

Hobbies that help others

Most teenagers enjoy spending their free time with friends, playing computer games or doing sports. Some young people also decide to use their extra energy and help others. Here are some suggestions on what you can do to make a difference and have fun at the same time.

Cooking and baking

Not only can you learn how to prepare a meal for yourself, but you will also help your family members. If your parents are too tired to cook every day, you will be able to help them out. Start with simple dishes and slowly learn how to make more complicated ones. You can either ask grown-ups for help, or find a variety of recipes online or at your local library. There are cookbooks for every type of diet, and those that explain how to prepare quick and easy meals. When you are practiced enough, you can also see if your school, local shelter, or charity has a potluck day, when people bring and exchange food, or sell it to raise money for a worthwhile cause.



Volunteering

This is a very diverse field for hobbies, since there are many places to volunteer. Perhaps you already know who and how you want to help. If not, you can check with your local volunteering centres and pick a cause which is most interesting. It can be visiting elderly people, telling stories to children in hospitals, working with animals in shelters, planting sustainable gardens, cleaning up nature, or organizing events? There are even volunteering opportunities abroad, so once you are old enough, you can also travel and make this world a better place.



Fostering animals

If it is not possible for you to own a pet, you can always foster animals from shelters. Or, perhaps, you already have one, and want to help animals who do not have a home of their own. There are many more animals than people who are willing to care for them, so this can be a great opportunity to show kindness and enjoy their furry (or feathery) company. Most shelters will pay for the animal's food and veterinary care, so you simply need to offer them a temporary home, until they can find a permanent one. And in case you are not able to bring an animal to your own home, you can volunteer at a shelter and help both people and animals there.



Teaching

Most of us have some skill that others do not. Why not show somebody else how to develop a skill you already have? It can be anything from playing a sport, swimming, riding a bike, or playing an instrument, to playing a video game, mastering a subject at school, or doing research. Even helping your grandparents with setting up their new phone or social media profile counts! When we help others learn a new skill, we become better at it ourselves.



Tasks and questions:

1 What are the most popular hobbies with your friends?

2 Does anyone's hobby include helping other people?

3 Discuss the hobbies mentioned in the text. Which would you be most, and which least likely to take up? Why?

4 Research:

- Which volunteering opportunities exist in your town or city?
- What is the most interesting one?
- Could you try it in your spare time, e.g. over the holidays?
- Who would you do it with?
- How does it help others, and how is it good for you?