

LESSON 3

Volunteering: The Concept

60 minutes

Strand 2.1: Appreciating my Community

Reflecting

Outcome LCW.M2.S1.COM.3

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

In this lesson students reflect on what volunteering means as unpaid help for the community. They weigh challenges against benefits and complete a personal audit of past or potential volunteering activities.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
LCW.M2.S1.COM.3	discuss the role of volunteering in communities.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Define volunteering as unpaid commitment for wider benefit
- Weigh challenges of time and sustainability (whether you could keep a commitment going without burning out) against skills and impact
- Audit past volunteering or three forms you would consider

KEY TERMS

Term	What it means here	For example
Volunteering	Committing your time and energy for the benefit of wider society, a community, the environment, or individuals, without being paid for it.	Coaching under-12s at a local GAA club on Saturday mornings
Unpaid	You give the time freely; there is no wage, though you may still gain skills, contacts, or a sense of purpose.	Stewarding at a community festival for a day with no fee
Representation	Whether the people who volunteer reflect the full mix of ages, backgrounds, and experiences in the community they serve.	A youth centre whose volunteers include young people from the estate, not only adults from outside it

BEFORE THE BELL

- Prepare markers and space for the agree-disagree line (two statements)
- Ensure Strand 2.1 portfolio folders are available
- Optional blank template for cover teachers: filename Volunteering Audit (plain text or .docx); headings Role; Frequency or time ask; Learning or what draws you; Challenge-opportunity close; show-line: past unpaid roles or three considered forms; one learning point each; challenge + opportunity close
- Remind the room that markers stay movable. Changing position after hearing an argument is the point.
- On screen this lesson: opinion line.

Volunteering: The Concept

HOW THE LESSON RUNS		
5 min	introduction	Getting Started
5 min	content	Key Terms
35 min	activity	Your Volunteering Audit
10 min	content	Think About It
5 min	summary	What you covered

STEP BY STEP

5 min Getting Started

Open with a thirty-second show of hands: who has done anything unpaid in the last year that helped somebody outside their household? Keep it light. The point is that informal help already sits in the room before the word volunteering is defined.

5 min Key Terms

Spend no more than five minutes here. Flag that **unpaid** does not mean worthless: skills and contacts are real gains, just not a wage. Move on once the three terms are visible.

35 min Your Volunteering Audit On screen: opinion line

SUGGESTED TIMING

- **10-12 mins** opinion line (two statements): place, hear both sides, optional re-move
- **18-20 mins** independent writing of the Volunteering Audit in class
- **3 mins** check that every student has a named `Volunteering Audit` document started in Strand 2.1

PORTFOLIO ARTEFACT

- Filename: `Volunteering Audit` (plain text or .docx)
- Folder: Strand 2.1
- Shows: past unpaid roles or three considered forms; one learning point each; challenge + opportunity close
- Optional blank headings: Role; Frequency or time ask; Learning or what draws you; Challenge-opportunity close

TEACHING TIPS

Push for *specific occasions*, not adjectives. “I helped at home” is weak; “I mind my cousins every Friday so my aunt can do late shifts” is usable. Informal help counts. For students with none, three considered options beat a blank page. The audit is in-class production for this reflecting lesson; polish or extra examples can finish as homework only after a real start is on file.

LOOK-FORS

- Formal and informal examples treated as valid
- A real challenge named, not a generic “busy with school”
- Closing paragraph links challenge to opportunity rather than stopping at one or the other
- Every student leaves with a named Strand 2.1 document started

10 min Think About It

Paired talk with the audit document open, not a write-on-the-page task. Circulate for concrete skill moments. If a pair only lists “teamwork”, push for the moment it showed up. Representation (who volunteers and who is missing) lives in this talk, not on the line. The skill-moment sentence and one tightened challenge/opportunity sentence are mandatory in the audit during the period. Any extra definition-shift paragraph is optional after class.

5 min What you covered

Quick exit check: every student should have a started `Volunteering Audit` document in Strand 2.1 with at least first entries and a begun closing paragraph. Note anyone still blank so you can catch them at the start of the next lesson before the shortlist build.

TEACHING MOVES

- Model reflection by changing position on the line yourself
- Circulate during paired talk to elicit specific skill moments
- Remind students that informal help counts in the audit
- Check all students have started Volunteering Audit in Strand 2.1 by the end

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Only listing formal roles: clarify that informal unpaid help qualifies
- General skills without details: prompt for the exact activity moment
- Ignoring sustainability of the commitment: highlight whether they could keep it going term after term without burning out

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Provide sentence starters for audit entries
- Extension: Have students propose ways to improve volunteer representation
- Support: Allow discussion in pairs before writing the audit

WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEFT WITH

- Volunteering Audit: past experience or three forms you would consider, with learning noted