



# Work and Careers

Note-taking: volunteering in charity shops | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511

## 1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. What kinds of volunteering can young people do in your area?
2. Why might volunteering help someone prepare for work?
3. What workplace skills can students learn outside school?
4. Would you volunteer in a shop? Why, or why not?

### Exercise 3 at a glance

In this activity, you will read one factual text and complete notes using information from the text. In the exam, this task is usually worth 7 marks. This practice version includes extra notes to help you build confidence. Use short words or phrases from the text, not your own ideas.

## 2. Read for overall understanding

Read the text. How can charity shop volunteering help young people?

### Volunteering in Charity Shops

Charity shops are usually associated with second-hand clothes, books and household items, but many also provide useful volunteering opportunities. Teenagers who help for a few hours a week can build workplace skills without taking on a full job. Managers say the experience is especially useful for students who have never spoken to customers or worked as part of a small team. It can also give students something concrete to discuss when they write a cover letter or prepare for their first interview.

A new volunteer usually starts with simple tasks. They sort donations, check labels, tidy shelves and learn how to price basic items. These jobs may sound ordinary, but they teach attention to detail. A volunteer who puts books in the wrong section or misses a damaged item quickly learns why careful work matters. More experienced volunteers may help arrange window displays or prepare items for online selling.

Customer service is another important part of the role. Volunteers learn to greet customers politely, answer simple questions and ask for help when a problem is complicated. They also practise staying calm under pressure, especially during busy periods or when a customer wants to return an item. These situations can be useful practice for future job interviews, where students may need examples of responsibility. Managers may later provide a short reference if the volunteer has been reliable.

There are limits to what young volunteers can do. Some shops do not allow teenagers to handle money, and volunteers may need written permission from a parent. Training is also important because charity shops receive personal items, damaged goods and sometimes unsafe electrical products. Volunteers must understand when to ask a manager before accepting or selling an item. Even with these limits, many students leave with stronger communication skills, a better work routine and something meaningful to add to a CV.

### 3. Strategy focus

#### Notice skills hidden inside examples

Sometimes the text describes a task, but the note heading asks for a skill. Copy the skill phrase when it is given clearly.

### 4. Practice note-taking task

Complete the notes using information from the text. Use short words or phrases from the text. Do not add your own ideas.

Notes	Write short answers
Tasks for new volunteers	- ..... - ..... - .....
Workplace skills volunteers develop	- ..... - ..... - .....
Customer service practice	- ..... - ..... - .....
Limits and requirements	- ..... - ..... - .....

### 5. Vocabulary notebook

Underline five useful words or phrases from the text. Check their meaning, then record them in your vocabulary notebook.

### 6. Follow-up tasks

1. Discussion: Which charity shop task would teach the most useful work skill?
2. Strategy: Choose two answers and explain how the text moves from a task to a skill.
3. Writing: Write a short paragraph explaining why volunteering can help future careers.
4. Vocabulary: Circle words and phrases connected to jobs, responsibility and customer service.

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## 2. Read for overall understanding

Suggested answer: it helps them build workplace skills and gain confidence with customers.

## 4. Practice note-taking task

### Tasks for new volunteers

- sort donations
- check labels
- tidy shelves

### Workplace skills volunteers develop

- attention to detail
- staying calm under pressure
- communication skills

### Customer service practice

- greet customers politely
- answer simple questions
- ask for help

### Limits and requirements

- do not allow teenagers to handle money
- written permission from a parent
- training is also important

## Notes for checking

This is an extended practice version of the IGCSE ESL note-taking task. The live exam normally has fewer marks, but this version includes extra notes to build confidence and selection skills.

Accept short phrases that keep the same meaning.

Learners should avoid copying a whole sentence if a shorter note answers the heading.

Some answers need more than one or two words, especially when the key detail is a phrase.