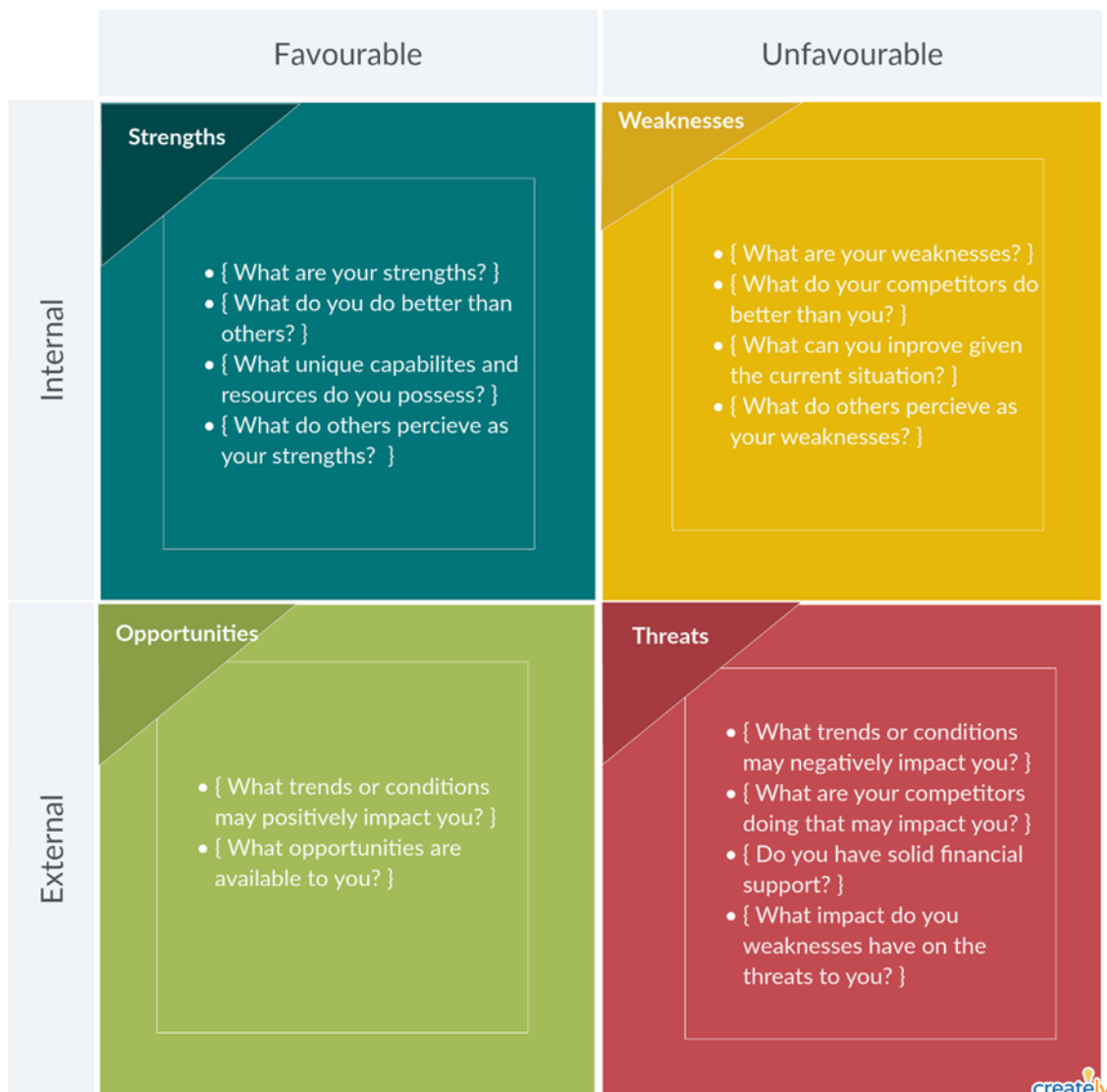
goals. SWOT Analysis is a very powerful tool used by individuals and businesses alike to help them move forward in a successful way.

Before filling out your analysis, think about the prompts for each section:

So how do you go about identifying these strengths and weaknesses, and analysing the opportunities and threats that flow from them?

SWOT Analysis is a useful technique that helps you do this. What makes SWOT especially powerful is that, with a little thought, it can help you uncover opportunities that you would not otherwise have spotted. And by understanding your weaknesses, you can manage and eliminate threats that might otherwise hurt your ability to move forward.

If you look at yourself using the SWOT framework, you can start to separate yourself from your peers, and further develop the specialised talents and abilities you need to advance your career and help you achieve your personal



Now complete your personal SWOT analysis:

| <p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <p>What do you do well? What unique resources can you draw on? What do others see as your strengths?</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <p>What could you improve? Where do you have fewer resources than others? What are others likely to see as weaknesses?</p> |
|---|---|
| | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <p>What opportunities are open to you? What trends could you take advantage of? How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <p>What threats could harm you? What is your competition doing? What threats do your weaknesses expose you to?</p> |
| | |

MARKETING YOURSELF

The first thing a potential employer learns about you is often from your initial application or Curriculum Vitae (CV) so you need to make sure that you make a great first impression. Your CV is your opportunity to market yourself and show that you are the best person for the job! But before you start to think about writing your own CV, [play the part of the boss](#) and see if you can pick out the good from the bad!

When writing your CV it can be tempting to want to make it stand out from the crowd. But you are advised to keep it simple as the following list of do's and don'ts illustrates. This picks up on some of the points noted in your last activity. (Source – [reed.co.uk](#))

Where to start

Writing a CV for the first time can be quite a daunting experience – what do you include? Your work experience will be limited – but that is to be expected – so think about all the other things that you may do that can be included. Barclays Life Skills have a [CV builder](#) that will take you through the process in a structured way to take the pain out of doing it. You can even link it to your social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter so that you don't miss anything that you may have achieved.

Just a word of warning here though – always present your best self online. Be really careful about what you post in your social media accounts as employers often look to candidates' profiles to gauge whether they'll be a suitable fit for a company.

CV LAYOUT DO's

- ✓ **Keep it [short and sweet](#).** The most effective CVs aren't just informative, they're also concise. Try and get straight to the most pertinent points, and ideally take up no more than two sides of A4.
- ✓ **Choose a professional font.** A professional font ensures that your CV can be easily read and simply scanned. Remember: Comic Sans is not your friend.
- ✓ **Present things in a logical order.** Use sufficient spacing, clear section headings (e.g. work experience, education) and a reverse chronological order to keep things clear and easily legible. And always make sure you highlight your most recent achievements.
- ✓ **Play to your strengths.** Format your CV to maximise the impact of your application. For example, if you feel a lack of experience is holding you back, lead with education instead. As long as you can relate it back to the role in question, how you order the sections is up to you.
- ✓ **Use bullet points.** They're a great way to draw attention to any key facts or relevant information, allowing a hiring manager to skim the document easily and find your significant achievements without having to wade through the hyperbole.
- ✓ **Other things to do:** Include contact details, keep email address professional (madforit33@email.com does not count), maintain consistent formatting, ask someone to check for [common spelling and grammar mistakes](#).

See Appendix on p.20 for a CV template

CV LAYOUT DON'Ts

- × **Be afraid of white space.** Don't fear the gaps. Even if you think your CV looks quite bare, as long as you've included all the relevant information and applicable, quantifiable achievements, you needn't worry. Remember: Sometimes less is more.
- × **Try to include too much.** The ideal CV should be a checklist of all of your accomplishments. It should not be your life story. Tailoring your CV to the role is a great way to skim some of the fat and keep all waffle to a minimum.
- × **Include irrelevant information.** Before including any points in your application, ask the same question: will it help you get the role. If the answer is no, take it out. [Hobbies and interests](#) are a great example. If they don't help you stand out, don't waste valuable space.
- × **Forget your cover letter.** Although it is often seen as a different entity all together, your [cover letter](#) is attached to your CV and both are vital in helping you clinch the right role. Utilise yours properly and your CV becomes the perfect document to reinforce your talent. Oh, they didn't say include one? Still do. Every extra opportunity to sell yourself should be taken.
- × **Experiment with size.** You may think that changing font size is a great way to fit your CV onto two pages. But whether you're using large font to make your application seem longer or you're using smaller font to make sure everything fits, you're not fooling anyone. See also, margin size.
- × **Other things not to do:** Use crazy colours, use crazy fonts, include unnecessary references, include a selfie.

Covering letter

Most job applications require the submission of a covering letter in addition to your CV. Getting the covering letter right takes time and skill and should never be rushed. The covering letter should be tailored to the specific job and company that you are applying for. It's not a good idea to send a generic letter out as it is more likely to be rejected. Employers like to see that you have taken the time to think about why you want to work specifically for them – so do your homework!

The top tip for any cover letter is to keep it to the point; ensuring it doesn't put the reader off with too much detail and grabs their attention. Aim for roughly 200 to 250 words, broken into short paragraphs with the focus on key information, such as:

- The job you're applying for
- The documents you're enclosing (your CV, application form, portfolio, test)
- Why you want to do the job, and work for the organisation specifically
- Why they should hire you: your skills and experience and what might separate you from other applicants
- Any achievements you are particularly proud of that demonstrate relevant or desirable skills and attributes
- When you can start

HOW TO WRITE A SUCCESSFUL COVERING LETTER

Work through the section on [how to write a cracking covering letter](#) and choose your top 5 tips for success and write them in the box below.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

FIVE TIPS FOR A GREAT JOB APPLICATION

So you're applying for a job but are unsure where to start, or even how to change the approach that's just not getting you noticed. Don't worry – applying for a job is a process you can own and control. Follow these tips to increase your chances of progressing to an interview.

1. Take your time

Rushed applications that are not personalised will be immediately obvious to employers and can give the impression that you don't care about getting the role. It makes more sense to submit five tailored, specific, well thought-out applications that will stand out to employers than 10 generic applications that are far less likely to get you noticed. Plus, taking your time will allow you to double check details like the company name and the name of the person you are contacting, as well as ensure you catch any spelling or grammar errors that may have otherwise slipped through. Remember to make sure your LinkedIn profile, if you have one, is consistent with the experience you are highlighting.

2. Speak their language

Make sure you know what the employer is asking for with our [job ad glossary](#) and respond so that the person reading can see exactly how

your skills and experience match. There will be specific words and phrases they use to describe their ideal candidate, so reference these in your application.

3. Sell yourself

Write your application in a way that focuses on the positive impact of your day-to-day work. Verbs like 'transformed', 'delivered', 'produced' and 'organised' help to clearly demonstrate your action and its impact. [Check out a sample CV with more detailed tips.](#)

4. Keep it relevant

While you may want to include every little bit of experience you have, it's important to grab the employer's attention, which means putting most emphasis on skills and experience that are specifically relevant to the job. Anything in your application that doesn't respond to requirements listed in the advert should either be left out of the application or only be mentioned briefly towards the end.

Once you're done, check the length. Recruiters read a lot of applications, so it's important to be ruthless with text length. If you're unsure how to cut down your application, ask someone you trust for help.

5. Include a cover letter

A cover letter is a document that you submit alongside your CV that introduces you to the employer and gives you a chance to talk directly to them, emphasising your enthusiasm for the organisation and the role. If there is an opportunity to submit one, you should (even if it's not mandatory) as it will add to your chances of standing out. Read more about cover letters [here](#).

Your job application is the perfect opportunity to sell yourself, so take it.

INTERVIEW AND SELECTION



So you have marketed yourself perfectly and have secured an interview, so now is the time to prepare. It is really important to do your homework and to consider what to expect if you have never been in an interview situation before.

The first thing you need to do is to be sure of what the interview involves and whether it is just one part of a multi-part selection process. It could be that you have been asked to take part in a face-to-face interview or it could be a phone or video interview so it is important that you know what to expect as this will impact on how you prepare. [Find out more about the variety of interview and selection methods here.](#) For each type of

interview/assessment, you can discover what to expect, how to prepare and more importantly how you can stand out from anyone else!

No matter what type of interview you have been asked to complete, preparation is key. The following is a list of some of the things you should do before your interview:

1. Research the organisation

You'll already know the basics from your research ahead of submitting your application, but now is the time to delve a bit deeper. What are their current projects? Have they been in the news? Who are their clients? Who will be

interviewing you? Check out the organisation's website, newspapers, or social media for this information. Showing you know what the organisation is up to will look good to your interviewers. If you have been told or can find out who will be interviewing you a bit of research about them (a quick look over their LinkedIn page will do) could potentially help reduce your nerves.

2. Prep the possible questions and their answers

Looking at the job description and the skills required for the role should give you a steer on what kind of questions

could be asked about your abilities and experience. List the possible questions and make a note of what your answers would be, but don't worry about fitting in to an exact box. The interview is a chance to show your knowledge and skills but also your personality; so personal projects you've developed, or examples from hobbies or interests that are relevant might be of interest to the interviewer. It's all of these things combined that will help to demonstrate why you are a good match for the job.

3. Research career progression and training opportunities

The role itself is one thing, but by broadening your research out a bit into how the role fits within the team or the company, this will give you a good understanding of what path you could possibly take within the business. This shows you're thinking long-term and seriously about the role and it will also help you respond appropriately to questions about your future plans or ideal career progression, relating directly back to the company you are applying to.

Is there a particular course or qualification you think would be relevant to the role you are applying for? If it feels right during the interview, you could express an interest in possible learning and development opportunities. This is a great example of your proactivity, but don't go overboard – it's good to mention but shouldn't be the main focus of the interview.

4. Sort out extra support you might need

If you need special access or additional materials to be arranged for your interview, make sure you get in touch with the organisation and tell them.

5. Plan the route

Make sure you know where you are going and how long it takes to get there. If you can, go online and work out the easiest way to get there, then be sure to add on extra time so you're totally covered. The last thing you want is to arrive flustered or late.

6. Figure out what to wear

The last thing you need is a frantic panic on the morning of the interview as you hunt for a suitable outfit. Planning what to wear a few days beforehand will let you focus on the important things.

A few days before

7. Think of the questions you'd like to ask

During your research there will most likely have been things cropping up that you'd like to know more about. Write them out as clear questions for the interviewer. This will help you avoid an awkward silence when you're asked if you have any questions. Your questions may be quite basic and cover things like the working hours, the next steps in the

process or start date. Or they may be more strategic to show that you have really considered what it might mean to work for the company.

Examples include: "What are the key objectives for this role within the first year?", "How does my role fit within the wider organisation?", "Are there any areas of focus for training and development in this role?"

8. Practice with friends or family

Imagining what it feels like to be in the interview can help make it feel less daunting. Rehearsing questions and answers with friends, family or a mentor will be a huge help on the day.

The day before

9. Read through your notes

Re-familiarise yourself with the questions and answers you've prepared but don't stress about trying to remember every single detail. A decent grasp of the main points will stop you 'script-reading' your answers, but if it helps, create a list of key skills, qualities and experience from your CV that you want to cover.

10. Get a good night's sleep

You'll undermine your preparations if you're stifling yawns in the interview. Feeling refreshed and alert will also help you cope with any unforeseen situations that might get the nerves buzzing; like questions you maybe hadn't thought of.

MOCK INTERVIEWS

So preparation has been done and interview day has arrived, it is inevitable that you are likely to be nervous but try to channel those nerves in a positive way. As long as you have done all your research there is no need to worry! Try to relax, speak slowly and just be your best self!

Practice your interview skills with an online [mock interview](#). This will give you the opportunity to rehearse your answers to the kind of questions you can expect whatever job you're going for. There is the option to video yourself so you can play back your answers. There are also model answers for each question so use the opportunity to take some notes to help you prepare better when you face the real thing! This online session allows you to discover the types of questions that you can be asked at different stages of your career.

Start with the First Job
or Apprenticeship
interview.

If you have time you
can have a look at how
the others differ.

Mock interview notes

ASSESSMENT CENTRES

Assessment centres are routinely used now as part of the selection for early career roles including apprenticeships and graduate positions. But what does an assessment centre entail?

Each assessment centre experience will be a bit different depending on the role, industry and organisation but there are lots of similarities between the themes and skills that each employer will be looking for. There are also lots of standard formats for the different assessments, so you might find it helpful to take a look at some of those you are most likely to come across.

Throughout the day you will be assessed on common skills such as communication, teamwork, timekeeping, achieving results, problem solving, influencing and persuading. Dependent on the role you are going for they may well look at numerical or other skills.

To find out more about what is involved check out this [guide to Assessment Centres](#).

In the box , summarise what you have found out about the types of task you may have to undertake as part of an assessment day.

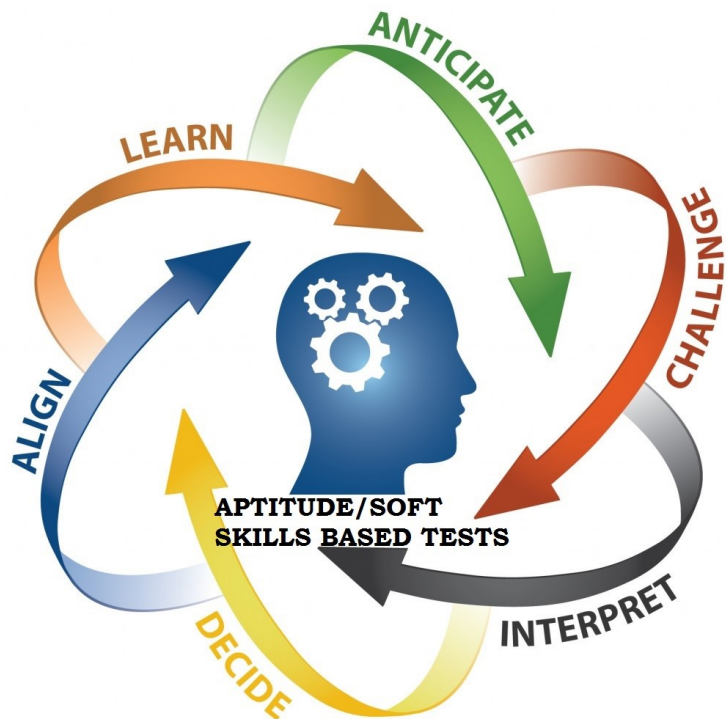
Assessment centre notes

SKILLS-BASED TESTING

Candidates selected for interview often are asked to take some skills tests – sometimes called psychometric tests. These may allow an employer to find out how you think and reason problems or they may be more personality related. Often the skills tests take place before shortlisting for interview. There are some sample tests available for you to have a go online.

Try out all three tests and note down anything of interest.

<https://barclayslifeskills.com/i-want-help-applying-for-jobs/sixth-form/assessment-test>



Skills-based testing notes

VIRTUAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Barclays Lifeskills [Virtual Work Experience](#) gives you a unique opportunity to gain work experience in a company that you might not normally get access to while highlighting the essential skills you might need. You'll get to see the inner workings of Freeformers, a 'digital transformation' agency, and actively work with different departments on one exciting project, helping them solve problems and complete real-life tasks.

As part of the experience you'll also see lots of tips as well as links through to other LifeSkills content. These are designed to help you learn how best to deal with situations you may come across in the workplace. By clicking on the links you'll get the most out of your Virtual Work Experience and learn more about the vital skills you'll need in the workplace.

Work through the short module and complete answers to the following in the boxes provided:

What key skills are identified and why are they important?

What tips are you given about how to approach your work experience?

During the work experience you meet some different functions within the Freeformer business. Summarise what you understand about their role in the company.

Note any other observations that you have:

PERSONAL FINANCE

Over the next couple of years, many of you will be starting your first 'real' job. You will start to pay taxes and national insurance and will have to consider things like budgeting. Some of you may also start thinking of how to make your money go further and may be interested in how to invest and make your money work harder for you. The final section of your virtual futures programme is all about finance. Using the [PWC Financial Literacy programme](#), you will work through 5 modules that will help to give you a greater insight and understanding of the following areas:

- Credit and Debt
- Insurance
- Your money and you – how payslips work.
- Financial Planning
- Consumer Fraud

Bear in mind that these have mostly been written with the intention of a teacher leading on them and are suitable for students from Key Stage 4 and above, so there may be sections that you can skim through and other parts where you may want to spend more time understanding what is involved. All five sections are very important for you to consider in order to be financially savvy and secure with your money.

Make any relevant notes in this space.

Personal finance notes

USEFUL WEBSITES AND RESOURCES FOR CAREERS AND FINANCE



PWC Employability Hub has lots of useful information and tips for job interviews and how to get through testing and assessment centres. They also have a section on the skills that they look for when recruiting their apprentices and graduate trainees into professional services roles. <https://www.pwc.co.uk/careers/student-jobs/employability.html>

Nat West Bank have a really comprehensive money skills website with lots of modules and interactive resources. You should be able to find information about any possible question you might have about money and finance! <https://natwest.mymoneysense.com/home/>

The Careers Advisory Service is open to all UK citizens who are 18 and above – including school leavers. You can use the career tools on their website to:

- learn more about the careers that interest you
- discover your strengths and skills

- find the right courses and training <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

Springpod is a **free careers network** for young people aged 13–24. They can help you explore your options, build connections and get hired – all before you leave education. Networking is fast becoming a very important part of career development and job hunting so getting involved with organisations like Springpod will really enhance your prospects. Springpod also offer a programme of inspirational speakers and career talks that are free for you to attend.

<https://www.springpod.co.uk/>
Young Professionals is another networking organisation that brings young people into contact with some of the biggest corporate brands in the UK. Through an app you can explore opportunities for work experience and that first job to get you started on your career.

<https://young-professionals.uk/>

Apprenticeships

Everything you need to know about Apprenticeships is on the ASK Apprenticeship website. There is lots of information covering things like how to apply, what might make your CV stand out, where to find vacancies and why you might choose an apprenticeship.

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/resources/>

If you are considering applying for an apprenticeship – check out Classroom to Boardroom. This is an episodic chat show series from Springpod that explores the world of apprenticeships, through real-life success stories of apprentices working at leading organisations such as Nestle, Jaguar Land Rover, EY, Capgemini, Accenture, Pret and more.

<https://www.springpod.co.uk/classroom-to-boardroom/>

APPENDIX – CV Template School Leaver

Name

Address

01234 900621 • 0113 000 0000 • name@mail.com

Driving Licence • Own Car

Personal statement

A highly motivated and hardworking individual, who has recently completed their A-Levels, and received excellent grades in both Maths and Science. Seeking an apprenticeship in the engineering industry to build upon a keen scientific interest and start a career as a maintenance engineer.

Mechanically minded, with a methodical approach to working and an eagerness to learn and develop personal skills in a practical setting. Eventual career goal is to become a fully-qualified and experienced maintenance or electrical engineer, with the longer-term aspiration of moving into project management.

Key Skills

- Advanced problem solving and numeracy skills
- Accomplished communication skills, both written and verbal, developed through numerous essays and presentations given during my time at college
- Ability to take the initiative and work well under pressure, ensuring strict deadlines are met, as successfully demonstrated during work experience placement project
- Flexibility, whilst maintaining enthusiasm and commitment to each project
- Proficiency in all areas of Microsoft Office, including Access, Excel, Word and PowerPoint

Education

College/School Name (2010 – 2012)

A-levels:

Physics – A

Maths – B

Business Studies – B

School Name (2004 – 2010)

10 GCSEs, grade A–C, including Maths (A) and Double Science (AA)

Work Experience

Part-time Sales Assistant, Shop Name, Location

(April 2011 – Present)

Key results:

Achieved four out of five revenue targets

Personally billed over £10,000 since starting position.

Demonstrated resilience and ability to upsell products, consistently meeting KPIs set for adding more value to sales.

Significantly improved negotiation skills, regularly converting customers from point of enquiry to sale.

Pharmaceutical Company (*unpaid work experience*)

(Summer 2009)

Duties included:

Shadowed a key member of laboratory staff, observing their day-to-day work

Spent a morning working within customer service centre, listening to client complaints and understanding company best practice when responding

Assisted in project on risk management and contingency planning in case of failure at distribution centre

Learned about company project management lifecycle methodology

Gained knowledge of key health and safety standards used within the industry

Hobbies & Interests

Over the last two summers I have helped a family friend restore a classic sports car. This has triggered a passionate interest in mechanics and automotive restoration and, now that the project is finished, I have continued to build my knowledge by attending various classic car events.

During this time, I also decided to set up a blog around the project. Initially starting as a way to ask other collectors for advice whilst tracking progress, I began to enjoy writing about the subject and have now started writing occasional freelance articles for an online automotive magazine.

References

References are available on request.



Lymm High School, Oughtrington Lane, Lymm, Cheshire, WA13 0RB

01925 755458 | info@lymmhigh.org.uk

www.lymmhigh.org.uk