MY CHARACTER STRENGTHS WORKBOOK

# How to use this workbook

* Open the workbook in Word on your desktop and save to your own device. It’s your workbook and no one else will have access to it.
* To get the most out of this workbook, you will need internet access, however if you don’t have access at this time, you can still use most of the workbook.
* All the interactive sections are highlighted in light green. As you work through the different activities, click on the tick boxes, select your answers from the drop-down menus or use the comment boxes to type your own.
* There is further space on page 22 for you to record any notes or thoughts about any of the activities.
* Question answers can be found at the end of the workbook.
* If you have any questions, you can contact us by email at [FutureQuest@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:FutureQuest@uwe.ac.uk).

# Introduction

This workbook will cover:

* what character strengths are
* character strengths in other people
* identifying character strengths in ourselves
* how to use character strengths

By completing this workbook, you will:

* understand what character strengths are
* understand why character strengths are important
* know your top character strengths
* have ideas of how to make your character strengths stronger

There are suggested timings for each activity, but as a guide, you can expect to spend around **1 hour** on completing this workbook.

PART 1 – IDENTIFYING STRENGTHS

# What are character strengths? (15 min)

Watch this 8 minute video on the Science of Character to understand what we mean when we talk about character strengths and find out why character strengths are important. (Captions are available.)

Play icon for the video.

Click the video above to play or click [here](https://vimeo.com/79444520) to view full screen in a new browser.

Answer the questions below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| How many character strengths were identified by the two psychologists? | Choose an item. |
| Character Strengths can’t be learnt.  (True or False) | Choose an item. |
| You can influence another person’s character.  (True or False) | Choose an item. |
| Name one area of our lives in which using character strengths could help. | Click or tap here to enter text. |

24 Character Strengths

Character Strengths are the positive parts of our personality that affect how we think, feel and behave. Psychologists have come up with 24 strengths that make up our character. Everyone has all of these strengths, but in different amounts, making us all unique. Character strengths can be developed, so we have the potential to build on any of these strengths.

By identifying and using our character strengths, we can make them stronger, which will help us develop a more fulfilling life by feeling happier, managing stress and health, improving relationships, achieving goals and finding purpose in our lives.

By identifying and focusing on character strengths in other people, we can help to develop their character strengths too.

The following table lists the 24 character strengths, which are grouped under 6 virtues that were found to exist across cultures as way of leading to a meaningful life. Virtues are core characteristics of a high moral standard. When any of the strengths listed in each group are used, then the group virtue can be developed.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Wisdom** | **Courage** | **Humanity** |
| * Creativity * Curiosity * Judgment * Love of learning * Perspective   (able to see bigger picture) | * Bravery * Perseverance * Honesty * Zest | * Love * Kindness * Socially Intelligent   (aware of yourself and others around you) |
| **Justice** | **Temperance** | **Transcendence** |
| * Teamwork * Fairness * Leadership | * Forgiveness * Humility * Prudence   (cautious)   * Self-regulation   (self-control) | * Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence * Gratitude * Hope * Humour * Spirituality |

(VIA Classification, Christopher Peterson and Martin E.P. Seligman, 2004)

You can use the [VIA Institute on Character](https://www.viacharacter.org/character-strengths) website to find out more about these character strengths and to look up any you may not understand.

# What are their character strengths? (10 mins)

Use the table of 24 character strengths to decide which are the main strengths each of the following have:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Harry Potter standing next to an owl and holding a wand | **Harry Potter** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Elsa from Frozen standing in a blue dress | **Elsa** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Michelle Obama in a seated position smiling | **Michelle Obama** | Click or tap here to enter text. |

Who do you admire?

Think of a person you know that you admire. This could be a friend, a classmate, a family member or a teacher. Think about why you admire them.

What character strengths do they have from the list? How do you know they have these strengths? How do they behave?

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| Click or tap here to enter text. |

Discover your character strengths (15 mins)

You can discover your top strengths by one of two ways:

1. **Take a quick online survey**

You can get to know your top strengths by registering and taking the free 15 minute [VIA Character Youth Survey](https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register#youth). The survey will provide you with a complete list of your character strengths ranked in order with those that are more dominant in your personality at the top.

When you have received your results, go to page 8 to record your top 5 strengths.

1. **Use the following tables**

Or if you prefer, you can use the following tables to assess the level of your character strengths yourself. Use the tick boxes to mark whether each strength is mostly like you, sometimes like you or not often like you.

Remember, you can use the [VIA Institute on Character](https://www.viacharacter.org/character-strengths) website to find out more about any character strengths you are unsure of.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Wisdom**  Strengths that help build your knowledge | | | | |
| **Strength** | **Description** | **Mostly Like Me** | **Sometimes Like Me** | **Not Often Like Me** |
| Creativity | I solve problems and think of new and better ways of doing things |  |  |  |
| Curiosity | I am interested in many things and open to new ideas |  |  |  |
| Judgment | I look at all sides of an issue to come up with the right answer |  |  |  |
| Love of Learning | I am open to learning about new things |  |  |  |
| Perspective | I am able to give good advice and see the bigger picture |  |  |  |
| **Courage**  Strengths that help handle challenges | | | | |
| **Strength** | **Description** | **Mostly Like Me** | **Sometimes Like Me** | **Not Often Like Me** |
| Bravery | I accept challenges, face difficulties and speak up for what is not right |  |  |  |
| Perseverance | I finish what I start regardless of any difficulties |  |  |  |
| Honesty | I tell the truth and I am trustworthy |  |  |  |
| Zest | I am active, energetic and enthusiastic |  |  |  |
| **Humanity**  Strengths that help build relationships | | | | |
| **Strength** | **Description** | **Mostly Like Me** | **Sometimes Like Me** | **Not Often Like Me** |
| Love | I am warm and genuine, and value others |  |  |  |
| Kindness | I am caring and helpful |  |  |  |
| Social Intelligence | I am aware of and understand others’ thoughts and feelings |  |  |  |

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| **Justice**  Strengths that help build community | | | | |
| **Strength** | **Description** | **Mostly**  **Like Me** | **Sometimes Like Me** | **Not Often Like Me** |
| Teamwork | I am loyal and work well with others |  |  |  |
| Fairness | I treat everyone fairly and care about what is right |  |  |  |
| Leadership | I provide guidance to others and set a good example |  |  |  |
| **Temperance**  Strengths that help find balance and manage bad habits | | | | |
| **Strength** | **Description** | **Mostly**  **Like Me** | **Sometimes Like Me** | **Not Often Like Me** |
| Forgiveness | I don’t hold grudges and accept others’ faults |  |  |  |
| Humility | I am modest and don’t bring attention to myself |  |  |  |
| Prudence | I am cautious, careful and plan ahead |  |  |  |
| Self-Regulation | I am always in control of what I do and say |  |  |  |
| **Transcendence**  Strengths that help connection outside of yourself | | | | |
| **Strength** | **Description** | **Mostly**  **Like Me** | **Sometimes Like Me** | **Not Often Like Me** |
| Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence | I appreciate nature, the skills of others and the nice things in life |  |  |  |
| Gratitude | I am thankful for the good things in life no matter how small |  |  |  |
| Hope | I believe good things will happen |  |  |  |
| Humour | I like to laugh and see the funny side of things |  |  |  |
| Spirituality | I search for meaning and purpose in life |  |  |  |

What are your top 5 character strengths?

If you took the online survey, your strengths will be ranked in order with your strongest strength at the top.

If you used the tables to assess your strengths, have a look at the strengths that you have ticked to be **Mostly Like Me**. Which of those do you think are your top 5 strongest strengths? If you have ticked less than 5 strengths, you will need to look to the next column **Sometime Like Me.**

List your top 5 character strengths here:

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| 1 | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| 2 | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| 3 | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| 4 | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| 5 | Click or tap here to enter text. |

PART 2 – USING YOUR STRENGTHS

How can I use my strengths? (20 mins)

Your character strengths are like super powers. The more you use your strengths, the stronger they become. You can use your strengths to improve your general wellbeing and skills for learning by:

* doing more of the activities you enjoy
* doing activities that focus on your top strengths
* doing activities that focus on the strengths you want to develop

Activities you enjoy

We often find that when we are using our strengths we feel energised and enjoy what we are doing.

Think back over the last couple of weeks.

List below any activities that you did that you enjoyed, felt positive about or felt energised. If you are finding it difficult to find something from the last couple of weeks, think about any activities that you have felt this way about in the past.

Examples of activities may be doing well on a piece of work or a test, spending time with friends or family, doing a hobby, exercising or relaxing.

List each activity in the table below and record the character strengths you used in each activity:

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| **Activity** | **Strengths I am using** |
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| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |

Do you regularly do these activities? If not, how can you do more of these activities to develop these strengths further? Could you set yourself a goal to do more of these activities at a particular time, several times a week or month?

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Activities focusing on your top strengths

Do any of the activities you’ve just listed involve your top 5 strengths? How do you use your number 1 strength? How often do you use it?

Record your thoughts below:

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| Click or tap here to enter text. |

How could your number 1 strength help you in school and later in work?

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| Click or tap here to enter text. |

What activities could enable you to use more of your number 1 strength?

Use the toolkit on pages 12-20 for ideas.

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| Click or tap here to enter text. |

Activities focusing on the strengths you want to develop

Which character strengths would you like to make stronger?

In what situations could you use these strengths to help you?

If you’re unsure, think back to the person you admire. By looking to people we admire, we can recognise character strengths in others and this helps us to identify strengths that we might like build on.

Pick 1 or 2 strengths to develop and note your thoughts below:

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| Click or tap here to enter text. |

What activities can you do to build on this?

Use the toolkit on pages 12-20 for ideas.

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| Click or tap here to enter text. |

Character Strengths Toolkit

This toolkit lists some activity suggestions for developing each of the 24 character strengths. There is also space to add your own ideas. Tick any that you decide to do.

**Wisdom**

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|  | **Creativity** |
|  | Create something visual, such as draw or paint, create a collage, film a video for TikTok or take photos on a particular theme |
|  | Use items that you were going to recycle to build something new |
|  | Think of different ways to solve a problem or difficult task. |
|  | Work an assignment in a different environment or do it in a different way |
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|  | **Curiosity** |
|  | Build on your knowledge of a subject area that interests you for half an hour a couple of times a week. You could use books, the internet, TV, magazines or podcasts |
|  | Find out about a different culture to your own by trying different food or talking to someone from a different culture |
|  | Take a different route home |
|  | Visit an area of Bristol you have never been to before |
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|  | **Judgment** |
|  | Write down the pros and cons for the next decision you have to make |
|  | Watch/listen to a political speech that doesn’t represent your views and keep an open mind |
|  | Think of the best and worst scenarios for the next challenge you face, and then plan for the most realistic scenario |
|  | Count to 10 before rushing to act in intensive situations |
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|  | **Love of Learning** |
|  | Do a skill swap with someone else. You teach them something and they teach you something in return. |
|  | Use a dictionary to find and learn a new word every week. Then try to use the new word in conversations or written work |
|  | Learn a new skill by watching a ‘How to…’ video on YouTube |
|  | Take a free online tour of a museum |
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|  | **Perspective** |
|  | Find out about the life of a celebrity you admire and think about how they can inspire you to live your life in a positive way |
|  | Find famous quotes that you like and write these on pieces of paper to display somewhere or carry around with you |
|  | Examine a news story and read people’s different views on it |
|  | Think about a time you have either made a mistake or failed at something. What have learnt from the experience? What could you do next time? |
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**Courage**

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|  | **Bravery** |
|  | Read and collect acts of bravery from news stories |
|  | Take a small step towards facing one of your fears |
|  | Try something new that feels out of your comfort zone |
|  | Speak up or write about an unpopular view in class or in an assignment |
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|  | **Perseverance** |
|  | Set yourself a specific time for doing homework or an assignment and aim to finish it within that time |
|  | Do something now that you have been putting off |
|  | Write down your goals and put them somewhere where you will see regularly |
|  | Keep a checklist of things you need to do and tick them off once you’ve done them |
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|  | **Honesty** |
|  | Make a note of any lies you tell, however small, and try to keep your list shorter |
|  | Learn the values of your school and think of ways that you can show these values |
|  | Keep a diary of your thoughts and feelings |
|  | Watch a film where honesty is a theme, such as Erin Brockovich or A Few Good Men. |
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|  | **Zest** |
|  | Exercise at least 3 times a week and note how it affects your energy level |
|  | Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even the weekends |
|  | Do an activity that involves performance, such as singing in a choir, dancing in a show or acting in a play |
|  | Wear bright, colourful clothing to express your energy |
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**Humanity**

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|  | **Love** |
|  | Make a thoughtful gift or create a personalised greetings card for someone you value |
|  | Try a new activity with a friend or family member |
|  | Help someone else identify their strengths |
|  | Record and share your memories of someone with them |
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|  | **Kindness** |
|  | Do a random act of kindness every week, such as get someone’s shopping for them, leave a positive comment on someone’s blog or thank someone for something they have done for you |
|  | Donate any unwanted gifts or things you no longer appreciate or use to charity |
|  | Volunteer with a local organisation |
|  | Smile at others and really spend time listening when you ask if someone is OK |
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|  | **Social Intelligence** |
|  | Start a conversation with someone who you wouldn’t normally speak to |
|  | Go litter picking |
|  | Play sport for your school or enter a competition for your school |
|  | Organise an activity with a group of friends |
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**Justice**

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|  | **Teamwork** |
|  | Play a team sport regularly |
|  | Volunteer to help at a charity event |
|  | Help a classmate who is struggling with their work or meet with friends to help each other revise |
|  | Work with someone else to complete a jigsaw puzzle |
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|  | **Fairness** |
|  | Include someone in conversation or group work who is sometimes left out, or someone who is new to you. |
|  | Watch a film or TV documentary about a well-known activist, such as Malala Yousafzai, Greta Thunberg or Martin Luther King |
|  | Take an online unconscious bias test to raise your self-awareness |
|  | Research a minority group that you are unfamiliar with and think about how they may see the world differently to you |
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|  | **Leadership** |
|  | Organise a family event |
|  | Volunteer to lead your group next time you are doing group work at school |
|  | Start an after school club that represents your interest |
|  | Organise your own fundraising activity and raise sponsorship money |
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**Temperance**

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|  | **Forgiveness** |
|  | Give yourself permission to make mistakes. What have you learnt from a mistake you have made recently? |
|  | List any grudges you may have. What emotions do they make you feel? How does this affect your behaviour? |
|  | Plan a positive response to someone who next offends you. What could you do differently so that you feel better about the situation? |
|  | Watch a film about acts of forgiveness, such as Invictus, Lady Bird or Pay It Forward |
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|  | **Humility** |
|  | Ask someone you trust to give you feedback on your weaknesses |
|  | Notice if you speak more than others when doing group work and make an effort to allow others to speak and really listen to what they are saying |
|  | Be more conscious of the environment by using more recycled products and buying things you only really need |
|  | Compliment someone if they have done something better than you |
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|  | **Prudence** |
|  | Create a study or revision timetable |
|  | Write a ‘to-do’ list every week |
|  | Make decisions when you are feeling relaxed. If you are feeling stressed or down, take a step back from the situation until you feel you can make a good decision |
|  | Think about what you need in different situations and create checklists to be more organised, such as going to school on particular days, going on a trip or playing a sport |
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|  | **Self-Regulation** |
|  | When you feel annoyed about something, take deep breaths while counting to 10 before acting |
|  | Think about any character strengths that you use too much. What affect does this have? How could you use these less? |
|  | Avoid distractions while studying, such as your phone or the TV by working in a different room to them |
|  | Make a list of ways to relax and refer to this list whenever you are stressed |
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**Transcendence**

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|  | **Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence** |
|  | Go for a walk in nature for 30 minutes |
|  | Really listen to a song or piece of music that has been critically acclaimed and think about the skills that went into creating it |
|  | Take photos to capture the beauty in your local around and display on your wall |
|  | Go star gazing |
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|  | **Gratitude** |
|  | Thank someone for something they have done. You could do this by speaking to them in person or with a written note placed somewhere, or you could give them a small ‘thank you’ gift. |
|  | Write down 3 things you feel grateful for every day. You could create a gratitude journal or scrap book to include images |
|  | When you are eating, think about where the food came from and all the people doing different jobs to get the food to you |
|  | Take 5 minutes every day to focus on and experience something nice, such as a piece of chocolate, a cup of coffee, sitting in the sun or listening to your favourite song |
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|  | **Hope** |
|  | Think of a couple of optimistic solutions to a problem you have |
|  | Picture yourself in a year’s time and think about what you want to achieve. Set a goal towards achieving this |
|  | Regularly note down any negative thoughts you have and then rewrite them as the opposite. Read the positive thoughts every day when you go to bed and wake up |
|  | Watch an inspiring film, such as The Pursuit of Happyness, The Giver or The Diving Bell and the Butterfly, and think about how the characters’ actions generate hope |
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|  | **Humour** |
|  | Watch a comedy film, a stand-up comedian or funny YouTube videos |
|  | Tell your friends a new joke every week |
|  | Spend time with a friend who always makes you laugh and note how they use humour in different situations |
|  | Find your playfulness side by doing a childhood activity with someone, such as blowing bubbles, face painting, dressing up in different clothes or having a water fight |
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|  | **Spirituality** |
|  | Try a meditating for 10 minutes a day |
|  | Research a religion different to yours and look for ways in which they may be similar. Perhaps there is a core message that means something to you. |
|  | Set a goal focusing on becoming more active in your own religion |
|  | Explore your values by using the Future Quest My Values Workbook |
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Notes

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| Click or tap here to enter text. |

Thank you for completing the My Character Strengths Workbook **😊**

You can find the workbook answers on the next page.

Check out the [Future Quest website](https://www.futurequest.org.uk/online-resources) for more activities on pathways, strengths, skills and encounters with Higher Education and employers.



WORKBOOK ANSWERS

What are character strengths?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| How many character strengths were identified by the two psychologists? | 24 |
| Character Strengths can’t be learnt.  (True or False) | False |
| You can influence another person’s character.  (True or False) | True |
| Name one area of our lives in which using character strengths could help. | Possible answers might include: school, work, home life, relationships or involvement in community groups. |

What are their character strengths?

There are no right or wrong answers here as everyone has all the character strengths, just in different amounts. These are our suggestions for main strengths for these characters.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Harry Potter standing next to an owl and holding a wand | **Harry Potter** | Bravery  Kindness  Teamwork  Leadership  Love of Learning |
| Elsa from Frozen standing in a blue dress | **Elsa** | Bravery  Love  Honest  Humility  Social Intelligence |
| Michelle Obama in a seated position smiling | **Michelle Obama** | Perspective  Kindness  Social Intelligence  Fairness  Leadership  Hope |