Develop the skills to succeed in 21st Century employment
The Life Skills programme comprises a range of FREE teaching resources that have been mapped to the CEFR (A1 - C1) and created specifically to help language teachers bring life skills into the classroom.

Resources include lesson plans, videos and quizzes and cover key employability topics including:

- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Creativity
- Problem-solving
- Social and Cultural Awareness
- Study Skills
- Leadership and Responsibility
- Self-awareness and Initiative
- Organisation Skills
- Time Management
- Workplace Readiness

Visit the Macmillan English website to discover and download our resources: macmillanenglish.com/life-skills

"The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning.”

Jiddu Krishnamurti
Inside your Life Skills Employability Toolkit:

✔ Self-evaluation quiz: Reflect on your current skills and set your objectives for the year ahead.

✔ Calendar: Printable monthly sheets featuring professional development activities and tips.

✔ Monthly review: A flexible tool to help you reflect on your monthly experiences and goals.

✔ Weekly planner: A photocopiable weekly planner to help you list and achieve your objectives each week.

Want to receive FREE resources, teaching tips and reminders about our FREE monthly webinars? Sign up to the Macmillan English email list!

Get set for success

Discover our new Skills for Work video series on YouTube and pick up top tips for professional success.

Launching in February: Watch our exclusive interview and get ‘out of this world’ career tips from astronaut Chris Hadfield!

“Life is not about the big dramatic long-term dream goal. Life is about the sum total of each little step you take.”

Chris Hadfield
Fact: Two years ago, if you searched online for “life skills in education” you would find 71 million results. Today, the same search generates over 200 million results.

Why is there so much interest in life skills?

The rapid changes brought on by technology have had a direct effect on all our lives. However, the workplace has been transformed completely. Today, people expect to have many different jobs and therefore need to build flexible skills and be ready to adapt and learn in a fast-moving world. We all need to be able to use new and ever-changing technology, as well as collaborate successfully with people from various backgrounds in person and at a distance.

Who defines life skills?

There are many different lists of life skills, developed by ministries, international organisations, universities and educational partnerships. Everyone who is interested in the improvement of education has a view on which skills are the ones necessary for success in the 21st century.

The Assessment and Teaching of 21st century Skills (ATC21S) started with a group of more than 250 researchers across 60 institutions worldwide who categorised 21st century skills into 4 broad categories:

1. **Ways of thinking**: Creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making and learning
2. **Ways of working**: Communication and collaboration
3. **Tools for working**: Information and communications technology (ICT) and information literacy
4. **Skills for living in the world**: life, career, personal and social responsibility

Other organisations, including P21.org, have listed skills including life and career skills, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and ICT skills.

In *The Global Achievement Gap*, Tony Wagner highlighted seven skills which further reinforce key themes: **Critical Thinking** and **Problem Solving**; **Collaboration** Across Networks and Leading by Influence; Agility and Adaptability; Initiative and Entrepreneurship; Effective Oral and Written **Communication**; Accessing and Analyzing Information; Curiosity and Imagination.

So you can see that similar themes appear throughout these and many other lists created by employers.

The question is, which of the life skills do you recognise and want to build within yourself?
Self-evaluation Quiz

This quiz is adapted from Palgrave, Skills for Success 3rd edition, by Stella Cottrell.

For each of the following statements, rate your responses as outlined below.

Rating: 0 = strongly agree   1 = agree   2 = slightly agree   3 = disagree   4 = strongly disagree

1. I am certain that I can keep myself motivated towards achieving my next goal
2. I am confident that I have planned sufficiently to enable me to achieve my goals
3. I am very clear how my academic achievements fit into my life plans
4. I am confident that I can demonstrate the skills, values and behaviours that employers are looking for
5. I am confident in undertaking structured reflection without guidelines
6. I am confident that I can develop an effective strategy to meet most circumstances
7. I have a clear understanding of how to evaluate my own performance
8. I am confident that I know how to improve my performance in most circumstances
9. I know how to apply and transfer my expertise from one area to a different field
10. I am confident that I can see myself as others see me
11. I am confident that I have effective listening skills
12. I am an assertive person
13. I am a good self-starter
14. I am aware of the best roles for me to fill for team work
15. I am confident at problem-solving
16. I am confident that I know how to make best use of my mind
17. I am confident that I will take a creative approach to most problems
18. I am always very clear about which skills I am developing

Look at your score. How many items did you circle as 0 = strongly agree?

Look back over the points you gave a score of 1-4: How can you improve your score over the coming year?

“I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough; we must do.”

Leonardo da Vinci
Listening skills

Good listening skills are invaluable to forming rapport with others. However, skilful listening is about more than ‘hearing words’. It involves understanding the message, the situation and other people. There is an art in being able to discover what another person is trying to communicate, and this can take many years to perfect. Think of a recent situation when you felt that you were trying to communicate your point of view and could not make yourself heard.

- What was the situation: what happened?
- How did you feel?
- What did you do?
- What could the ‘listener’ or ‘listeners’ have done differently to help you feel you had been listened to?

(Taken from Palgrave, Skills for Success 3rd edition, by Stella Cottrell p. 135)
DATES TO REMEMBER:

- 10th: Happy Birthday onestopenglish
- 24th: Flipping the Classroom

TRY THIS:

Creativity skills
Most people equate creativity with a particular kind of person. You may have associated creativity with being an artist, designer, performer or inventor. Most of us underestimate our capacity for creativity. We may compare ourselves with great artists, for example, ignoring all the occasions when we have used our minds and resources creatively to deal with a situation we are in. We all have our own spheres where our natural creativity shines.

- What kinds of creativity do you show in your life?
- Do you have ‘your own ways of doing things’ for certain tasks?
- In which areas of your life would you like to be more creative?
- Do you feel comfortable with the idea of yourself as a potentially creative person?

(Taken from Palgrave: Skills for Success 3rd edition, by Stella Cottrell p. 204)
"It’s not what you achieve, it’s what you overcome. That’s what defines your career.”
Carlton Fisk

DATES TO REMEMBER:

- **16th:** Stories and Scaffolded Learning
- **30th:** Teachers at the Heart #1: Networking

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TRY THIS:

**Collaboration skills**

What are the dynamics in getting people to work together to achieve an outcome in a workplace situation? It can mean everything from knowing how to get the best out of others and motivating them to a common goal, to being able to support colleagues through difficult situations or conflicts of personality.

Everyone works in different ways, so being able to have different personalities working together and delivering on a single plan or goal relies on effective collaboration as well as having a tactful approach.

- Share the vision – does everyone know what the goal is and how success will be assessed?
- Share the stage – make sure everyone has a chance to share their ideas and feedback.
- Share the workload – if roles need to be assigned how will this be done and why? Do you prefer to lead or follow?
- Share the glory – when a successful outcome has been achieved do you recognise all those who contributed and those who collaborated.

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**DATES TO REMEMBER:**

- **20th:** Shakespeare Special

**TRY THIS:**

**Know yourself - defining success**

There are many ways of looking at 'success'. Some people define success in terms of objective materials criteria. (How much money, how high a position in a company, how big a house). 'Success' is a very subjective matter. It depends on what is meaningful to you and the people around you.

- Jot down quickly the first ten things (or symbols) you associate with success
- How important is each of those symbols to you personally?
- Are these things you want very much from life?
- How do you think your list would differ from somebody else’s? Compare your list with a friend.

(Taken from Palgrave, Skills for Success 3rd edition by Stella Cottrell p. 24)

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“I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”

Michael Jordan

DATES TO REMEMBER:

11th: Teachers at the Heart #2: Finding Balance

18th: Effective Exam Practice for Teenagers

NOTES

TRY THIS:

Creative thinking

Creative thinking skills use very different approaches to critical thinking skills. They involve a much more relaxed, open and playful approach. This can require some risk-taking... Creative thinking skills are as much about attitude and self-confidence as about talent. As you are not looking for ‘one’ answer, you are likely to come up with lots of suggestions that are not ‘right’. This can be difficult if you are more used to analytical and logical approaches.

- Brainstorm ideas on one topic onto a large piece of paper. Don’t edit these, just write them down.
- Allow yourself to play with an idea whilst you go for a walk.
- Draw or paint a theory on paper, or doodle around key words.
- Ask the same question at least twenty times and give a different answer each time.
- Ask questions such as ‘What if...?’ or ‘Supposing...?’.

(Taken from Palgrave, Skills for Success 3rd edition, by Stella Cottrell p. 210)
“Failure doesn’t mean you are a failure it just means you haven’t succeeded yet.”

Robert H. Schuller

DATES TO REMEMBER:

8th: Summer School Special

TRY THIS:

Work readiness

What is work readiness? Employers say they want students to be work-ready. Having had work, whether paid or voluntary, part-time or full-time, helps to develop an understanding of what this entails. ‘Work readiness’ is hard to define precisely, but … employers want to take on new staff who identify with the needs of their business.

- Bring a ‘can-do’ attitude – undertaking reasonable tasks when asked
- Take pride in your work – going the extra mile and being professional
- Use time effectively – including being punctual
- Be generally helpful and flexible

(Taken from Palgrave, Skills for Success 3rd edition, by Stella Cottrell p. 254)
Traditionally, educational learning has emphasised content over process. We are in transition toward an emphasis of process over content. Knowing facts is no longer as important as being able to analyse, synthesise, prioritise, categorise and evaluate information. Life skills in the information age include the ability to process many types of information in many ways.

To prepare for success, we need to learn to deal with a rich array of information types and consider how to process the information verbally, visually, logically, intuitively.

- Understand the criteria (i.e. what decision/action needs to be taken)
- List all the options (not just the ones that appeal to you)
- Order the options according to the criteria
- Evaluate the possible outcomes
- Use this to plan your course of action(s)

NOTE: The best way to predict the future is to create it.”

Abraham Lincoln

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Dates to remember:

"The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.”

Thomas A. Edison

Try this:

Time management

Do you feel you have loads of time, or are you often 'running out of time'? Time management is an essential skill, especially as technology seems to provide people with 24-hour access. There are many tools (on your phone, computer/tablet) that can help you plan your time, as well as diaries, schedules and wall planners. What matters is making a start to plan your time and reviewing and refining how you use that time.

How do you manage your time? What % do you give to the following 4 stages?:

• Plan what are you going to do – and by when?
• Does the activity need to be broken into stages?
• Do – tackle the task in the time you have allocated
• Review – if you were to offer advice on the same task to a friend, what advice would you give? How would you help them complete the task? Does the plan, time allocation or outcome need to be amended?
• Reflect – what did you achieve, what was left undone?
September

DATES TO REMEMBER:

14th: BACK TO SCHOOL SPECIAL

– Classroom Routines for Young Learners
– Evaluating Online Information
– Managing and Motivating Teens

TRY THIS:

21st-century study skills
Are your study skills up-to-date? With modern technology there is a lot more support available at the touch of a button. Often it’s not the amount of time you spend studying, but how effectively you use that time. Study skills aren’t just for exams; study skills can help in preparing for meetings, and when creating or reviewing work. Have you made the most of your mobile phone, tablet or computer to develop these skills?  

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“Dreams are extremely important. You can’t do it unless you imagine it.”
George Lucas
October

M   T   W   T   F   S   S

1    2

3    4    5    6    7    8    9

10   11   12   13   14   15   16

17   18   19   20   21   22   23

24   25   26   27   28   29   30

31

DATES TO REMEMBER:

12th: SPEAKING WITH IMPACT

“All you need is love and a dream — and you’re on your way to becoming a success.”

Walt Disney

NOTES

TRY THIS:

Teamwork

Teamwork skills are life skills. More people lose their first job for lack of ability to get along with others than for lack of technical skills. Social skills are core to all the life skills frameworks. The most fundamental social skill is empathy. Understanding communication, friendship, caring, diversity skills, leadership skills, and teamwork skills all hinges on the ability to feel what it is like to be the other person.

How can you develop empathy?

• Demonstrate clearly that you are listening

• Listen for the underlying message: what does the person really mean? What do they really want you to hear or to know?

• Leave silences – this enables other people to enter the dialogue or to work out their own position

• Use appropriate body language and facial expressions

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November

M T W T F S S
1 2 3 4 5 6
7 8 9 10 11 12 13
14 15 16 17 18 19 20
21 22 23 24 25 26 27
28 29 30

DATES TO REMEMBER:

• 8th–12th: The Macmillan Education Online Conference

“IT'S NOT THE DAYS IN YOUR LIFE, BUT THE LIFE IN YOUR DAYS THAT COUNTS.”
Brian White

TRY THIS:

Leadership skills
Being a leader demands a lot from anyone, often including prioritisation, people management, delegation, negotiation, development and intervention. Personally, there will be the need to manage the stress of the job and the expectations of those in the team. No matter if you’re a leader already or just part of a team, think about how you want to be respected.

• How often should you meet with ‘the team’? Should a leader be visible by their absence?
• Communicate with the team (and not just the negatives). What communication style do you prefer and how is this viewed by your team?
• Do you leap in and ‘do’ and when do you delegate? Who to?
• Do you give feedback – how often do you ask for feedback from others?

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“Success is how high you bounce when you hit bottom.”
General George Patton

DATES TO REMEMBER:

7th: Teachers at the Heart #3: Careers
14th: NEW FOR 2017

TRY THIS:

Self-awareness

“Either we learn to manage our emotions or we are managed by our emotions...” Daniel Goleman eloquently makes the case for the importance of affective skills (growth in feelings or emotional areas). Affective skills include knowing and dealing with one’s feelings. We may not be able to choose whether we are angry or not, but we can choose what we do about our anger. Without affective skills we “act out” our feelings rather than “act from” our feelings.

• What does assertiveness mean to you?
• How often are you assertive? How does it make you feel?
• How do you feel when you think you have not been respected or listened to?
• How does this affect your emotions?
• How does that impact on your colleagues?

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Weekly Priorities

W/C

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

“Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.”

Albert Einstein

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Monthly Review

Month

The 3 words that best describe my month:

The life skills I used most (and how) are:

The key things I have achieved are:

Next month I want to focus on:
Beyond (British English)
A 6-level course for teenagers. The big focus of the series is to equip students with skills and strategies they will be able to transfer into other areas of their education and lives. Available as Go Beyond in American English. CEFR levels A1–B2+

Open Mind (British English)
A 6-level communicative course for adult learners, with a strong focus on developing language skills and life skills for work and career, study and learning, self and society. Available as the Mind series in American English. CEFR levels A1–C1

Gateway 2nd Edition
This 6-level course offers information-rich content for exam success as well as a strong life skills syllabus helping teenage students become independent learners. Designed with the option for blended learning through flipped classroom activities. CEFR levels A1+–B2+

Skills for Success
Whether you’re just starting at college or university, or about to leave a post-graduate programme, Skills for Success will help you to think creatively and constructively about personal, academic and career goals.

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