

Career Activities

Quick activities to help students communicate their strengths in interviews, resumes, and conversations.

The Gallup Organization

Activity #1: Meaningful Roles

Goal: To help students think through roles they have had and how they used their strengths within those roles.

This activity works best when students gather in groups of three or four to discuss their findings. You may want to provide your own example so they can understand how their strengths can relate their own successes.

1. Have students list three of the most meaningful and important jobs, leadership roles, or volunteer positions they have held. For each, have them describe five responsibilities or outcomes they achieved in those roles.
2. For each outcome ask them to write the Clifton StrengthsFinder theme or themes that they utilized to help them be successful in achieving the outcome.
3. In any interview it is important for candidates to verbalize and give detailed information about what they have done in their past roles. Ask each student to take one of their outcomes and come up with a specific example of how they achieved that success. Students must “sell themselves” by using each of the themes they listed to describe exactly how they achieved their success.

Additional Ideas:

- The best interview responses are specific; they clearly state what the person has done and how they did it. Using strengths can help them paint a picture of who they are and what they are good at.
- Examples will help tremendously, so if there is time, walk through one or more with your students to give them good models from which to learn.
- To provide even more examples, after students have discussed their successes in their small groups, have a few students share their achievements with the larger group.
- Feedback is important. Try to help the lesson set in by giving them feedback and getting them to be more specific about how they can use their strengths to describe what they do and how they do it.

Activity #2: My Best

Goal: Students need to own their themes and learn to truly understand the value of them. This activity helps them analyze when and how they have used a particular theme to be successful.

This activity works best when students gather in groups of three or four to discuss their findings. You may want to provide your own example so they can understand how their strengths can relate their own successes.

1. Have each student choose one theme that they feel fits them best. Have them answer the following questions in their small groups.
 - a. What is best about this theme?
 - b. How do you use it in your school work?
 - c. How do you use it in jobs or other positions you have held?
 - d. What would happen if you didn't have this theme?
 - e. How does this theme help you be successful?
2. After each student has shared their responses, give them five minutes to prepare themselves to “sell” these talents as something an employer would want and could benefit from. They will have 2 minutes to present in the small or larger group.

Additional Ideas:

- Think about more questions for the students to discuss. If you have a specific topic, role, or career you are focusing on, additional questions may help them bring more focus to this activity.
- Prepare your own example to show them how you can sell yourself.
- Consider providing a specific job or project they must have in mind when selling their strengths.

Activity #3: Personal Statement of Strength

Goal: Who am I? This activity helps students answer this question and helps students pull all of their themes together. It can help them to take ownership for the themes and begin to see how to use strengths as a language to describe themselves.

Using their top five themes students write one to two paragraphs about themselves. Their goal is to combine their themes in a way that tells a story about who they are and what is best about them. Students can be as creative as they want. The goal is to get them to start talking about themselves using the language of strengths.

Activity #4: Job Analysis

Goal: A key to helping students utilize their talents is to get them to analyze opportunities based on what they do best. The goal for this activity is to put some real positions in front of them to see how their strengths fit that role.

You will need to have two or three job descriptions either from your own organization or a job board like Monster.com. Or, feel free to write your own description. This could be a job, a volunteer project, or a leadership opportunity. The descriptions should be fairly detailed in order to show the outcomes and the responsibilities of the position.

The job analysis can be discussed in small or large groups.

1. Have the students read through the descriptions one position at a time.
2. For each of the outcomes or responsibilities listed for the job, ask them to look at their themes and write beside each of them the theme or themes that would help them achieve the success described for each statement. Make it clear that not all of the outcomes or responsibilities may fit them, so there may not be themes written on some statements. Depending on time, students can do this activity for one or more job descriptions.
3. Next, ask students to consider the answers to these questions in order to think through their fit for the role:
 - a. Would most of my strengths be utilized in this role?
 - b. Are there some strengths that wouldn't get much use if I took a role like this? What are they and how would that make me feel?
 - c. Are there some things in this position that would be difficult for me to do?
 - d. How well would this position fit me?
 - e. What things would I like to have added to this if I could?
 - f. What parts of the role do not fit?
 - g. How would I feel in this type of a role?
4. In a group, talk about finding a role that fits you and your strengths. Talk about your experience in roles that may not have fit you very well and what that was like. Encourage students to do this with leadership positions, jobs, internships, or projects in which they plan to play a role.

Additional Ideas:

- There are no right or wrong answers to these questions — let students know that. You may even use yourself as an example to show that not everything in a role may fit you perfectly, but that it is very important to get into roles that best utilize your strengths. You may even talk about roles that didn't fit you and why.

- Encourage students to keep their strengths in mind as they consider taking on new roles in the future. Remind them to look every role and analyze it based on their strengths.