UCAS

ASSUMPTIONS CAN BLOCK YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

CHALLENGE THEM REGULARLY FOR AN INSPIRING FUTURE

AIM

To challenge assumptions and influences which may limit students' choices.

OBJECTIVES

- To focus on engineering as an example to challenge assumptions.
- To encourage students to challenge their personal influences.

KEY VOCABULARY

- Assumptions
- Influences
- Engineering

RESOURCES NEEDED

Access to the UCAS Hub for all students.

TOOLS TO USE IN THE UCAS HUB

- Favourite courses
- Notes

INTRODUCTION (Discussion – ten minutes)

Who influences you? Friends, family, the media? Words can too.

Research shows people called Lawrence become lawyers. Because the word seems familiar from an early age!

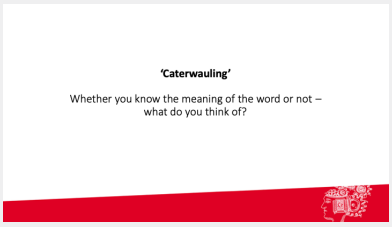
Many people have a limited idea of how many different types of engineers there are. It's that word 'engine' at the beginning.

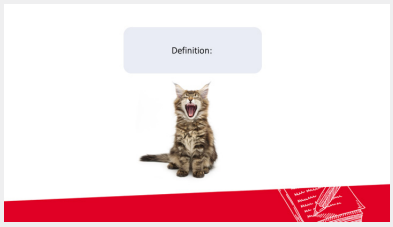
Use the examples of caterwauling and engineering to kick-off.

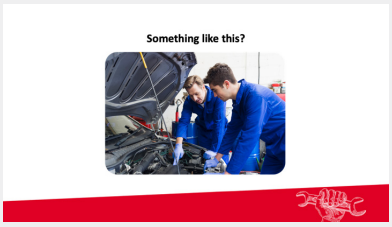
Ask the students to quickly come up with a definition.

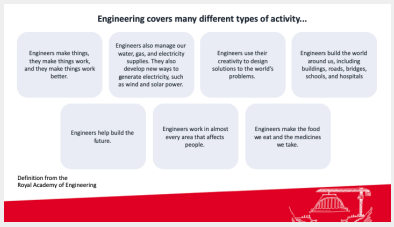
- When I say 'caterwauling', what do you think of?
- When I say 'engineer', what do you think of?
- If you had to be an engineer, what kind would you be?

Ask the class to suggest all the types they know, before referring to the definition from the Royal Association of Engineering and the given examples.









TEACHING FOCUS ACTIVITY (Ten minutes – extend the time to explore if you have a longer session)

To give your students an insight on how to research different options, get them to look at the different engineering courses in the UCAS Hub.

There are three main categories – mechanical, chemical, and civil.

There are courses such as 'Aviation Operations with Commercial Pilot Training', 'Acoustical and Audio Engineering', and 'Civil and Coastal Engineering'.

Pick one course you like the sound of, and add it to your 'favourites'. Imagine yourself in that job, and then practise the same activity with other occupations.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

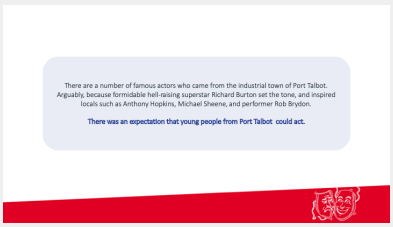
Look at the 'nudge' effect of influences.

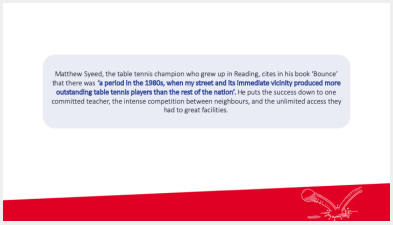
There are a number of famous actors who came from the industrial town of Port Talbot, arguably because formidable hell-raising superstar Richard Burton set the tone and inspired locals such as Anthony Hopkins, Michael Sheene, and performer Rob Brydon. There was an expectation that young people from Port Talbot could act.

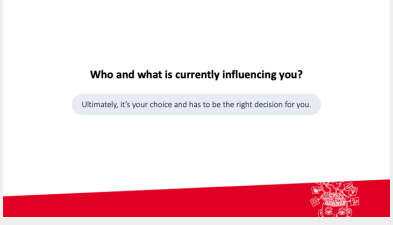
Matthew Syeed, table tennis champion who grew up in Reading, cites in his book 'Bounce' that there was 'a period in the 1980s, when my street and its immediate vicinity produced more outstanding table tennis players than the rest of the nation'. He puts the success down to one committed teacher, the intense competition between neighbours, and the unlimited access they had to great facilities.

Eilish McColgan is a successful Scottish middle-distance runner. The daughter of famous athletes, Liz and Peter McColgan, Eilish is coached by her mother, a former Olympic silver medallist and 10,000 metres world champion. Eilish studied mathematics and accountancy at the University of Dundee before embarking on a full-time career as an athlete.

Think about the influences on your life so far. Who is swaying your decision-making about your future career? Throw some wild card choices into your research. If you're limiting your university location, take a look at somewhere out of your 'safety zone'.







PLENARY (Five minutes)

Discuss what the students found when they looked at the engineering courses. How might they use this 'challenging' approach to discover other options?

A student in Bristol was keen to go on a course in Edinburgh. She was anxious about the cost of travel as she wanted to be able to go home during term-time, as well as having the option of her family visiting her. Train costs were prohibitive, but then she was advised to look at flying. And she realised that if she picked her times carefully, she'd solved her problem.

Take advice from as many people as possible. And remember, they are giving advice. You choose whether the advice is useful, and crucially you have the choice on whether you act on that advice... or not.

HOMEWORK

Research options that you may have previously discounted – unis, apprenticeships, locations, subject areas, sectors etc. What would be your wild card and why do you see it as a wild card? Write it down in the 'notes' tool in the UCAS Hub.