

# Volunteering challenge

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# General

This course introduces you to the notion of volunteering, why you might choose to do it, what you might choose to do, and what benefits you can gain from it. Volunteering can be great fun if you find the right opportunity, or it can feel like a real chore if you choose the wrong thing, so it's important to choose something you enjoy so you can stick to your commitment.

# What is volunteering?

## Helping out

Volunteering is a type of unpaid work people do because they want to help out. It generally involves giving up your time, and using your skills and knowledge to benefit others in the community. In the video below, some people explain what volunteering means to them .

Playing time: 2.41

[watch](#)

## Choice

You might already do lots of things you don't get paid for. You don't get paid to go to school, for example. But that's not voluntary - in fact, school attendance is a legal requirement! You might also do unpaid household chores, washing the dishes, cooking, or keeping your room tidy. This isn't a legal requirement, but it's probably not much of a choice if it's the 'rules' in your household. One important difference between volunteering and other forms of unpaid work, therefore, is that you choose to do it. That is, you choose to give your time and skill to others for their benefit.

## What I already do (5 coins)

Complete the '[What I already do template](#)' and upload it to the '[What I already do submission](#)'.

## Choosing a suitable opportunity

Most people already do a lot of things they would rather not do if they were given the choice, so it's important that if you volunteer, you choose something you really want to do. The next video shows how you can choose volunteering opportunities that suit your particular skills and interests.

Playing time: 3.03

[watch](#)

There are two key factors in the above video to help you choose a suitable volunteering opportunity:

- What you do
- Who you work with

One character chose to help elderly people use iPads, and another character chose to do administration work for a group helping the local community. Volunteering can be a chore if you work with a group that doesn't interest you or if you do something you don't enjoy.

## Who do I want to work with? (5 coins)

Complete the '[Who I want to work with template](#)' and upload it to the '[Who do I want to work with? submission](#)'.

## The benefits of volunteering

Take a look at the next video to learn about some of the benefits of volunteering.

Playing time: 3.10

[watch](#)



## Benefits (5 coins)

1. Post one thing you would like to gain from volunteering on the '[Benefits of volunteering forum](#)'. It could be meeting new people, improving a particular skill, getting some form of work experience, or something else.
2. Respond to someone else's post with an idea for a volunteering opportunity that might help them gain that benefit. If you find that you have similar ideas to someone else, consider whether there are any opportunities that would allow you to work as a group.

## Resources and Activities

### forum: Benefits of volunteering forum

Post one thing you would like to gain from volunteering. Then, respond to someone else's post with an idea for a volunteering opportunity that might help them gain that benefit. If you find that you have similar ideas to someone else, consider whether there are any opportunities that would allow you to work as a group.

Link: [Benefits of volunteering forum](#)

### resource: What I already do template

Resource file: What I already do template.docx

### resource: Who I want to work with template

Resource file: Who I want to work with template.docx

### assign: What I already do submission

Link: [What I already do submission](#)

### assign: Who do I want to work with? submission

Link: [Who do I want to work with? submission](#)

# Finding opportunities

Once you have decided what sort of group you want to volunteer for, and what sort of thing you want to do, you need to find an opportunity that will appreciate you.

## Start local

For the sake of convenience, it's best to find a local volunteering opportunity. Some groups may post online or contact your school to find volunteers, but others might not advertise publicly, in which case you would have to approach them to see if they could benefit from what you have to offer.



*Photo by Ray Sangga Kusuma on Unsplash*

## Youth groups

There may be youth groups in your area, such as the Scouts. Youth groups often need volunteers to help with younger age groups, or to help organise and oversee activities more generally.

## Community services

If you live in a rural area, there may be a local voluntary fire service such as the CFS. Fire services sometimes have a cadet group for teenage volunteers. As well as learning about fire fighting, you can help out with behind the scene activities during emergencies, such as providing food to the firefighters, cleaning and restocking the appliances when they return to the station so they are ready to go out again, and providing information to locals. Watch the next video for some information about CFS cadets:

Playing time: 3:35

[watch](#)

There are other community groups that provide for those in need. Some groups provide for the elderly, for example, organising community tea or helping people with their shopping.

## Local charities

Many charitable organisations have centres across Australia, so it's worth checking out what's in your community. You may want to help out at the local RSPCA shelter, for example, by working with the animals or helping with administration or fundraising. If there isn't a local shelter but you would still like to work with animals, you could look into working at a local farm or riding school, or with the parks as a volunteer ranger. There are lots of opportunities if you look for them! The next video was made by RSPCA Queensland about why people like to volunteer for them.

Playing time: 4:08

[watch](#)

## Exploring your opportunities (5 coins)

Complete the '[Local volunteering opportunities template](#)' and upload it to the '[Exploring your opportunities submission](#)'.

## Volunteering overseas

There are a number of organisations that organise short-term overseas volunteering opportunities. These are a bit like charitable holidays. Usually you have to fund yourself, but you could try fundraising if you can't afford it. These experiences can be organised through your school, or you can go directly through a volunteering organisation. The next video introduces a few different overseas volunteering opportunities.

Playing time: 14:19

[watch](#)

Overseas volunteering opportunities can be difficult to organise, but it's good to have an idea of what sorts of things are available, particularly for when you finish school!

## Overseas opportunities (5 coins)

Look online for an overseas volunteering opportunity that might appeal to you and share it on the '[Overseas volunteering forum](#)', along with an explanation of why it interests you.

## Resources and Activities

### forum: Overseas Volunteering Forum

Look online for an overseas volunteering opportunity that might appeal to you and share it here, along with an explanation of why it interests you.

Link: [Overseas Volunteering Forum](#)

### resource: Local volunteering opportunities template

**Resource file:** Local volunteering opportunities.docx

## assign: Exploring your opportunities submission

Link: [Exploring your opportunities submission](#)

# Being a volunteer

## Commitment

Volunteering isn't just saying you would like to do something - it actually involves a serious commitment. If you agree to volunteer and then don't follow through, you could be seriously letting someone down. Volunteers need to be reliable and committed, because people depend on them. For people in the community, interacting with you may be the highlight of their day, so if you can't fulfill your commitment you have to let them know in good time so they can make other arrangements.

## Good intentions

The next video is a short animation that demonstrates the spirit of volunteering, and the importance of intention.

Playing time: 2:28

[watch](#)

If you are volunteering because you feel you ought to or because you've been told to, you won't enjoy it or gain the satisfaction that can be derived from helping others.

## Good conduct

Volunteers represent the organisations they work for, so they are expected to behave professionally. This next video is a short guide to what one particular organisation expects from their volunteers, but it applies equally to other volunteering opportunities.

Playing time: 3:20

[watch](#)

## Being a good volunteer (5 coins)

Create a list of the top 10 rules of conduct or principles by which volunteers should do their work, and share it on the '[Being a good volunteer forum](#)' along with an explanation of why you chose the first item on the list.

## Volunteering is a two-way relationship

We have thus far emphasised your obligations as a volunteer, but it's important to remember that volunteering is a two-way relationship. The organisation you work for has certain responsibilities, and you have rights as a volunteer. The next video provides a clear summary of the volunteering relationship:

Playing time: 3:13

[watch](#)

## Volunteer rights (5 coins)

Do you have any concerns about volunteering? Can you see any possible issues with regard to your experience as a volunteer? Could there be any risks for your health and safety? What do you expect from

organisations you volunteer for? Post your thoughts on the '[Volunteer rights forum](#)'.

## Resources and Activities

### forum: Volunteer Rights Forum

Do you have any concerns about volunteering? Can you see any possible issues with regard to your experience as a volunteer? Could there be any risks for your health and safety? What do you expect from organisations you volunteer for?

Link: [Volunteer Rights Forum](#)

### forum: Being a good volunteer forum

Create a list of the top 10 rules of conduct or principles by which volunteers should do their work, and share it here, along with an explanation of why you chose the first item on the list.

Link: [Being a good volunteer forum](#)

# The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

## The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Duke of Edinburgh's awards are an internationally recognised program for people between the ages of 14 and 24. You can start working for your Bronze award at the age of 14, then progress to Silver and Gold. If you start with Silver or Gold, you have to do additional hours of service to make up for missing the Bronze and/or Silver, so it's best to start with Bronze and work up to Gold. The next video explains the award a bit more:

Playing time: 3:45

[watch](#)

## Completing the award

There are four elements to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award:

1. Skills - you choose which skills you would like to develop
2. Physical activity - you choose what you would like to do
3. Service - this is the volunteering element
4. Adventure - this is where you go on a group expedition for a few days; you get to choose where, and how you want to travel

## Evidence

You have to provide a log of your activity over the period of time you take to complete the award. You also have to provide photos and other physical evidence of your achievements. The next video was made by a group doing their Bronze adventure in the Blue Mountains. It's a good example of the type of evidence you should be keeping.

Playing time: 3:56

[watch](#)

There's an online record keeping process that you can access when you register for the award, but there are also paper templates you can complete offline. The templates can also be used to help you think about and plan for your award before you start it. It's a good idea to plan and practice collecting evidence before registering, because it costs money to register. If you choose to complete the award at school, the school may cover the fee for you.

## The Award (5 coins)

Take a look at the Duke of Edinburgh's Award [website](#) to find out more. Is this something that would appeal to you? If you were to complete the Award, what could you do to meet each of the four elements above? Post your ideas on the '[Duke of Edinburgh's Award forum](#)'.

## Resources and Activities

**forum: Duke of Edinburgh's Award forum**

Is the Duke of Edinburgh's Award something that would appeal to you? If you were to complete it, what could you do to meet each of the following four elements?: Skills, physical activity, service, adventure.

**Link:** [Duke of Edinburgh's Award forum](#)



## Realising your learning

Whether you go for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award or not, it is valuable to keep a record of your volunteering. It is also useful to consider what you learn from volunteering and what effect you are having through your work, partly so you can use your volunteering as an example of personal development in job interviews. Employers love to hear about volunteering that candidates have done, and what they have learned from the experience. The next video covers a number of areas you could consider when evaluating your volunteering experience.

Playing time: 6:02

[watch](#)

### Finding the right opportunity

One of the ideas in the video is finding something you're passionate about. It's important to volunteer in a field you are passionate about, so it's often worth trying different things to explore whether they're right for you or not.



*Photo by Anna Earl on Unsplash*

Sometimes we think we're interested in something, but the reality is different to what we expected - of course, that doesn't mean we can't volunteer somewhere else instead. For example, you may want to work with new refugee migrants to help them feel welcome in your community, but the reality might be that you struggle too much with communication. Not a problem - you could shift to event organisation rather than direct interaction, or you could help a refugee advocacy group. Alternatively, you could find a different community to volunteer with. The way to learn what kind of volunteering you enjoy is to try a range of different opportunities.

### **Reflecting on what you enjoy (5 coins)**

Complete this activity when you have begun volunteering. What sort of opportunities did you initially think would suit you? Were you correct, or have you been surprised in some way? Have you found you enjoy something you thought you wouldn't enjoy? Have you found you don't enjoy something you thought you would enjoy? Will you stick with your current volunteering opportunity or might you try something else? Share your thoughts on the ['Reflection forum'](#).

### **Taking action**

Another idea from the video above is that volunteering is about taking action, pushing yourself to try new things, work with new people, and learn from new experiences.



*Photo by Brian Yurasits on Unsplash*

Your 'comfort zone' consists of all the things you're familiar with and comfortable doing. When you try something new and challenging, it's normal to feel a bit uncomfortable, and this is called stepping outside of your comfort zone. This discomfort is often where learning and personal growth occur.

### **Your learning (5 coins)**

Complete the '[My learning template](#)' by thinking about what you have done that pushed you outside of your comfort zone, and what you learnt from the experience.

### **Building connections**

Volunteering gives you the opportunity to meet new people and build new connections. Interpersonal connections are at the heart of any community, so you will find yourself becoming a part of a community by connecting with new people.





*Photo by Perry Grone on Unsplash*

### **Your connections (5 coins)**

Use the '[My connections template](#)' to list five people you have connected with as part of your volunteering. If there is anyone you would like to connect with but have not done so yet, note their name down too and consider how you might be able to connect with them.

### **Caring**

The strongest message in the video above is that volunteers are people who care enough to give their time in service of a cause. Receiving the gratitude of someone you have helped can be extremely rewarding.

### **Making a difference (5 coins)**

Who have you helped through your volunteering, and how? What difference have you made to the world or the lives of others? You can share this on the '[Making a difference forum](#)', or you can just make a note and upload it to the '[Making a difference submission](#)' if you would prefer not to share. Be sure to maintain the privacy of the people you have helped in your response.



*Photo by RÃ©mi Walle on Unsplash*

## Resources and Activities

### forum: Reflection forum

What sort of opportunities did you initially think would suit you? Were you correct, or have you been surprised in some way? Have you found you enjoy something you thought you wouldn't enjoy? Have you found you don't enjoy something you thought you would enjoy? Will you stick with your current volunteering opportunity or might you try something else? Share your thoughts here.

Link: [Reflection forum](#)

### resource: My Learning Template

Resource file: My Learning Template.docx

### resource: My Connections Template

Resource file: My Connections Template.docx

### forum: Making a difference forum

Who have you helped through your volunteering, and how? What difference have you made to the world or the lives of others? Be sure to maintain the privacy of the people you have helped in your response.

Link: [Making a difference forum](#)

### **assign: Making a difference submission**

Link: [Making a difference submission](#)

## Attachments

What\_I\_already\_do\_template.docx

Who\_I\_want\_to\_work\_with\_template.docx

Local\_volunteering\_opportunities.docx

My\_Learning\_Template.docx

My\_Connections\_Template.docx