



Resource—1 Side—1
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1—What is volunteering?

How many people will you help today? Will you help a member of your family around the home? Or a friend at school? Are you involved in giving support to younger children through a buddy scheme, say, or sports coaching? All of us give and receive help every day, in all sorts of situations. 'Volunteering' is one name we give to the help people offer one another – in their communities, in society at large and to the environment.

An organised form of helping

Some problems are difficult to tackle, and it takes an organised effort to make a difference.

When people give up their time to join in such an organised effort to help, we often refer to it as 'volunteering'. The word 'volunteering' is most often used to describe the way people give their time to charities that help others. Usually the charity will have a way of giving regular support

to the volunteer, making sure they are happy with what they are doing.

However, you don't have to join an organisation to be a 'volunteer'. For example, you can volunteer to help an elderly neighbour along with others who care for them.

Young people are involved in lots of different kinds of volunteering, both in and outside school. The common type is helping to run an activity

or event. Many young people are involved in fundraising, too, and in offering practical help or giving advice or information.

Here are some other ways young people help out:

- 'Peer mentoring' and buddy schemes, where older pupils help younger ones
- Anti-bullying schemes

- School Councils and Youth Parliaments

- Breakfast clubs

- Sports coaching and activity clubs

- Projects and clubs devoted to drama, music or art

- Activities to raise funds for a good cause

- Teaching older people computer skills

- Environmental projects like picking up litter, removing graffiti, planting trees and helping local artists to decorate and improve public spaces

- Developing local facilities for young people, such as a skateboard park

- Working for a local charity – perhaps one that takes care of animals or one that helps people who are elderly or homeless.



Volunteering facts:

Did you know?

—21 million people in the UK are involved in some form of volunteering? (That's one person in three.)

— on average, each volunteer spends four hours a week volunteering?

What's that worth?

Based on the average hourly wage, 88 million hours of volunteering a week would cost £40,000 million a year in the UK! That's around £700 of free help for every man, woman, and child in the country.

The United Nations describes volunteering as:

— Doing something that helps another person (or other people) in the community – though of course it may also benefit you as well.

— Doing something you don't expect to get paid for (though you may get your expenses paid).

— Choosing to do something, rather than doing it because you were asked to or told to.



2—Why do young people volunteer?

Surveys have found that there are several reasons why young people help as volunteers...

If you took 20 typical young volunteers, this is what they'd say:



21st century volunteering – online Volunteering can also be virtual! Online volunteers offer their skills and their knowledge to groups and organisations (such as community groups and charities) that lack them. This can be particularly helpful to people in some of the world's poorer countries.

The voluntary work people do online includes doing research, designing (both websites and publications), building a database and online mentoring.

The benefits they get from this include taking responsibility, practising skills and learning about other countries – all of which may improve their chances when it comes to getting a job.

Online volunteers also have the freedom to help whenever they like, and they don't have to travel anywhere to do it. It's a flexible and convenient way to make a difference.

According to Giving Nation's research, **80%** of girls say it's cool to volunteer, but only **60%** of boys.

Why do you think there's that difference?

A group of young people aged 16-25 were asked 'when you think of volunteering what comes to mind?'

Volunteering is...	% of young people who agree
...helping people out	92
...a way to get skills or experience	68
...being a good citizen	62
...an opportunity to do something you're interested in	41
...a way to make friends	39
...a way to have a good time	24
...doing things the Government should do	23
...being a goody-goody	23
...boring	18
...doing something for nothing	15
...old-fashioned	14
...something your mum and/or dad does	14
...not cool	11

Where can I find out about volunteering in my area?

Log on to www.do-it.org.