



Carrying out a SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.

Do you know what things you are good at? Canoeing, maths, playing the guitar? Do you know what kind of things you are bad at? Canoeing, maths, playing the guitar?! Everyone has things they are good at, as well as things they are not so good at. It makes sense to take the time to develop your talents and abilities, while also trying to improve some of the things you are weak at. You are most likely to succeed in life if you use your talents to their fullest extent. Similarly, you'll suffer fewer problems if you work to improve your weaknesses.

But before you can do this you need to know exactly what your strengths and weaknesses are. This is where a SWOT analysis comes in. As well as helping you to discover what your strengths and weaknesses are, it will also help you to identify opportunities and threats in the world around you. To complete a SWOT analysis, you need to answer a series of questions for each of the four areas. Write down the answers on a grid of four squares, one for each area.

Strengths

What advantages do you have (for example, skills, attitudes, personality traits)?

What do you do better than anyone else?

What do other people see as your strengths?

Which of your achievements are you most proud of?

Weaknesses

What tasks do you usually avoid because you don't feel confident doing them?

What do other people see as your weaknesses?

What are your negative habits (for example, are you often late, are you disorganized, do you have a short temper)?

Do you have personality traits that hold you back?



SCOUTS

Opportunities

What dreams, wishes and goals do you have for the future?
What opportunities are open to you to follow these dreams and goals?
How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?

Threats

What kinds of obstacles are in the way of your dreams, wishes and goals for the future?
What things could stop you from developing your strengths?
Could any of your weaknesses lead to threats?

Try to be objective when answering these questions. When it comes to your strengths and weakness, try to look at yourself as others might see you. But also don't forget to include things that maybe others do not know about you. When you are thinking about your strengths, don't be modest or shy when answering the questions – be as objective as you can. And if you have any difficulty with this, write down a list of your personal characteristics. Some of these will hopefully be strengths!

When you have completed the analysis you should think about how you can develop yourself in the future. For example, one of your strengths might be your physical fitness, and an opportunity might be that the Venture Scouts are big into climbing. So you might decide to develop your interest in mountaineering. Likewise one of your weaknesses may be that you find it difficult to meet new people, and a threat might be that you are moving to a new school. So you might need to think about how you are going to deal with having to make new friends.

Remember, a SWOT analysis is like making a plan. As with all plans you should carry out a review at some stage, and this is simply done by carrying out the SWOT analysis again. You may find that you have eliminated some of your weaknesses, or that there may be new opportunities and threats in the world around you. Whatever you find, the SWOT analysis will help you to prepare for your future.

