

LESSON 2

Pathway Hierarchy and Guidance Balance

60 minutes

Strand 1.2: Understanding my Progression Opportunities

Reflecting

Outcome LCW.M1.S2.PROG.1

Outcome LCW.M1.S2.WORK.7

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Reflect on post-school pathways by challenging the assumption that Higher Education is the only success route. Stake a position, defend it with briefing claims, practise reading guidance signals, and judge whether guidance points one way or many.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
LCW.M1.S2.PROG.1	identify the diversity of progression opportunities available to them.
LCW.M1.S2.WORK.7	investigate trends in the labour market and employment opportunities on a local, national and international level.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Challenge the idea that everyone should aim for Higher Education
- Use two concrete claims from the briefing to defend a position on pathway balance
- Judge whether school guidance points one way or many

KEY TERMS

Term	What it means here	For example
Pathway hierarchy	The unspoken ranking that treats some post-school routes as better than others, often putting Higher Education at the top and everything else underneath.	Hearing 'you are too bright for an apprenticeship' as if skill and points only belong on one ladder
Skills shortfall	When employers and public plans need more people in a type of work than the training system is currently producing.	Construction and related trades needed for housing delivery when too few people are entering those routes
Guidance	The advice, information and nudges a school or adult gives about what you should do next. Balanced guidance shows many legitimate routes; one-way guidance keeps pointing at the same door.	Open-day posters, subject choice talks, and who gets encouraged toward which application

BEFORE THE BELL

- Ensure the Strand 1.2 folder expectation is clear so students know where the Choice and Society document will live. A blank document is fine if they are starting fresh.
- Have the baseline Pathways Map available as a reference only; do not re-teach all eight routes.
- On screen this lesson: opinion line, document annotator.

Pathway Hierarchy and Guidance Balance

HOW THE LESSON RUNS		
4 min	introduction	Getting Started
4 min	content	Key Terms
8 min	activity	Stake Your Starting Position
7 min	content	Read the Pathways Briefing
10 min	activity	Annotate a Guidance Sample
17 min	content	Defend a Position in Choice and Society
5 min	content	Think About It
5 min	summary	What you covered

STEP BY STEP

4 min Getting Started

Open by saying plainly that today is about thinking a belief through, not about choosing a career yet, so nobody feels pushed to announce a plan. Link back to the Pathways Map the class made earlier, referring to it as the starting picture of the eight routes, without re-teaching all eight.

Confirm the Strand 1.2 folder and the **Choice and Society** filename before students move their markers, so nobody invents a structure of their own halfway through the writing later in the lesson.

Watch for students who treat disagreement as personal. The target is the hierarchy, not any one person's plan.

4 min Key Terms

Two or three minutes is enough here: read the three terms with the class and take questions about what the words mean, but hold off on arguing about whether the ideas are true. The next step is where students commit to a position on that, and the argument is livelier if they meet it with their own marker already placed.

8 min Stake Your Starting Position On screen: opinion line

RUNNING THIS STEP

These three statements are beliefs rather than facts, so there is no answer to give out and the activity will not offer one. Let every student place a marker first. Then take two voices on opposite sides of the first statement only and move on, because the deeper argument belongs with the briefing, where students will have evidence to use.

LOOK-FORS

- Students treating "I might do HE" as the same as "everyone should"
- Silence from students who already feel their route is second-class

7 min Read the Pathways Briefing

SUGGESTED TIMING

- About 5 minutes silent read
- About 2 minutes pair exchange: which two claims land hardest

TEACHING TIPS

Do not tell the room the "correct" side of the HE question. The outcome is defended pathway diversity, not anti-college messaging.

If students hunt for numbers that are not here, redirect them to the three named claims: volume gap, skills pressure, investment shape.

10 min Annotate a Guidance Sample On screen: document annotator

RUNNING THIS STEP

Let students place their own labels on the notice before anything is revealed, and hold the model back until most lines have a call on them, so that the comparison is between their judgement and the model rather than a copy of it. The argument over the borderline lines is where the teaching happens, so give it time.

This sample trains the judgement section of the write-up. It is practice for reading real signals at their own school, not a verdict on any named school.

WATCH FOR

Students who mark everything as balanced because the tone is polite. Polite one-way guidance is still one-way.

17 min Defend a Position in Choice and Society

SUGGESTED TIMING

- Most of the block on continuous writing
- Last 2 minutes for a filename and folder check

TEACHING TIPS

Require the counter-argument. A position with no fair opposite is a rant. If a student cannot name school evidence, ask for one concrete signal they have seen this year rather than a vibe. The annotation sample is a rehearsal, not a substitute for their own school.

DIFFERENTIATION

Students who freeze on structure can use four short headed paragraphs matching the bullet list. Stronger writers should make the counter-argument genuinely uncomfortable.

5 min Think About It

Keep this as paired talk, then silence for portfolio tidy-up. Invite two students who did not move to name what evidence would have moved them. That keeps disagreement disciplined rather than stubborn.

5 min What you covered

Quick show of hands: who wrote a school-guidance judgement based on a concrete signal rather than a feeling? Remind students the Pathways Map remains a baseline and will be revisited later in the unit.

ANSWERS AND LOOK-FORS

- "The CAO timeline is the backbone of sixth year" - One-way signal - One process is named as the spine of the whole year. Other routes become side quests by calendar design, not by argument.
- "every student should aim high. If you can reach a level 8 degree..." - One-way signal - "Aim high" is quietly defined as one credential. Hierarchy hides inside motivational language.
- "PLC courses remain available as a useful bridge if points do not work..." - One-way signal - FET appears only as a recovery route after HE failure, not as a first-choice pathway with its own logic.
- "Apprenticeship information will be available from the guidance office..." - Missing route or buried option - On request means optional and low-visibility. Compare that with a full HE open-day calendar pushed to everyone.
- "Work, travel and enterprise routes are personal choices students may..." - Missing route or buried option - These routes are pushed outside school time entirely. That is a hierarchy decision dressed as respect for privacy.

TEACHING MOVES

- Name the cycle phase (reflecting) at the open.
- Keep the key terms step tight and move to the opinion line for staking positions.
- For the annotation activity, reveal the model only after most students have placed their labels.
- Require a fair counter-argument in the Choice and Society write-up.
- Circulate during paired talk to keep disagreement on the hierarchy, not on any one student's plan.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Students may revise claims without committing first; emphasise honest starting positions, then allow change.
- Failing to include a counter-argument in the defence; prompt students to state the strongest fair opposite view.
- Hunting for numeric "figures" that the briefing does not give; redirect to the three concrete claims (volume, skills pressure, investment shape).
- Over-simplifying guidance as entirely one-way; encourage discussion of nuanced or borderline signals.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Offer four headed paragraph starters matching the write-up bullet list.
- Extension: Invite students to propose additional evidence that might change their stance.
- Support: Allow paired work on the guidance annotation to discuss signal types together.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEFT WITH

- Choice and Society: position, two supporting figures, strongest counter-argument, school guidance judgement