**Positive Psychology**

**Resource Pack:**

**Discovering my Strengths**



****

**Information for Teachers:**

In positive psychology, cultivating and using our personal strengths is an integral part of striving for “the good life” – very roughly speaking, the pursuit of happiness. When we draw on the positive parts of our personality, research shows we can have a more significant positive impact on others, improve our relationships, and enhance our wellbeing and happiness.

The (Values in Action) VIA Survey is a validated tool that can help us discover our character strengths, including those that we tend to use and rely on the most.

The 24 strengths are categorized into six classes of ‘virtues. In no particular order, they are (Ruch & Proyer, 2015; VIACharacter.org, 2020):

* Transcendence – including appreciation of excellence and beauty, gratitude, hope, spirituality, and humour. As a virtue, transcendence strengths connect us in a meaningful way to the world around us.
* Wisdom – curiosity, creativity, perspective, love of learning, and judgment are considered wisdom strengths because they are useful in helping us learn and gather knowledge.
* Humanity – this virtue class includes social intelligence, love, and kindness. Humanity strengths come into play by helping us build and maintain positive, warm relationships with others.
* Courage – strengths in this class include bravery, zest, honesty, and perseverance. These emotional strengths empower us to tackle adversity and how we tend to work through it.
* Temperance – Temperance strengths help us “manage habits and protect against excess”, including managing and overcoming vices. They include self-regulation, prudence, humility, and forgiveness.
* Justice – in this category, strengths such as teamwork, leadership, and fairness. With these strengths, we relate to those around us in social or group situations.

These individual character strengths and virtues are measured using a self-report survey, by merely indicating agreement to examples of the strengths in action. The adult survey version contains 240 total questions – ten items for each of the 24 identified strengths, laid out in a 5-point Likert scale format. However, there is also a child’s version which includes only 96 items. After completion of the Survey, it will rank the individual strengths with a brief description of each.

|  |
| --- |
| I recognise that each individual has a unique blend of abilities and needs. I contribute to making my school community one which values individuals equally and is a welcoming place for all. **HWB 2-10a / HWB 3-10a** |
| Through contributing my views, time and talents, I play a part in bringing about positive change in my school and wider community. **HWB 2-13a / HWB 3-13a /** |

**A close up of a logo

Description automatically generatedExperiences and Outcomes**

**Introduction to Lesson:**

This lesson focuses on the use of the Values in Action (VIA) strengths survey to allow pupils to explore their character strengths and personal qualities. It will also support pupil to think about how they can use their strengths.

**Learning intentions and Success Criteria:**

Learning Intentions:

By the end the lesson I will be able to identify my strengths to gain a better understanding of myself.

Success Criteria:

I will have been successful if I can:

* Identify my top five-character strengths
* Develop a greater understanding of myself
* Recognise how I can use my strengths



**Activity: Guess your top 5 strengths**

Introduce the character strengths to pupils: Character strengths are personal qualities, like honesty and leadership, that help you get along in the world and be a better person. People tend to be stronger at a few of these virtues than others. Knowing your character strengths

Pupils could look at the word cloud below on the slide and guess which would be their top three strengths.

**A picture containing food, phone

Description automatically generatedStrengths Word Cloud**

**Video Clip: The Science of Character**

The video explains character strengths in more detail, why they matter and what they mean for individuals.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3nT2KDAGOc>

**Activity: Take the VIA character strengths survey:**

The VIA survey will help pupils to identify their character strengths

Instructions:

* Each pupil will need a device which connects to the internet
* Click on the link or type in: <https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register>
* Under the heading, “Register to Get Started,” enter your name, email, gender, date of birth, and a password. Make sure the second box (“I have read...of this agreement”) is checked, then click “register.”
* On the next page, select, “I want to take the VIA survey for youth” (it’s shorter than the adult version), then click, “Take survey.”
* On the next page, select, “I am taking the survey for myself.” Answer all of the questions.
* At the end of the survey, you will come to a page labelled “demographics.” You can fill in the information if you wish, or you can just click, “Complete survey.”
* On the next page, click “Download your character strengths profile.” or take a record of top 5 strengths along with the brief description.

(Teachers can also take the survey by clicking on the main version)

A screenshot of a cell phone

Description automatically generated

A screenshot of a cell phone

Description automatically generated

**Activity: Class Strengths**

When all pupils have completed the survey, tally up everyone’s strengths: Ask the students to look at their top two strengths. Then get a tally of how many students had one of their top two strengths in the wisdom category, courage category, etc. Then reveal what the class’s top strengths were, this is a fun way for everyone to get a sense of each other’s strengths.

**Activity: How might you use your strengths?**

Pupils could discuss their top strengths with a partner and think about how they might use each of their strengths.

For example, if a top strength was bravery, then they might make a good firefighter. Or, if a score was high in creativity, then could they use it to create music? If they scored high in kindness, how might they find opportunities to encourage others to be kind?

Another suggested task is to create an individual mind map which illustrates top strengths and how these are used.

See below for example:

A close up of a map

Description automatically generated

**Activity: Create poster**

Pupils could create a poster that lists his or her top five-character strengths. This can be as creative as they would like and could include artwork that symbolizes their strengths. They could use pictures, images, drawings and words to describe themselves and their top five strengths.

**Activity: Reflection**

Ask students to reflect either verbally or in written form about something that they discovered about themselves or that surprised them from this activity.