
HERO HQ
FIVE FORCES CHALLENGE
Student Mission Workbook

01 / YOUR ASSIGNMENT

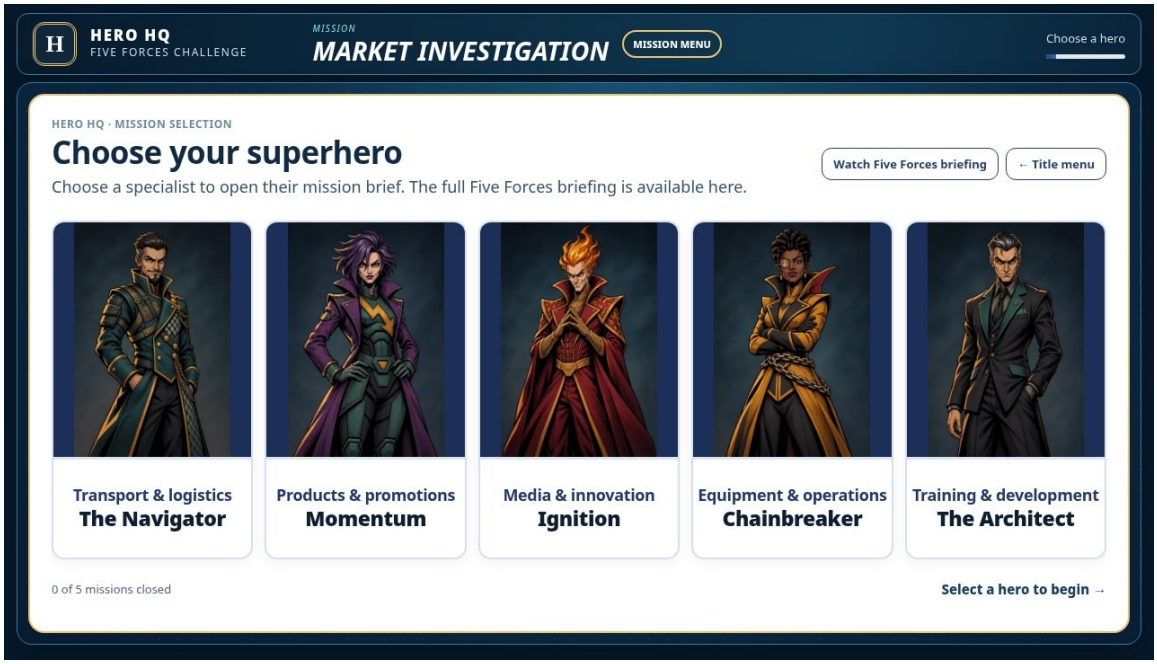
# Welcome to Hero HQ

**THE BRIEF**

You are a superhero industry analyst. Your job is to investigate an industry, identify competitive pressures, assess their strength and recommend an action. You must support your final decision with two or three evidence items.

## Choose your mission pathway

- ☐ One mission: complete the two pages for your assigned hero.
- ☐ All five, independently: complete every mission record and the final comparison.
- ☐ All five, in pairs: discuss together, then write your own individual reasoning.
- ☐ Jigsaw: complete one mission, then teach your findings to your group.




Choose one of the five heroes to open a market mission.

## Your team

Name / class (workbook only):

Player or team alias (use a made-up name in the game):

Do not enter your real name in the game. Print this workbook and write your responses directly on the pages.

02 / THE FRAMEWORK

# Five Forces field guide



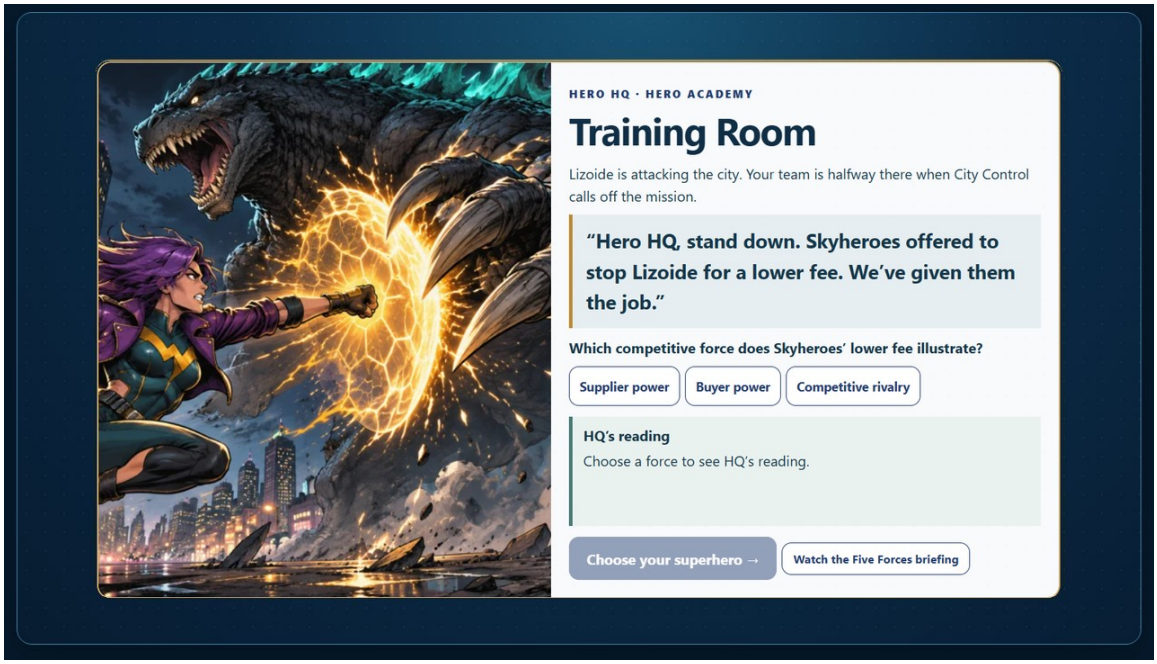

Think about the whole industry, not just one rival.

| Force | Ask this question |
|---|---|
| **Competitive rivalry** | How strongly do existing businesses compete with one another? |
| **Buyer power** | Can customers negotiate lower prices or better terms? |
| **Supplier power** | Can businesses that provide essential inputs demand more? |
| **Threat of substitutes** | Can customers meet the same need in a different way? |
| **Threat of new entrants** | How easy is it for another business to start competing? |

**Remember**
Competitive pressure is not the same as being a direct competitor. For example, a cheaper alternative way to meet a need may be a substitute, not a rival selling the same product.

03 / LIZOIDE TRAINING ROOM

# Your first practice case




Training Room: City Control gives the Lizoide mission to another team.

Lizoide is threatening the city. Skyheroes offers to stop Lizoide for a lower fee than Hero HQ. City Control gives them the job.

**1. Which force best describes Skyheroes undercutting Hero HQ?**

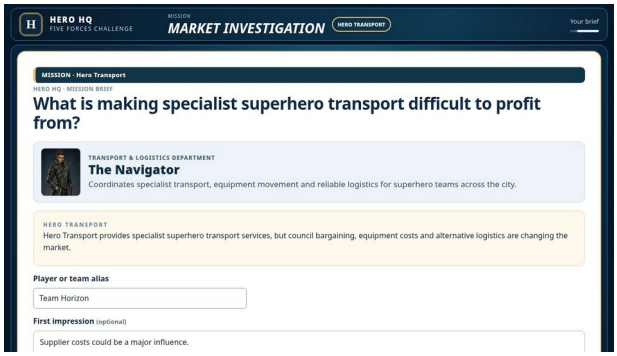
☐ Buyer power ☐ Supplier power ☐ Competitive rivalry

**2. Why? Name the two businesses or organisations involved.**

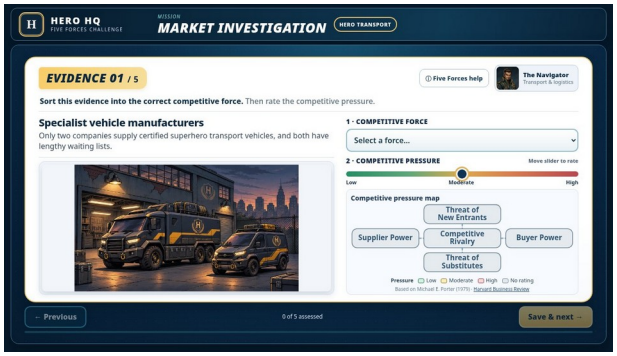
**3. What would make this an example of buyer power instead?**

04 / ON-SCREEN STEPS

# Navigating the investigation




Mission brief: identify the market problem

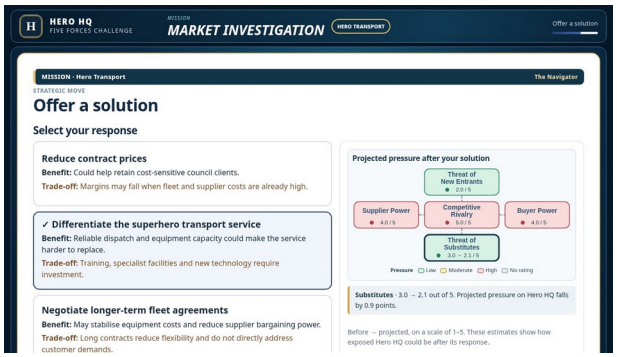



Evidence: classify and rate pressure

1 Read the market problem and write an initial hypothesis. 2 Read each of the five evidence documents. 3 Select the relevant force and set a pressure rating from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). 4 Save each item before moving on.




Review your pressure assessment against HQ

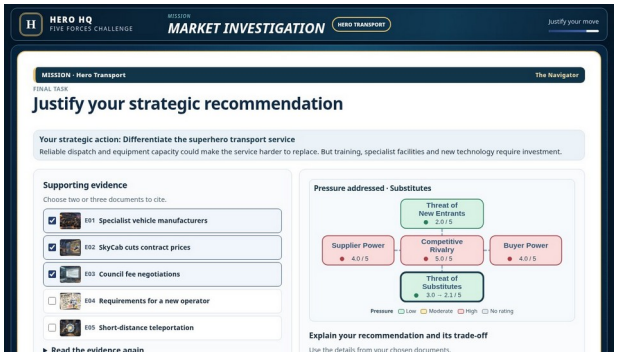



Test one of three strategic responses

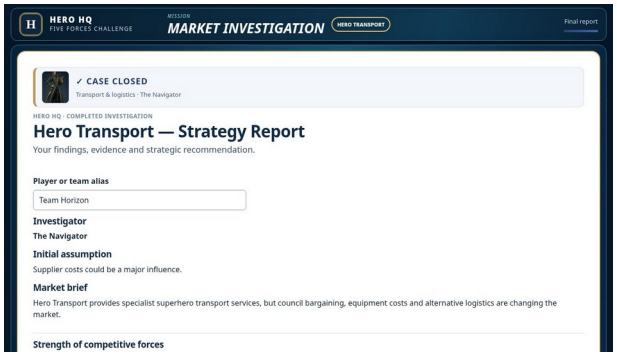
5 Compare your pressure map with HQ and investigate disagreements. 6 Choose an action, consider its potential benefit and trade-off, and explain why it fits the market.

05 / YOUR EVIDENCE

# Close the case




Select two or three items and justify your strategy




Retain your final investigation report

## A clear recommendation has four parts

| Step | Sentence starter |
|---|---|
| **Claim** | I recommend that [organisation] should … |
| **Evidence** | Evidence E__ shows … and evidence E__ suggests … |
| **Reasoning** | This matters because it reduces / responds to … |
| **Trade-off** | However, this option may also … |

**Submission checklist**

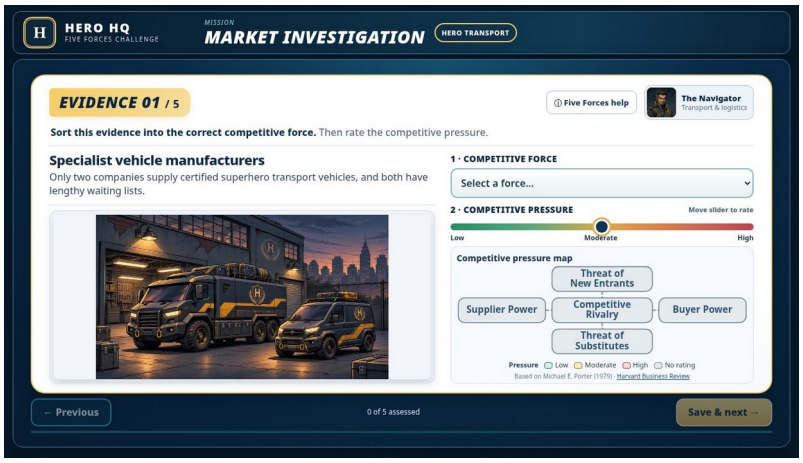
☐ All five evidence cards in your mission are classified and rated. ☐ The strategy is justified with two or three items. ☐ You have identified a trade-off. ☐ You have printed or saved your strategy report.

**The next ten pages form five separate mission records. If you have been assigned one market, complete only that market's two pages.**

06 / MISSION EVIDENCE RECORD

# Mission 01 | Hero Transport

**SUPERHERO** The Navigator • **INDUSTRY QUESTION** What is making specialist superhero transport difficult to profit from?




**Opening hypothesis: Which force might matter most in this market, and why?**

## Evidence log

For each clue, record the force you selected and a pressure rating from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

| Evidence card | Your force classification | Pressure |
|---|---|---|
| **E01 Specialist vehicle manufacturers** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E02 SkyCab cuts contract prices** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E03 Council fee negotiations** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E04 Requirements for a new operator** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E05 Short-distance teleportation** | _____ | ___ / 5 |

**Choose one clue: explain why you classified it under that force.**

07 / MISSION RECOMMENDATION

# Mission 01 | Strategic decision

**Hero Transport • The Navigator**

## 1 My pressure assessment

| Buyer power | Supplier power | Substitutes | New entrants | Rivalry |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 |

**Which force was the strongest? What evidence supports your view?**

## 2 Select a response

☐ Reduce contract prices
☐ Differentiate the superhero transport service
☐ Negotiate longer-term fleet agreements

**My chosen response:** _____

**3 Justification: refer to two or three evidence IDs (E01–E05).**

**4 Benefit and trade-off: what will improve, and what might be costly or risky?**

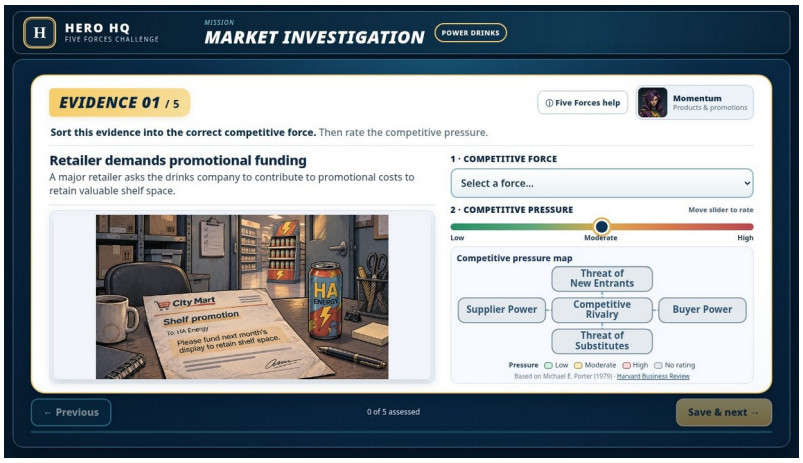
**After viewing the HQ comparison: What would you keep or revise in your assessment?**

☐ **Mission complete** ☐ **Strategy report saved or printed**

06 / MISSION EVIDENCE RECORD

# Mission 02 | Power Drinks

**SUPERHERO Momentum • INDUSTRY QUESTION Why might growing drink sales still lead to disappointing profits?**




**Opening hypothesis: Which force might matter most in this market, and why?**

## Evidence log

For each clue, record the force you selected and a pressure rating from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

| Evidence card | Your force classification | Pressure |
|---|---|---|
| **E01 Retailer demands promotional funding** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E02 Certified Voltroot supplier** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E03 Competing supermarket discounts** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E04 Contract bottling for new brands** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E05 Alternative hydration products** | _____ | ___ / 5 |

**Choose one clue: explain why you classified it under that force.**

07 / MISSION RECOMMENDATION

# Mission 02 | Strategic decision

**Power Drinks • Momentum**

## 1 My pressure assessment

| Buyer power | Supplier power | Substitutes | New entrants | Rivalry |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 |

**Which force was the strongest? What evidence supports your view?**

## 2 Select a response

☐ Offer broader retailer discounts
☐ Differentiate through a targeted niche
☐ Develop a second ingredient supplier

**My chosen response:** _____

**3 Justification: refer to two or three evidence IDs (E01–E05).**

**4 Benefit and trade-off: what will improve, and what might be costly or risky?**

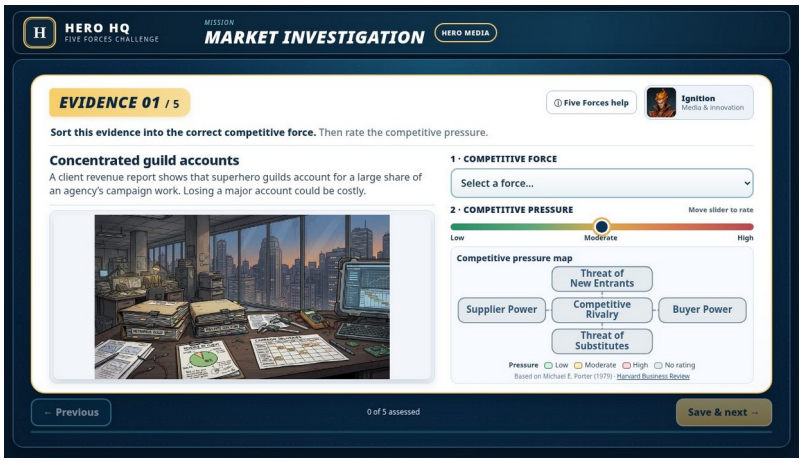
**After viewing the HQ comparison: What would you keep or revise in your assessment?**

☐ **Mission complete** ☐ **Strategy report saved or printed**

06 / MISSION EVIDENCE RECORD

# Mission 03 | Hero Media

**SUPERHERO Ignition • INDUSTRY QUESTION Which competitive pressures are changing the creative services market?**




**Opening hypothesis: Which force might matter most in this market, and why?**

## Evidence log

For each clue, record the force you selected and a pressure rating from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

| Evidence card | Your force classification | Pressure |
|---|---|---|
| **E01 Concentrated guild accounts** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E02 Citywide campaign approval** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E03 Rival agencies undercut a bid** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E04 Restricted advertising display sites** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E05 Self-managed guild communications** | _____ | ___ / 5 |

**Choose one clue: explain why you classified it under that force.**

07 / MISSION RECOMMENDATION

# Mission 03 | Strategic decision

**Hero Media • Ignition**

## 1 My pressure assessment

| Buyer power | Supplier power | Substitutes | New entrants | Rivalry |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 |

**Which force was the strongest? What evidence supports your view?**

## 2 Select a response

☐ Compete on lower campaign fees
☐ Specialise in crisis communications
☐ Build a long-term client programme

**My chosen response:** _____

**3 Justification: refer to two or three evidence IDs (E01–E05).**

**4 Benefit and trade-off: what will improve, and what might be costly or risky?**

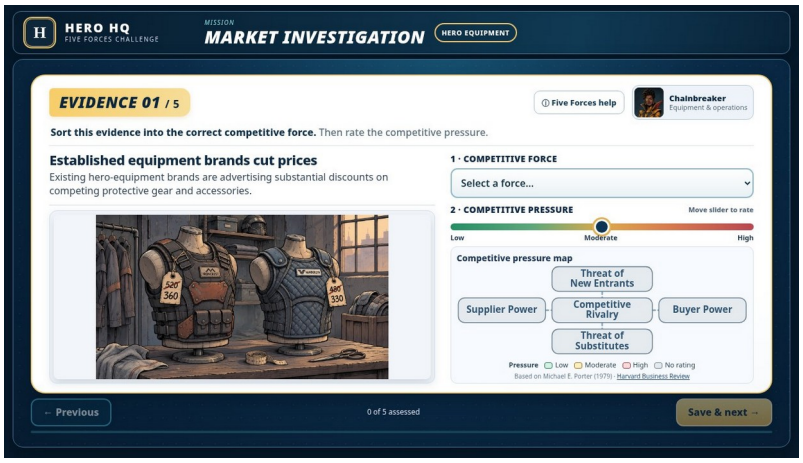
**After viewing the HQ comparison: What would you keep or revise in your assessment?**

☐ **Mission complete** ☐ **Strategy report saved or printed**

06 / MISSION EVIDENCE RECORD

# Mission 04 | Hero Equipment

**SUPERHERO** Chainbreaker • **INDUSTRY QUESTION** Which market forces could threaten profitability in specialist protective equipment?




**Opening hypothesis: Which force might matter most in this market, and why?**

## Evidence log

For each clue, record the force you selected and a pressure rating from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

| Evidence card | Your force classification | Pressure |
|---|---|---|
| **E01 Established equipment brands cut prices** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E02 Certified specialist equipment cores** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E03 Apex Gear enters the equipment market** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E04 Alternatives to specialist accessories** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E05 A major buyer negotiates supply terms** | _____ | ___ / 5 |

**Choose one clue: explain why you classified it under that force.**

07 / MISSION RECOMMENDATION

# Mission 04 | Strategic decision

**Hero Equipment • Chainbreaker**

## 1 My pressure assessment

| Buyer power | Supplier power | Substitutes | New entrants | Rivalry |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 |

**Which force was the strongest? What evidence supports your view?**

## 2 Select a response

☐ Negotiate a joint material purchase
☐ Expand bespoke safety services
☐ Bid aggressively on large guild contracts

**My chosen response:** _____

**3 Justification: refer to two or three evidence IDs (E01–E05).**

**4 Benefit and trade-off: what will improve, and what might be costly or risky?**

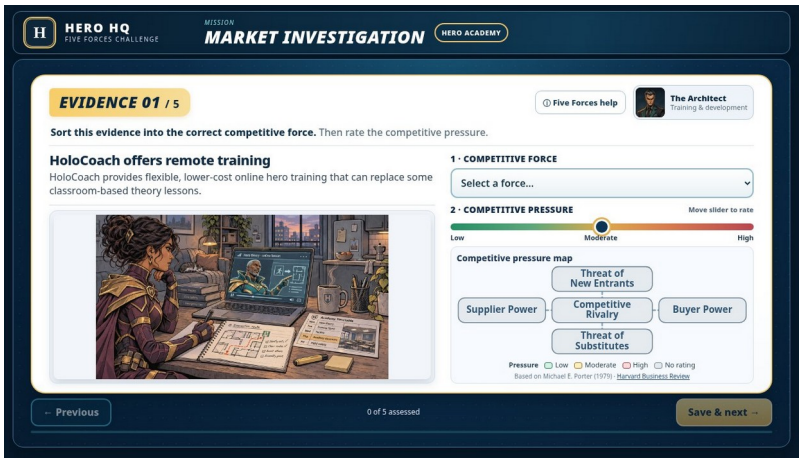
**After viewing the HQ comparison: What would you keep or revise in your assessment?**

☐ **Mission complete** ☐ **Strategy report saved or printed**

06 / MISSION EVIDENCE RECORD

# Mission 05 | Hero Academy

**SUPERHERO** The Architect • **INDUSTRY QUESTION** Is an existing rival the only reason Hero Academy is under pressure?




**Opening hypothesis: Which force might matter most in this market, and why?**

## Evidence log

For each clue, record the force you selected and a pressure rating from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

| Evidence card | Your force classification | Pressure |
|---|---|---|
| **E01 HoloCoach offers remote training** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E02 School contract renewals** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E03 A new hero training centre opens** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E04 Exclusive simulator supply** | _____ | ___ / 5 |
| **E05 Bolt Academy competes for trainees** | _____ | ___ / 5 |

**Choose one clue: explain why you classified it under that force.**

07 / MISSION RECOMMENDATION

# Mission 05 | Strategic decision

**Hero Academy • The Architect**

## 1 My pressure assessment

| Buyer power | Supplier power | Substitutes | New entrants | Rivalry |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 | ___ / 5 |

**Which force was the strongest? What evidence supports your view?**

## 2 Select a response

☐ Match Bolt Academy's prices
☐ Create differentiated blended training
☐ Renegotiate simulation licensing

**My chosen response:** _____

**3 Justification: refer to two or three evidence IDs (E01–E05).**

**4 Benefit and trade-off: what will improve, and what might be costly or risky?**

**After viewing the HQ comparison: What would you keep or revise in your assessment?**

☐ **Mission complete** ☐ **Strategy report saved or printed**

08 / OPTIONAL SYNTHESIS

# Across the five markets

Complete this page if you played multiple missions or participated in a jigsaw discussion. Record each market's main pressure and the best-supported strategic response.

| Market | Most important pressure + evidence ID | Recommended response |
|---|---|---|
| Hero Transport | _____ | _____ |
| Power Drinks | _____ | _____ |
| Hero Media | _____ | _____ |
| Hero Equipment | _____ | _____ |
| Hero Academy | _____ | _____ |

**Which competitive force appeared strongest across more than one industry? Give an example.**

**Compare two markets: why might the same force be more serious in one than another?**

**What is one limitation of using a simplified Five Forces model?**

### Your final debrief

I can identify the five forces; justify a pressure rating; recognise alternative interpretations; and recommend a strategy using evidence rather than guessing.

Hero HQ markets are fictional. The point of the challenge is to practise the quality of your thinking and your use of evidence.