

Education unlocks skills and employment

Activity pack for ages 11-16



About this resource

These fun and easily-adapted activities for ages 11-16 help young people to develop the skills they need to be effective change-makers in their lives, their communities and the world around them.

Activity 1 – What skills are important?

Learners will work collaboratively to rank different types of skills according to how important they think they are. They will learn about the Sustainable Development Goals and consider what skills might help these goals to be achieved.

Activity 2 – My skills audit

In this activity, learners will complete a skills audit to help them think critically about their own personal skillset.

Activity 3 – Taking part in the digital world

Learners will discuss the importance of digital skills and investigate the challenges that some young people face in being able to learn skills and access employment. As an extension to this activity, learners are asked to develop their own digital skills by creating an infographic to raise awareness of the digital divide.

Activity 4 – Sharing skills across our communities

In this final activity, learners will think about how we learn skills and identify things that can support this learning process, as well as potential barriers. They will consider the opportunities for skills development across their community before planning a short activity to teach a skill to others in their class.



Notes for educators

- These flexible activities are intended to support your teaching rather than direct it. The activities could be used as standalone sessions for a drop down (off-timetable) day or to enrich the teaching of different subjects and topics. An overview of potential curriculum links is provided below.
- The approximate timings given for each activity are a guide only. We recommend completing all the activities over a series of lessons, if possible, but educators may prefer to use a selection depending on their learners' needs and the time available. Some additional activity ideas are included at the end of the resource.
- Learning outcomes are provided at the start of each activity. No starters and plenaries are included as it is assumed that educators will want to plan these individually.
- All activity and resource sheets are included in this pack. An accompanying slideshow is provided as a separate download.
- Where possible, the activities and resources are differentiated to help you meet the needs of different learners in your class. This guidance might also be useful in adapting some of the activities for younger and older learners. It may also be helpful to refer to the Education unlocks skills and employment activities for ages 7-11.
- We've also put together a list of useful links and resources to help support any additional teaching about the topics and concepts explored in these activities.

Curriculum links

England: Citizenship; Personal, Social and Health Education

Northern Ireland: Learning for Life and Work

Scotland: Health and Well-being

Wales: Humanities; Science and Technology

Background information

Young people make up one-third of the global unemployed workforce and by 2030, it is forecast that more than half of all young people will not have the basic skills necessary for the workforce of the future. Next-generation skills go beyond the future of work. They also include the skills young people need to engage with others and be effective in their lives, communities and the world around them. Education is critical in providing the life skills young people need for a rapidly changing and complex world.

We are entering a fourth industrial revolution where advances in technology are fundamentally altering the way we live, work and interact with each other and the world around us. Approximately two billion jobs, half of the jobs available in the world today, are expected to disappear by 2030 as a result of automation. Young people are particularly at risk of job displacement because they are more likely to be in those lower-skilled occupations where automation is predicted to have the greatest impact. Covid-19 has accelerated the growth in remote work, e-commerce and automation – it is estimated that up to 25% more workers may need to change occupations than before the pandemic. Many jobs will disappear or become obsolete, but alongside this many new jobs will be created.

About Theirworld

Theirworld believes that every young person deserves the skills and preparation they need to unleash their potential and be engaged citizens. Our campaigns, Global Youth Ambassadors program, and skills projects are preparing the next generation of campaigners, coders and entrepreneurs – especially young girls – with skills for the future.



Activity 1 – What skills are important?

30 min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- rank different types of skills according to how important they think they are
- work collaboratively and discuss their ideas with others
- consider what skills will be needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 3-6)
- Scissors and copies of the [Sorting skills](#) activity sheet

What to do:

- 1** Ask learners what skills they think are the most important to have in life. Ask learners to talk with a partner about their ideas before sharing their ideas as a whole group. Possible questions to prompt their thinking are provided on slide 3.
- 2** Organise learners into groups of three or four. Give each group a copy of the [Sorting skills](#) activity sheet. These skill types are also provided on slide 4. Talk through the meaning of each of these skills to check learners' understanding. Say that learners are going to work together in their groups to think about the importance of these different skill types.
- 3** Show slide 5 and explain that learners should cut out the skills cards and sort them into a diamond. The skills that learners think are the most important should go at the top of their diamond. The skills they think are less important should go at the bottom. There are three blank cards on the activity sheet in case learners want to replace some of the skills with their own ideas.
- 4** Say that there is no right or wrong way of doing this, but learners need to agree as a group and have reasons for why they chose this order.
- 5** Allow time for learners to share and talk about their ideas with other groups. Learners could also reflect on and discuss what skills they have developed through taking part in this group-based activity.
- 6** Show slide 6 and ask learners whether they have heard of the Sustainable Development Goals. Learners are introduced to these goals in the Education unlocks big change activities for ages 11-16.
- 7** Explain that in 2015, countries all over the world came together to commit to the Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs, also known as the Global Goals, are a set of goals and targets aimed at making the world a better place by 2030. The goals apply to everyone, young or old, in all the 193 countries that signed up to them.

8 Depending on learners' knowledge about the goals you may wish to use this [animation from the World's Largest Lesson](#) as an introduction to the [SDGs](#). We've also put together a list of [useful links and resources](#) to help support any additional teaching about the [SDGs](#) that might be needed.

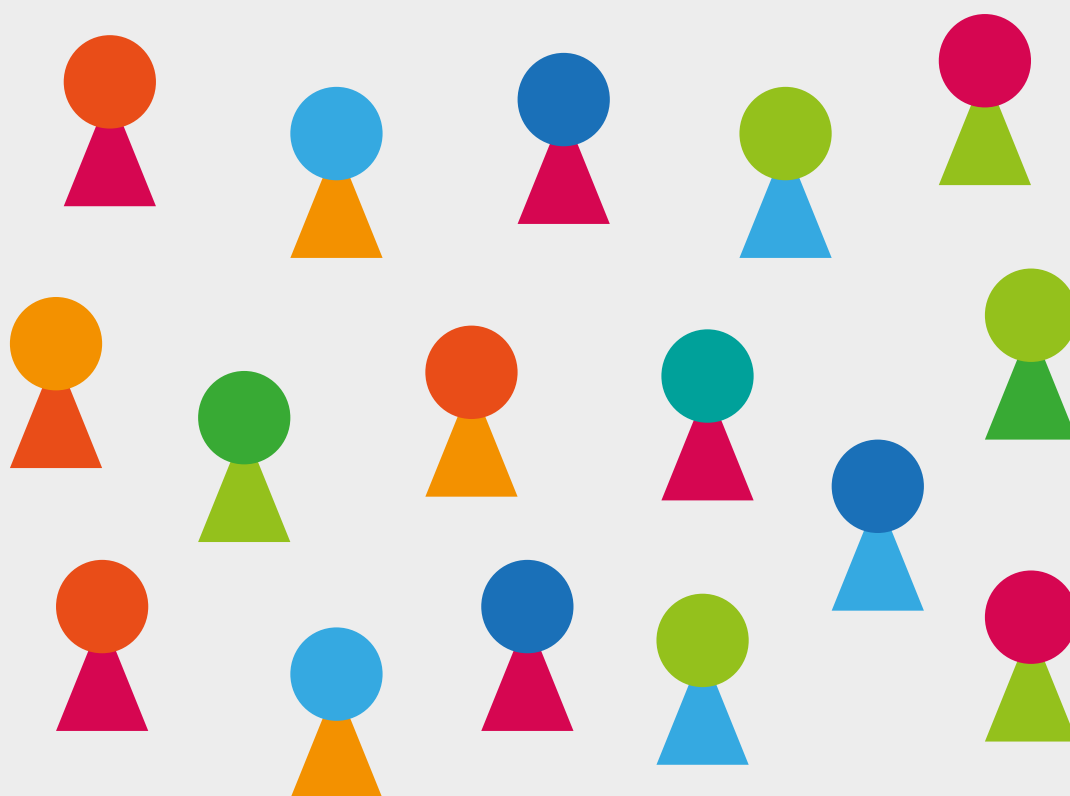
9 Ask learners to think about and discuss in their groups what skills might be useful in helping the [SDGs](#) to be achieved. For example, people will need adaptability and resilience to respond to the impacts of the climate crisis. Creativity and problem-solving will help people to come up with solutions to the challenges facing our planet and its people. The [SDGs](#) will only be achieved with teamwork – everyone working together to take action.

10 Feedback their ideas as a class. Finish by asking learners whether they would change the order in which they ranked the different skills. If so, why?

Differentiation

Make it more difficult:

Learners could go online to find evidence to support the importance of different skill types. For example, this [article from the World Economic Forum](#) identifies the [top 10 job skills of tomorrow](#) that employees will need.



Activity 2 – My skills audit

30min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- think critically about the skills they have and what actions they could take to develop these

What you need:

- Slideshow (slide 8)
- Paper, pencils and pens
- Copies of the [My skills audit](#) resource sheet

What to do:

- 1** Explain that in this activity learners are going to be thinking about what skills they have as an individual and identifying possible skills that they might wish to develop further.
- 2** Show slide 8 and give each learner a copy of the [My skills audit](#) activity sheet to complete.
- 3** In the first column, learners should write down some of the types of skills that they already have. Learners could use the skill types provided in the [Sorting skills](#) activity sheet or come up with their own ideas.
- 4** For each of these skill types, learners should:
 - use a number between 1 and 5 to rate how good they think they are at this skill (where 1 is a very low ability in this skill and 5 is a very high ability)
 - write one or more examples of when they have demonstrated this skill
 - think of an action they could take to further develop this skill
- 5** Discourage learners from rating themselves 0 or 5. They should have some level of each skill, even if it is very low, and there are always things we can do to improve a skill that we have.
- 6** Finish by discussing when learners might need to demonstrate that they have different skills in this way, for example when they are applying to go to college or university, or trying to get an apprenticeship or job. Learners will think more about what and who can help them to develop skills in the final activity.
- 7** Learners could refer back to their skills audit a few weeks' later to see whether they have made progress in any of these skills.

Activity 3 – Taking part in the digital world

30min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- identify different types of digital skills and discuss the importance of digital skills in our lives
- investigate barriers that some people face in accessing the internet and learning digital skills
- explore ways in which Theirworld and partners are supporting some young people around the world to develop digital skills
- create infographics to raise awareness of the digital divide (optional)

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 10-15)
- Access to a digital device and the internet (optional)

What to do:

- 1** Remind learners that the Sustainable Development Goals are a set of goals and targets aimed at making the world a better place by 2030. Learners are introduced to these goals in the first activity and the 17 goal icons are provided on slide 6.
- 2** Show slide 10 and ask learners to work out how old they will be in 2030. Point out that in 2030, learners might be working. Or they might be studying or training for a future career. Invite learners to share their thoughts about what they might be doing in 2030 with a partner. What job might they have? What would they like to be studying or in training for?
- 3** Explain that it is likely that many young people at school today will have a job in the future that doesn't exist yet. Similarly, many of the jobs people do today didn't exist when their parents were children.
- 4** Discuss learners' ideas about why they think this is. Show slide 11 and explain that one of the reasons for this is automation – using technology to do things that people used to do before. Automation means that some existing jobs won't be needed in the future, but other jobs will be created to support these technological changes.
- 5** Say that digital skills will be of increasing importance in this automated world. Share the fact that over 90% of jobs worldwide already require digital skills. Digital skills will become even more important for work in the future as we use technology more and more in our lives.
- 6** Discuss learners' ideas about what digital skills are. Explain that we can think of digital skills as the range of abilities we need to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information. Some examples of different digital skills are provided on slide 12.

- 7** Organise learners into pairs or groups of three. Show slide 13 and give learners five minutes to think of as many different ways as possible in which they use digital skills in their lives. They could record their ideas on paper or digitally. Discuss their ideas as a class. You might like to extend this discussion by asking learners to reflect on how our use of digital skills and technology has changed during the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 8** Ask learners whether they think everyone will have the opportunity to develop these skills. Invite learners to share their ideas about why some people might not have the digital skills they need. For example, possible factors might be related to age, disability, gender, poverty and where you live. Use the facts on slide 14 to prompt this discussion.

- 9** Use the case study on slide 15 to support further discussion about the challenges that some young people can face in learning digital skills and the importance of education in locking skills and employment. Additional information is provided in the slide notes. You might also like to show this [video](#) from one of the girls involved in the Code Clubs project talking about the importance of digital skills.

- 10** As an extension to this activity, ask learners to develop their own digital skills by creating an infographic to raise awareness of the digital divide. They could use one of the facts on slide 14 or carry out their own research online to find some data to represent.



Activity 4 – Sharing skills across our communities

40min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- consider what and who can help them to learn skills
- identify opportunities for the sharing and development of skills across their community
- plan a short activity to teach others in their class a skill

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 17-21)
- Additional resources will also be required for learners to plan their skill-sharing activity

What to do:

1

Explain that in this activity learners are going to be thinking more about how we learn skills. They will be considering what and who can help people to learn skills, as well as thinking about what might make it difficult.

2

Point out that we learn skills throughout our lives in many different ways. We might learn some skills on our own but often we need the support of others – at school, at home and across our communities. We might also need support in other ways, for example by having the right equipment or space to learn skills.

3

Show slide 17 and ask learners to think about one of the skills they have and discuss with a partner (or in a larger group) how they learned this skill. Additional information to prompt this thinking and discussion is provided in the slide notes and below:

- **Where did they learn this skill?** We learn skills in lots of different places – at school, online, at home or in other places in our community. We are learning skills all the time throughout our lives.
- **Who or what helped them to learn this skill?** For example, this might be other people teaching or showing them how to do something, or offering them encouragement. It might be having the necessary equipment, space or time to learn and practice a skill. It might be having self-belief and motivation to keep going and practice a skill.
- **What might make it difficult to learn a new skill?** We will all have some skills that we naturally find easier to do or learn. There will also be some skills that we enjoy learning more than others. However, there may also be other things that can make it more difficult. For example, we might not have the equipment, space or time we need to learn a skill or someone to teach us how to do it.

4

Show slide 18 and say that Theirworld has been working with businesses to develop Skills Friendly Cities that support young people to develop the skills they need for the work and life in the future. The project is led by a group of businesses called the Global Business Coalition for Education.

- 5 Remind learners that we learn skills throughout our lives in many different ways. We might learn some skills on our own but often we need the support of others – at school, at home and across our communities.

- 6 Show slide 19 and ask learners to think about the different groups that they belong to in their community. What opportunities might there be for learning and sharing skills through these community connections? Ask learners to talk with a partner before discussing their ideas as a class.

- 7 Show slide 20 and discuss what opportunities there might be for the learning and sharing of skills through these community connections. For example, businesses and charities might be able to support skills development by offering work experience placements, volunteering options or school speakers. Spending time with friends can help develop interpersonal skills. Taking part in sports can help develop teamwork skills. Encourage learners to also think about any opportunities there might be for them to support others in their community to develop skills.

- 8 Explain that learners are now going to plan a short activity to teach a skill to others in their class or school. For example, this might be how to count to ten in a different language, how to make something, how to mend a puncture on a bike or perhaps a digital skill. Point out that each one of us has many skills that we can share; teaching others a skill is also a great way of supporting our own skills development.

- 9 The questions on slide 21 could be used to support learners with this planning process. Ideally, provide time for learners to subsequently share their activities with a partner or a larger group.

Differentiation

Make it more difficult:

Learners could create their own community map to show the connections they have with different groups and possible opportunities for skills learning.

Additional activity ideas



Learners could:



Identify a new skill that they would like to learn and support them to create an action plan for learning it. Perhaps learners could break it down into smaller steps and think of a daily or weekly goal to work towards.



Research possible new jobs in the future. Encourage learners to think about what skills might be needed for these jobs and how young people could go about learning these skills.



Talk to elderly members of their family or community about how the importance of digital skills and the internet has changed in their lifetime. How do they think the internet has changed our world for the better (or the worse)?



Learners could investigate different education systems around the world and explore differences between what and how young people learn skills. Learners could then compare these findings with their own education experiences.

Share your learning!

Theirworld would love to hear how any schools have used these activities in the classroom. Please also let us know any feedback so that we can try to improve our resources and support for schools in the future. Email schools@theirworld.org or find @theirworld on [X](#) and [Facebook](#).

Useful links and resources

- Browse [Theirworld's other teaching resources](#) and investigate the importance of education in unlocking big change.
- [The Key](#) is a comprehensive information toolkit created by Theirworld with all the talking points, pitch decks, facts and infographics you need to make the case for education.
- The [World's Largest Lesson](#) has a huge selection of free resources to engage and inspire young people aged 8-14 to learn about and take action for the Sustainable Development Goals.
- UNESCO has a [helpful resource bank](#) with hundreds of teaching ideas and resources to support education about and for the sustainable development goals. The activities linked to [SDG8 \(Decent Work and Economic Growth\)](#) could be used to develop learners' understanding of the importance of education in unlocking skills and employment.
- [Reboot Education](#) is an online platform which lists hundreds of resources to support teachers in developing a global dimension in the classroom and across the school community.
- Theirworld and its Global Business Coalition for Education initiative brought together experts to discuss the most important issues of the day and how education underpins solving them. Educators may wish to listen to this [discussion exploring the role of skills and community-level investments in education and economic recovery](#). This report from Deloitte Global and the Global Business Coalition for Education – [Preparing tomorrow's workforce for the Fourth Industrial Revolution](#) - may also be of interest.

The links and resources [provided above] include and will take you to materials and sites that have been produced by third parties. We do not maintain or control these links, materials or sites and have no responsibility for the content or your use of the same. Please be aware that there may be separate terms and conditions applicable to your use of these materials and sites.

Sorting skills

Activity sheet

Cut out the skills cards. Sort them into a diamond. The skills you think are the most important should go at the top of your diamond. The skills you think are less important should go at the bottom. There are three blank cards in case you want to replace some of these skills with your own ideas. There is no right or wrong way of doing this, but you need to agree as a group and have reasons for why you chose this order.



Adaptability being able and willing to change in order to manage successfully in new situations	Communication being able to share or exchange information with others	Interpersonal being able to form good relationships with other people
Creativity being able to use your imagination or own ideas to create something new	Organisation being able to arrange and prepare things effectively	Teamwork being able to work well together with others
Critical thinking being able to take in new information and work out how best to use it	Problem-solving being able to find ways to deal with problems or difficulties	Resilience being able to recover quickly after something difficult has happened
Your idea	Your idea	Your idea

My skills audit

Activity sheet

Skill	Rating 1 \longleftrightarrow 5	When I demonstrated this skill	Action I could take to improve this skill



Theirworld

Theirworld is a global children's charity committed to ending the global education crisis and unleashing the potential of the next generation.

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