English Stage 4 – characters and careers

**Suggested duration:** 2-3 lessons

Learning for life beyond school is supported when subjects are delivered to students in a way that they can understand how the content is relevant to career pathways and work settings. NESA syllabuses identify work and enterprise as important learning across the curriculum content for all students.

# Career learning benefits and career management skills

Career learning resources have been developed to enrich existing teaching and learning programs to facilitate effective career education for students, supporting students to link classroom learning to workplace applications, including developing career management skills.

Career learning activities embedded within existing curriculum have been aligned to the themes from the [K-12 Career Learning Framework](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/career-learning-and-vet/career-learning). Activities may relate to one or more of the themes:

* Identity – building and maintaining a positive self-concept, responding to change and developing capabilities
* Experience – discover, investigate and consider opportunities for lifelong learning and work exploration
* Empower – learning to self manage, engage in career decision making and developing skills and capabilities to make informed decisions

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| **Theme** | **Career Management Skills** | **Australian Blueprint for Career Development Competency** |
| **Experience** | Link learning and motivations to personal career aspirations which give a work/life balance | 9.2 Explore and understand the interrelationship of life and work roles |
| **Experience** | Locate and use career information | 7.2 Develop qualities of seek and obtain /create work |

## What do we want students to know, understand or be able to do?

Students will use their study of character, perhaps in a unit of learning with a novel as the prescribed text, to connect to the employment related skills. This will be achieved by creating an ideal job description for a character in the text they are studying.

### Syllabus outcomes

* **EN4-1A**: responds to and composes texts for understanding, interpretation, critical analysis, imaginative expression and pleasure.
* **EN4-2A**: effectively uses a widening range of processes, skills, strategies and knowledge for responding to and composing texts in different media and technologies.

### Textual concepts

[Textual concepts](http://englishtextualconcepts.nsw.edu.au/content/what-is-it) form the core knowledge of subject English as stated or implied by the NSW English syllabus for the Australian Curriculum K-12.

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| Textual concept | Why it is important | Stage 4 |
| [Character](http://englishtextualconcepts.nsw.edu.au/content/character) | Character is an important concept in narrative as a driver of the action, a function in the plot, a way of engaging or positioning a reader or as a way of representing its thematic concerns. The way character is read is an indication of particular approaches to texts, be it through personal engagement or critical response. | Students understand that characters are constructs that function differently in different types of texts and media.  They learn that these character constructs   * combine with constructs of events and settings to create narrative * use resources such as description, dialogue, monologue * may draw on such devices as stereotype and generic convention to reflect values. |

### Assumed knowledge and understanding

To participate in this activity, it is assumed that students have a basic understanding of the following Stage 4 English content:

* reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying point of view (EN 4-2A)
* critically analyses the ways experience, knowledge, values and perspectives can be represented through characters, situations and concerns in texts and how these affect responses to texts (EN 4-5C)

### Learning experiences, adaptations, changes or extensions

Students are required to choose a character from a prose fiction text \*(short story or novel) which they have studied/are studying. This character will be used to complete the sequence of activities outlined below.

#### Activity 1 – Character hot seat

A character hot seat allows the student to engage with a character, in the shoes of that character. Activity sheet 1 should be used to guide this activity. In essence, students respond ‘in character’ to a series of questions with what they might think, say, and do in response to questions or [scenario cards](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/teaching-and-learning-resources/literacy/teaching-strategies/stage-4/reading/stage-4-characterisation).

**Extension** – after students have completed the Hot Seat activity as their character, they could write a character biography which provides details about their personal life, character traits, achievements and/or response to obstacles in life.

**Teacher Notes** This activity links to the Literacy and Numeracy resources [Stage 4 Reading – Characterisation](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/teaching-and-learning-resources/literacy/teaching-strategies/stage-4/reading/stage-4-characterisation). Scenario cards can be found in the analysing character resource.

#### Activity 2 – Character’s employability skills

Students will assess their character’s employability skills, using the employment related skills, Activity Sheet 2. Students will rate their character’s skills in these areas and make any comments about specific strengths the character has. To substantiate their rating, students will be required to identify at least one incident from the novel where this skill is demonstrated.

**Teacher notes**: [Employability skills](https://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/jobs-and-careers/plan-your-career/8-job-skills-you-should-have) are the non-technical skills need to get a job. They include skills such as: communication, team work, problem solving, initiative, planning and organising, decision making, self-management. Employability skills can be developed in many areas of life including at school, at work and through hobbies and sport.

#### Activity 3- Job description suitable for the character

Students identify or create the ideal job for the chosen character. To complete this task successfully, students could research job descriptions using job advertisements sites such as [jobactive](https://jobsearch.gov.au/) or [Seek](https://www.seek.com.au/). After completing this research, students write a detailed job description for a position which they believe is suitable to the interests and qualifications of the character.

**Teacher notes:** Prior to creating the ideal job for the selected character, as a class share the characters that have been selected by students and brainstorm on all of the jobs that could suit different characters. A range of resources can be accessed to support student research on job descriptions including [Skills Road](https://skillsroad.com.au/careers/industries) and [myfuture](https://myfuture.edu.au/bullseyes). Extend the learning through discussion on how strengths and interests can support individuals in learning more about themselves and how this can assist in future study and career decisions.

##### Adjustment

Your character has decided to create a profile to showcase their skills and help them find work. While the character may continue to use a private account, in this public account the character will need to showcase their employability skills. The character’s profile should include the following elements:

* the character’s profile, including their key job skills
* a profile picture of the character
* two to three highlight events highlighting the character’s skills (based on information from Activity Sheet 2) covers (images, text, etc.)
* two or more posts from the character
* each post must include a relevant caption that relates to the story
* each post must contain 1-2 relevant comments from followers.

**Teacher Notes**: Students use their character of choice to explore how individuals make important decisions and contribute to society. These characters also embody values which are essential in shaping one’s personal identity. Exposing the students to employability skills assists students with their workplace enculturation.

Students will have the opportunity as they move through school to develop their own learner profile to demonstrate their skills, attributes and qualifications. Introducing students to the elements to be included in a public profile can support their future skill development and consider what they can include if using professional platforms such as LinkedIn. Activity Sheet 3 provides a scaffold for students to highlight their characters profile.

### Activity sheet 1 – character hot-seat

This activity may be completed as an oral task, presented in front of your classmates or you may be required to write the answers to each question.

Answer these questions as the character you have selected from the novel or short story you are reading for this unit of learning.

**Questions**

1. As a child what did you think you wanted to be/do when you grew up?
2. Has this since changed?
3. Why did you want to pursue this career?
4. Are you a team player or do you prefer to work independently?
5. How do you prefer to communicate with people? For example, face to face or telephone calls or via email, et cetera?
6. Do you aspire to be a team leader or are you content to be led?

**Scenarios** – how would the character respond to these situations? Respond as the character.

1. You are working on a project, in a team of four. One of your team members has contributed very little and says she/he is unavailable whenever your group meets up. How would you respond to the situation? For example, would you simply do his/her share of the work or would you initiate a conversation with this group member to find out why he/she is not contributing his/her share of the work.
2. A temporary promotion has been made available in your workplace. This is to fill the position of a manager who is taking 4 weeks leave. While you know you have the skills set to do the work, you are the newest member of the team. Other team members who have been employed in your workplace longer, have been making comments about this opportunity being open to people who’ve worked there longer. Your manager, who you would be replacing, has made it clear that anyone can apply for the temporary position. What would you do?

### Activity sheet 2 – employment related skills checklist

#### Name of character

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Employment relatability skill | Summary | Rating | Evidence |
| Teamwork | Can they work effectively in a group or team to achieve goals? | consistently  sometimes  rarely  n/a |  |
| Leadership | Do they show initiative and leadership abilities? | consistently  sometimes  rarely  n/a |  |
| Problem Solving | Can they manage and prioritise their workload and time effectively? | consistently  sometimes  rarely  n/a |  |
| Listening | Are they a good listener? | consistently  sometimes  rarely  n/a |  |
| Written Communication | Do they write accurately, clearly and concisely in variety of styles? | consistently  sometimes  rarely  n/a |  |
| Verbal Communications | Can they communicate information and ideas clearly and effectively in a variety of situations? | consistently  sometimes  rarely  n/a |  |
| Research & Analytical Skills | Can they gather, interpret and analyse information? | consistently  sometimes  rarely  n/a |  |
| Numeracy Skills | Can they accurately and effectively work? | consistently  sometimes  rarely  n/a |  |
| Personal Development | Do they know themselves and ways to develop as a person? | consistently  sometimes  rarely  n/a |  |
| Information Technology | Can they effectively use computers and technology? | consistently  sometimes  rarely  n/a |  |

#### Character summary

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| My character can | Usually | Sometimes | Not yet | Unsure |
| Work well with other people |  |  |  |  |
| Listen to others |  |  |  |  |
| Work out problems |  |  |  |  |
| Manage a number of things |  |  |  |  |
| Write well and clearly |  |  |  |  |
| Speak clearly so others understand |  |  |  |  |
| Work well with numbers |  |  |  |  |
| Find and use information |  |  |  |  |
| Use computers and technology |  |  |  |  |
| Knows how to become a better person |  |  |  |  |

#### Extension writing task

Using the information tables, what are the top three skills and qualities identified for this character? Justify your decision with examples from the text.

### Activity sheet 3 – character profile

#### Character name:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Profile element | Features | Response |
| Character Picture | Should be professional and simple |  |
| Headline | Official job title and a brief description of the role |  |
| Education | Include qualifications |  |
| Summary | Identify key skills and accomplishments |  |
| Experience | Showcase your employability skills through your experience and expertise |  |
| Endorsements and recommendations | A strategy where others speak about your skills and experiences |  |
| Posts | Allows your profile to be noticed. There are four post types: text, image, video document. Your post should relate to the story. |  |