



## People Skills:

Self confidence  
volunteer-led lesson

Age range: 11-14 and 14-16



## Contents

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03 Activity one: Overcoming challenges

09 Activity two: Thinking confidently

Use the planner below to work out timings

Activity	Time	Start time	Finish time
One – Overcoming challenges	30 mins		
Two – Thinking confidently	30–45 mins		



[Student Sheet](#)



[PDF Presentation Slides](#)

Look out for these icons throughout the following activity steps which will direct you to the relevant student handouts and slides. If viewing online these are not click throughs.

*Note: see LifeSkills Content Guide PDF on [barclayslifeskills.com](http://barclayslifeskills.com) for programme overview and curriculum links.*

## Activity one: Overcoming challenges

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Time needed: 30 minutes

### Aims

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- To help students understand that we grow by overcoming challenges
- To help them understand that fear is normal and something everyone experiences
- To realise that by treating challenges as opportunities, we can find reasons to overcome our fears

### Key learning outcomes

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By the end of the activity students will:

- know that fear is a normal part of overcoming challenges, which we need to do if we are to grow
- explore different types of fear and how to deal with each one
- know some ways to overcome fear
- identify a fear or challenge and plan how to overcome it

### Resources

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The resources needed for this volunteer-led lesson are:

- Student Sheet SC1.1:  
Available on page 7  
Overcoming challenges (one per student)
- Student Sheet SC1.2:  
Available on page 8  
Summary: Overcoming challenges (one per student)
- Self Confidence PDF Presentation Slides



Student Sheet



PDF Presentation Slides

Look out for these icons throughout the following activity steps which will direct you to the relevant student handouts and slides.

*Note: students who want to collect evidence of their progress through LifeSkills can add their worksheets and summary sheets to a folder, along with any additional relevant materials.*

## Activity steps

Share your own story of a challenge you took on, the fears you had to overcome and the emotions you experienced. Examples might include starting or changing jobs, managing a team of people, becoming a parent, public speaking, visiting a country you hadn't been to before, moving home



SC1.1

### 1. Introduce the idea of challenges and the fact that they are good for us

- Show PDF Presentation Slide SC1.1. Ask students how they feel when they have had a problem or a challenge, and they've managed to find a solution or overcome the problem. This could be when they have had to start at a new school, learn a new skill that they found particularly difficult, or do a physical challenge, such as abseiling or diving
- Discuss how successfully solving a problem or meeting a challenge can make us feel rewarded, stretched, proud of ourselves and more confident in what we can do. It can also make us feel that we've learnt something new: it allows us to grow and develop
- Ask students what feelings they can remember having before tackling the challenge: did they feel nervous or scared?; help them to identify that challenges often seem frightening at first



SC1.2

### 2. Look at some challenges faced by well-known people

- Show PDF Presentation Slide SC1.2 and read out each quote. Explain why these three people are famous and the challenges they faced, using the information on page nine
- Ask what students can learn from each of these people and their quote
- Explain that they show we can all overcome big challenges and use them to help ourselves or others to grow



SC1.3

### 3. Explore what it's like to face a challenge

- Show PDF Presentation Slide SC1.3. Help students identify the two sides to any challenge: the benefits from doing it, and also the fear of taking it on
- Explain that it's normal to feel fear when taking on a challenge
- Ask students to reflect on which aspect they think about most. How do they think the three famous people thought about their challenges?



SC1.4

### 4. Discuss a career challenge

- Show PDF Presentation Slide SC1.4. Ask students to get into pairs
- Ask half the pairs to think of some fears that might stop someone picking up the phone. Ask the other pairs to think of how this can be an opportunity to grow
- After a minute or two, get pairs to join into groups of four and share their ideas about fears and opportunities
- Ask groups to share their ideas with the class



## Sheet SC1.1

Available on page 7

### 5. Students look at a challenge of their own

- Give out **Student Sheet SC1.1**. Ask students to write about a challenge of their own. What is it? What are their fears? Can they see this as an opportunity and find some reasons to overcome it?
- If students are struggling to identify a challenge, you could suggest situations such as starting at a new school, getting a Saturday job, raising money for a trip or for a charity, or passing an exam
- Ask if anyone wants to share their ideas



## SC1.5

### 6. Discuss what we might be afraid of

- Show PDF Presentation Slide **SC1.5**. In groups, ask students to talk about one type of fear for a few minutes
- Ask them whether it really matters if they feel fear. Can students think of when they once overcame a fear? Examples might include going into an exam room, starting a **work experience placement**, representing the school on a sporting event
- Move between groups and help students share their ideas and examples with the class



## SC1.6

### 7. Share ideas for overcoming fears

- Show PDF Presentation Slide **SC1.6** and share the tips for overcoming fear
- Ask students to complete **Student Sheet SC1.1** and note how they could use these ideas to overcome the fears connected to their own challenge

### Extension ideas

- Ask if anyone else can share a story of someone who took on and overcame a different challenge
- If students could ask Malala Yousafzai, J.K. Rowling or Jonnie Peacock for advice to help overcome their own fears, what do they think each person would say to them?



## Sheet SC1.2

Available on page 8

### Summary discussion

- Remind students that to grow, we need to take on and overcome new challenges
- Emphasise that it's normal to feel fear – this shows you've taken on something worth doing. But these fears are never as big as we make them out to be. When students take on their challenge and overcome their fears, they'll build their confidence to take on even bigger challenges in the future
- Give out **Student Sheet SC1.2** as a summary of what you have covered in this activity



## Information

**Malala Yousafzai** was born in 1997 in Pakistan; she has been campaigning for the right for girls to be educated and started writing a blog for the BBC in 2009. On 9 October 2012, Malala was shot in the head by a Taliban gunman: miraculously she survived and, after receiving initial treatment in Pakistan, Malala was airlifted to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, where she underwent a series of operations. She continues to recover and to speak out on education issues.

**J.K. Rowling** is well-known for writing the bestselling Harry Potter stories, but she began writing the books in very difficult circumstances. Whilst a single mother and studying full-time for a teaching degree, J K Rowling had an idea for a children's story about a boy wizard. She wrote in the evenings, often sitting in local cafes having walked her baby daughter to sleep in her pushchair.

**Jonnie Peacock** won Gold in the men's T44 100m at the 2012 Paralympics. In 1999, aged just six, he had to have part of one leg amputated after a bout of meningitis in which he nearly died.

## Overcoming challenges

Student Sheet SC1.1



New challenges help us grow. Sometimes, fears can get in the way.

Think about a challenge you'd like to overcome. What's stopping you? How could you overcome your fears and grow?

The challenge I'd like to overcome is:

My fears about doing it are:

My good reasons to do it are:

Ways I could overcome these fears:

## Summary: Overcoming challenges

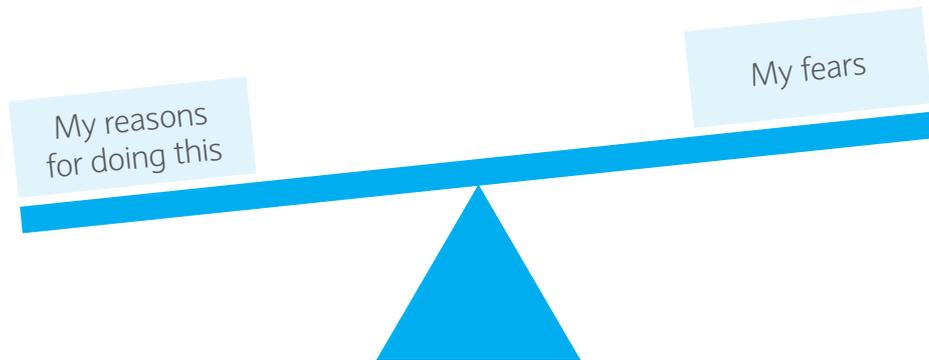
Student Sheet SC1.2



### Why overcome challenges?

New challenges help us grow. Sometimes, fears can get in the way. It's normal to feel fear – this shows you've taken on something worth doing.

Think of the good reasons to take on a challenge. Decide that these are more important than your fears.



### Do my fears really matter?

Usually your fears don't matter as much as you think. Here are four common types of fear and why each one might not matter so much.

Fear	Why it might scare you	Why it might not matter
Having a go	Your challenge might be difficult or not enjoyable.	It might not be too hard, and you might enjoy doing it!
Failure	You might not do it, and this will be really bad.	You might not do it, but you'll do your best and learn from it.
Embarrassment	You'll look stupid if you fail.	You'll look good because you had a go – and even better if you succeed!
Rejection	People won't want to know you if you fail.	People will still like you, and they might admire you for having a go!

### How can I overcome fear?

Here are some good ways to overcome your fears. Anyone can use them – how could YOU?

- treat each challenge as an opportunity
- find reasons to have a go
- reach out of your 'comfort zone'
- have a goal and a plan
- imagine success
- believe in yourself
- realise why your fears might not matter
- ask yourself 'What's the worst that can happen?'
- learn from mistakes – then [try again](#)

## Activity two: Thinking confidently

Time needed: 30–45 minutes

### Aims

- To help students explore how they think about past events and how this shapes how they feel about themselves and how they respond to events in the future
- To identify helpful ways to explain past events that will help students be more confident in themselves and more optimistic about the future

### Key learning outcomes

By the end of the activity students will:

- consider a past event and identify how they explain this to themselves
- know some helpful ways to think about past events
- consider a past event in a new, more helpful way and identify how this changes their feelings

### Resources

The resources needed for this volunteer-led lesson are:

- Student Sheet SC2.1:  
Available on page 12  
Thinking confidently (one per student)
- Student Sheet SC2.2:  
Available on page 13  
Summary: Thinking confidently (one per student)
- Thinking confidently PDF Presentation Slides



Student Sheet



PDF Presentation Slides

Look out for these icons throughout the following activity steps which will direct you to the relevant student handouts and slides.

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## Activity steps



SC2.1

### 1. Discuss the ingredients for success

- Show PDF Presentation Slide **SC2.1**. Ask students to name someone they think is happy and successful – a ‘hero’ – and give your own example. This could be someone famous or someone you know personally. If you have not delivered Activity one, you could use Jonnie Peacock, Malala Yousafzai or J K Rowling as examples. Alternative ideas could be David Beckham, Mo Farah, David Williams, a family member, anyone you know you has overcome adversity. Remember success doesn’t just equate to financial reward.
- Share ideas about what might help these people be happy and successful
- Explain that this activity will help students find positive ways to think about what happens to them



SC2.2

### 2. Examine how students reflect on situations

- Show PDF Presentation Slide **SC2.2**. Ask students to think for a moment about how they might explain the outcome of each situation to themselves after the event. Would they think about it in positive ways (e.g. ‘I worked hard to prepare for that test so I deserved to do well’ or ‘that person was having a bad day and didn’t mean to be rude’) or negative ways (e.g. ‘it was a fluke that I did well’ or ‘I must have done something to upset that person’)?
- Ask students to share their ideas



SC2.3

### 3. Introduce the idea of ‘explanatory style’

- Show PDF Presentation Slide **SC2.3**. Explain that when we think about past events, we answer these three questions. This is your ‘explanatory style’, and it can be positive or negative depending on how you tend to answer the questions
- Split the class into groups of four. In the groups, ask one pair to think about doing well in the test and the other about the person being rude
- Within their pairs, ask one student to answer the three questions shown on the slide in a positive way, and the other in a negative way, each student thinking of possible reasons
- Ask students to share their four sets of answers and reasons in their group, and then invite each group to share their ideas



SC2.4



Sheet SC2.1

Available on page 12

### 4. Students look at how they explain events in their lives

- Show PDF Presentation Slide **SC2.4** and give out **Student Sheet SC2.1**. Ask students to think of two events of their own (these should not be examples from their personal lives, but something from school or employment e.g. represented the school at a sporting event, organised fundraising, ambassador for the school for an open day, environmental event, secured a part time job paid or voluntary)
- Ask students to write down their events and how they think about each one. Do they think about each event in a different way?
- Invite students to share their answers, reasons and feelings if they are happy to do so



## 5. Students use a positive explanatory style

- Show PDF Presentation Slide **SC2.5**. Ask students to identify how they could think about the event they are not so happy about by using a positive explanatory style. They could do this on their own or, if they feel comfortable, ask a partner to help them come up with ideas
- Ask if anyone wants to share how they now feel about it

### Extension ideas

- Help students explore in more detail the idea that some things that happen are out of their control, while others are within their control. Think about being late for a job interview: if this was because a student overslept and missed the bus, then that was in their control. But if they were late because the bus broke down, that was out of their control
- Explain that whenever we take action on things that are within our control (even if we can't control the whole situation), we become more self-confident. When things are out of our control, we need to do what we can and accept that things sometimes happen that way. Ask students to think of future events that will be in their control and could help them build their self-confidence. Examples might include ensuring they are punctual, work hard and dressing for the situation, their behaviour and appearance is something they can control. Picking options at school, working towards the job you want to do, organising a party, making new friends, Events outside of your control – parents job changing resulting in a house move and potential school move, transport issues, exam timetable and deadlines for submitting work



SC2.6



Sheet SC2.2  
Available on page 13

### Summary discussion

- Show PDF Presentation Slide **SC2.6**. Explain that to feel positive and confident about the future, we need to feel positive and confident about the past. Share ideas for how students can act like their 'heroes' and think about what happens to them in more positive ways
- Encourage students to do this exercise for other past events they feel unhappy about. The more they do this, the more positive and confident they can become. Remind students that they must always take responsibility for what they do
- Give out **Student Sheet SC2.2** as a summary of what you have covered in this activity

## Thinking confidently

Student Sheet SC2.1



### What's my explanatory style?

Think of two things that happened to you in the past. How do you explain each event to yourself?

	1. Event that went well	2. Event that didn't go well
What happened?		
Did I do my best at things I could control?		
Does everything work out this way?		
Will things always work out this way?		

### My positive explanatory style

When you look back and explain events to yourself using your 'inner voice', try to make it a positive voice. It will help you become more optimistic!

- how could you think about the event that didn't go well in a different way?
- write down positive ways to think about what happened
- write down examples of where things went well instead

How I did well at the things I could control, or how I could learn to do better?	
Reasons why not everything works out this way	
Reasons why things won't always happen like this	

## Summary: Thinking confidently

Student Sheet SC2.2



### Am I an optimist or a pessimist?

Optimists tend to think about the good things that happen. This helps them to be confident about themselves and the future.

Pessimists tend to think about the bad things that happen. This makes them worried about the future and how they will manage.

How do you think?

### Use a positive explanatory style

Optimists have a positive explanatory style. They look for what went well and, when things don't go well, they look for how they could do better.

When you look back:

- look for what you could control in that situation
- remember what you did well
- if you didn't do things well, spot ways to do better next time

#### When things go wrong, remember:

- Not everything goes wrong for me
- Things won't always go wrong in the future.

#### When things go well, remember:

- Most things go well for me
- Things will usually go well in the future.

### Build your self-confidence

Here are some ways to help you think like an optimist and build your self-confidence:

- accept that things can go wrong
- remember that most things go well!
- listen to your thoughts
- replace any negative thoughts using your positive explanatory style
- remember examples of when things go well and use them to challenge pessimistic thoughts
- encourage yourself and use these examples to think 'I can help this go well because...'

Always be honest and take responsibility for what you do.