



**MACMILLAN  
LIFE SKILLS**  
for teachers

**"I touch the future.  
I teach"**

Christa McAuliffe



# Life Skills for teachers

GETTING  
ORGANISED



SELF-  
AWARENESS



CREATIVITY



STUDY  
SKILLS



COMMUNICATION



CAREER  
& WORK



NETWORKING



CULTURAL  
AWARENESS



TIME  
MANAGEMENT



CRITICAL  
THINKING



PEOPLE  
MANAGEMENT



SOCIAL  
SKILLS



*With learners for life*

# Life Skills for young learners


**EATING HEALTHILY**



I can eat healthily. Can you?

We can work in a team. Can you?

**collaboration**



**Creativity**



I can write a story. Can you?



**citizenship**

I can give directions. Can you?



We can use the past tense. Can you?

**communication**

**Creativity**

I can invent and design games. Can you?



**problem solving**



I can solve puzzles. Can you?

**Cultural awareness**

I can understand different cultures. Can you?



**Independence**



We can buy items from a shop in English. Can you?

**communication**

I can describe animals. Can you?



**Numeracy**

We can count. Can you?



**Cultural awareness**

I can understand different cultures. Can you?



*With learners for life*



## PLATO

c.427– c. 347 BCE

Plato was born into a wealthy family and had two brothers and a sister. At that time in Ancient Greece, men had most of the rights whereas women (and children and slaves) did not have any voice in society. This century marked the height of Classical Greek civilisation with art, literature, philosophy and architecture all valued parts of Grecian society and, within their known world, the Greek economy was very strong and growing.

### What life skills did a 4th-century Greek need?

**Citizenship** - All free men wanted to be good citizens. This included learning to read and write, understand maths and science, and value the arts (play a musical instrument and understand poetry). Networking was another key to gaining influence through both being supported in discussion and increasing one's social standing.

**Critical thinking** - We think of Ancient Greece as one state, but there wasn't one single Greek government; each city decided its own matters of law, some being ruled by a King, some with groups of citizens (free men) forming a senate. Being able to discuss and debate was seen as essential skills since debate was the main way of governing.



## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

1564–1616

The son of a businessman, Shakespeare attended school but, as his father was often in debt, there was not enough money for him to go to university. At eighteen he married, and within three years was father to a daughter and twins. The family moved to London where he began acting and writing plays and by 1592 he had already started to become famous.

### What life skills did an Elizabethan need?

**Respect** - Shakespeare was sometimes commanded to perform plays for the Queen. Queen Elizabeth I was generally well liked and very popular and the English economy was doing well, with exploration bringing in new foods, wealth and territories.

**Creativity** - At this time there were many theatres in London and so there was a constant demand for new plays (often a play would only 'run' for a week). With so many people writing so many plays, Shakespeare had to constantly think creatively to bring into life characters and plots that would keep the audience happy.

**People management** - At this time, London was the largest city in England and one of the largest in Europe, so this brought many people into the city and with it many social problems. There were areas where the crime rate was extremely high, there was no sanitation, disease often killed large sections of the population and life expectancy was low. The people who came to see Shakespeare's plays were from all social class and if they didn't like the play would be very vocal about saying so. England had a clear class system with nobility at the top and the very poor at the bottom.



# ALBERT EINSTEIN

## 1879–1955

Born in Germany, Einstein was the son of an engineer who had set up his own business. Unfortunately the business failed and this meant the family had to move from Germany to Italy, but Einstein stayed behind to finish school. He went on to study in Switzerland and once he had obtained his degree he worked in a patent office. However, all the time he was there he knew he wanted to be working on his own ideas. He kept on working and publishing his findings. His work was eventually recognised when, in 1921, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics.

### What life skills did Einstein need?

**Self-confidence** - Einstein lived in several different countries, sometimes with his family, sometimes alone, until 1933 he left Europe altogether due to the rise of Hitler.

**Study skills** - He worked on theories that gave him academic success and allowed him to travel and become famous across large parts of the world.

**Respecting Others** - much of the work Einstein did was not in isolation. He worked with many famous mathematicians and scientists of his day and many were happy to recommend him for promotion or places at Universities, he was friends with Charlie Chaplin and Robert Oppenheimer.



# Rabindranath Tagore

## 1861–1941

The youngest of thirteen surviving children, Tagore (nicknamed "Rabi") was born in the Jorasanko mansion in Calcutta. Tagore was raised mostly by servants; his mother had died in his early childhood and his father travelled widely. Tagore was a Bengali polymath who reshaped Bengali literature and music, as well as Indian art with Contextual Modernism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Author of *Gitanjali* and its "profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse", he became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913.

**Creativity** - Tagore modernised Bengali art by spurning rigid classical forms and resisting linguistic strictures. His novels, stories, songs, dance-dramas, and essays spoke to topics political and personal. *Gitanjali*, *Gora* and *Ghare-Baire* are his best-known works, and his verse, short stories, and novels were acclaimed—or panned—for their lyricism, colloquialism, naturalism, and unnatural contemplation.

**Self-Awareness** - Rabindranath had always wanted to paint. Writing and music, playwriting and acting came to him naturally and almost without training, but painting eluded him. Yet he tried repeatedly to master the art. In 1900 for instance, when he was nearing forty and already a celebrated writer, he wrote "I am sitting with a sketchbook drawing. Needless to say, the pictures are not intended for any salon in Paris. But, just as a mother lavishes most affection on her ugliest son, so I feel secretly drawn to the very skill that comes to me least easily."

**Cultural Awareness** - Tagore was a prolific composer with 2,230 songs to his credit. His songs are known as *rabindrasangit* which merges fluidly into his literature, most of which—poems or parts of novels, stories, or plays alike, they ran the entire gamut of human emotion, ranging from devotional hymns to quasi-erotic compositions. Tagore's poetic style, ranges from classical formalism to the comic, visionary, and ecstatic.



# GET ORGANISED

## Email organisation



Einstein was a scientist who made the most of his time. In images and photographs his desk looks messy but he knew where to find what he needed. He was able to work on several theories at the same time but he found a system of filing that worked for him and he stuck to it, being able to find things at a moment's notice.

**Aim:** This lesson gives students practical ideas for getting organised in the digital world.

**Materials:** mobile phone with messages or email system on a computer/tablet

### Don't multi-task to be more productive

1. Set aside 20 minutes, every couple of hours, to go through your emails. Once this time has passed, log out of your email programme or turn off your internet connection and work on your paperwork or projects.
2. Use the sort functions to maximise the 20 minutes
  - i. Sort/quickly scan for any red flags, urgent or emails marked with a ! Open and read these straight away – especially if they are from your line manager/boss.
  - ii. Sort by subject to pull together email streams – read the earliest one, so you understand what the initial email was about AND THEN the most recent one to see if you need to reply or if the discussion has been resolved/answered. If you need to get involved, refer back to the replies and forward, action or save as appropriate.
  - iii. Sort by sender. Immediately Trash/delete anything not relevant to your job (usually insurance, online courses, holidays and commercial offers). With the remaining emails try the following...

### 3. Sort out all the messages that come into your inbox FAST

**Forward it** – if you have a request that someone else should, or could action, forward the email to that person with any instructions or deadlines that might be needed – if it's urgent/important, make sure you ask for notification once read and put a follow up flag in your calendar to follow up (for example a week later).

**Action it** – if someone is asking you to do something (and it's part of your job/ only you can do it) prioritise it into your workload. Does it need to be done today (morning or afternoon), tomorrow, this week, next week or by a deadline? Then set the wheels in motion to answer that request.

**Save it** – if something needs no further action or is a standard circular, confirmation or an acknowledgement, save it into a folder and get it out of your inbox.

**Trash it** – Many of us get emails we are sure we didn't sign up for. All emails should have an unsubscribe button. Click on this and then delete the email.

# RESPECTING OTHERS/ COMMUNICATION

## class discussion



Plato was an expert in debate, it was central to his character. Still today, school and the working world present students with different ways in which they are asked to share their opinion. Employee engagement is seen as important in many places from supermarkets and fast-food retailers to .com businesses and health-care providers.

**Aim:** To help students understand the process involved in a successful debate/discussion

**Materials:** paper & pen/whiteboard.

Select one of the following topics (that doesn't have a single 'correct' answer) for students to debate

Which makes a better pet – a cat or a dog?

Which season of the year is the best?

What is better – health or wealth?

Which helps society more a doctor or a teacher?

(From the poster) Who is the most important of these 4 people?

Ask students to think of supporting reasons for their view. Students should work in groups to prepare their reasons for their choice. If possible set this as a homework task so that students have time to research their arguments on the Internet.

They should also think about what questions a moderator (who should not take either side) might ask.

**Explain how a debate is conducted:**

1. The moderator will pose the questions
2. Only one person should be speaking at a time – but that doesn't mean the other speaker cannot interrupt (see below)
3. If the discussion stalls and no one is speaking, the moderator should ask a question related to the subject, to get the groups talking again.
4. Set a time limit for any one speaker (60-90 seconds works well for lower-level students).
5. Encourage polite interruptions – 'I'm sorry to interrupt, but I want to say/add' 'Before you carry on, can I ...'  
'Excuse me, but....'

**What are the key life skills students will cover in this session?**

- Active listening - When responding to a point made by Speaker A, students should show that they have been listening by summarising Speaker A's point before presenting reasons why they have a different point of view. Their own facts should give a weakness/alternative to Speaker A's point-of-view.

- Speakers should use powerful words to communicate their point of view, 'Research shows...' is much stronger than 'I think...'; and numerical data or opinion poll results are a convincing support to arguments.

- Use facts rather than emotions (dogs may be cute but that's a subjective view)

- As moderator, include everyone in the discussion – so if Speaker A answered the first question, ask the second one to Speaker B. If there are more than two Speakers, make sure to invite all the speakers to comment so that everyone has a chance to contribute

- As the discussion nears its end, the moderator should allow each side/speaker to sum up the major points in support of their view. This should be no more than 2 or 3 sentences and should not be interrupted by the other speaker(s).

- Agree to disagree – once all the speakers have summed up, the moderator should thank all participants without expressing their opinion.

Have students change roles so that they take both sides of an argument and play the moderator's role. Which was the most difficult? Why?



# COMMUNICATION

## Much more than the words we speak



Shakespeare may not have had a computer or tablet, but he communicated so much through a variety of plays, sonnets and speeches. He needed to think not just about the words, but about how those words were delivered. In Shakespeare's time only men were actors; body language, tone of voice and 'presence' were as important then as they are today.

**Aim:** to equip students with interview skills

**Materials:** copy of the body language table per pair/group

In EFL classes students and teachers are very keen that good communication skills are developed and we work hard at pronunciation, stress, sentence construction etc. but some surveys suggest only 7% of what we communicate is through actual words. With online conferencing our body language is even more important than it may have been in the past, and for day-to-day life it's essential we know how to make the most of our communicative skills.

Body Language: Ask your students to try and put as many ideas into the table for each section as they can.

Now ask students to rework the ideas in each section into what they think is more positive body language. For example: keep your arms open/by your side; nod your head/acknowledge what the speaker is saying; lean in to the speaker; copy the posture of the speaker to show empathy (sometimes called postural echo); extend your hand and give a firm handshake and look the person in the eye/maintain good eye contact (if culturally acceptable), etc.

Ideally, have students practise a short interview dialogue (from your coursebook) or a dialogue from a well-known book or play. A great place for ideas is [www.macmillanreaders.com](http://www.macmillanreaders.com)

Have the students read the text while mirroring one type of body language from above. Could the other students recognise the body language?

Someone comes across as aggressive if they...

Possible answers could include:

- Stand with hands on hips
- Stand with feet apart (as if about to punch)
- Stand too close - Invading personal space
- Point fingers and gesture
- Fold their arms over their chest
- Avoid shaking hands
- Stare (in a fixed manner)

Someone comes across as defensive if they...

Possible answers could include:

- Hunch their shoulders
- Make no or limited eye contact
- Show limited acknowledgement/agreement
- Lean away
- Hold their head to one side

Someone comes across as nervous if they...

Possible answers could include:

- Avoid eye contact
- Bite their nails/chewing their lip
- Move restlessly from one foot to another
- Blush and/or sweat
- Don't shake hands or give a quick limp handshake
- smile/laugh (inappropriately)

Someone comes across as bored if they...

Possible answers could include:

- Look around the room rather than at the speaker
- Look at their watch repeatedly
- Yawn/rub their face
- Shuffle in their seat/stretch their back or shoulders (if standing)
- Let their eyes 'glaze over'

Once the interview is progressing, your students may well have to make a PowerPoint presentation. If you have made a good impression, come across well and have your audience's attention, how do you communicate the key points so they will remember them?

Three main techniques for students to use, that many great communicators have adopted, are:

**1.** Pause just before you deliver a key point. For example, "In conclusion, the skills that make me right for this job are....(pause)... then list the points.

**2.** Repeat the key phrase. For example, "The team I led last year were the most productive they had been in four years... most productive in four years"

**3.** Strengthen your voice to stress a point. Practice this technique with your students as it can often become more of a shout or a high pitched squeak, but when done well, especially in a presentation, it can be very powerful. For example, "I found that job challenging **but overcame the administrative hurdles** by...."



# KNOW YOURSELF

## understanding how your reactions influence others



Rabindranath Tagore wrote about and experienced many emotions but as a poet tried to see how his actions influenced others with the aim of making the world a better place. Do we understand how what we think, feel and do can influence others?

**Aim:** To teach students that understanding how we react when things go well, go wrong, or go differently to how we had planned can help us to react and manage situations better.

**Materials:** a copy of the table for each student; scenarios written/projected on the board

Ask students to complete the following table about different emotions:

When I'm	I think ...	I feel ...	I do ...	Others see me
angry				
happy				
under pressure/stress				
tired				
alone				
in a crowd				
wrong				
[other]				

Do they think, feel or do the same things for different emotions?

Next ask the students to answer the following questions in the column for each emotion:

(When I'm angry... ) others see me ....

Ask students to think about how their reactions will make others think and feel.

Could this influence what other people do?

Can this be positive or negative?

Explain that sometimes what we do seems to conflict with how we feel, for example,

- people cry when they are happy;
- people smile or laugh when they are nervous or in a stressful situation;
- some people talk to themselves (or even shout or swear);
- some people feel they have to make themselves the centre of attention.

Put the students into groups and ask them to create three scenarios for a particular situation (see box):

**Scenario 1** – based on some of their own reactions to the situation

**Scenario 2** – based on the WORST possible reactions to the situation

**Scenario 3** – the BEST possible reactions to the situation (which creates a positive outcome)

Possible situations:

1. You arrive very late at night at a very expensive hotel to find they have lost your booking and all the rooms are full.
  2. You lent a valuable, favourite possession to an exhibition and it has been stolen.
  3. Your boss said he needed the 80-page report at the end of next week, but he's now asked for it by the end of today.
  4. It's the biggest holiday/festival of the year and you can't get home to be with your family, but all your friends have left.
  5. You have just passed a really difficult exam and got an A, but your friend got a D.
- Can we 'master our feelings'?

# Monthly Life Skills review for: \_\_\_\_\_

**The 3 words that best describe my month:**

**The key things I achieved:**

**My teaching highlight/s of the month:**

**Positive feedback and nice things students said:**

**New things I tried or discovered:**

**The life skills I used most and how:**

**Next month I want to focus on:**

**How I am progressing with my goal/s:**

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# Life skills in the classroom

## Clean and tidy

### Ask students to talk about:

How do we keep our classroom clean and tidy?  
What do we do as a class?  
What do you do as a group/table?  
What can you do by yourself?

### I can...

wipe the desk after craft activities pick up paper  
under the desk put my books in my bag keep my  
pens and pencils in a pencil case

## Sort and store

### We can...

put toys away sort pencils/pens into pots tidy  
paper into folders/trays stack books by size  
collect homework books

"Do you have...?"

"Is this your...?"

"Have you finished  
with...?"

"Can I take this?"

"Do you need  
this again?"

## What to wear

### Ask students to talk about:

What different clothes do you wear?  
In summer

\_\_\_\_\_

In winter

\_\_\_\_\_

When it's rainy/snowy/hot

\_\_\_\_\_

When playing (a sport)

\_\_\_\_\_

Ask pupils to add any items to the list  
they think should be included and why.



## Learning skills for Primary pupils

Curiosity and imagination Devotion and passion  
Enthusiasm and persistence Appreciation and  
acceptance Failure and tolerance  
Sharing and self-control



## Clothing

I can ...  
fasten a zip  
button up a coat/shirt  
put on a T-shirt  
match socks  
fold clean clothes



# Life skills in the classroom



## Numbers and money

Ask students to talk about:

- Why do we need money?
- What happens if you don't have enough money?
- Can you have too much money?



I can...

- count to 10, 20, 50, 100
- put prices in order up to the most expensive
- help find things on a shopping list
- weigh out ingredients
- put things into sets (toys, cards)

kind, caring, thoughtful, helping

I can ...ask someone to join our group/table

share a smile/my sweets

help someone with their reading/spelling/painting

work without talking to other groups



"I'm sorry that's too expensive"

"How much is this?"

"Would you like to share...?"

"Come and join us"

"I have ... sweets"

"Do you have a partner?"

"I like your (picture/model)"

"This is bigger than that"

## Caring and sharing

Ask students to talk about:

- How do we treat our friends?
- How do we make new friends?
- What happens when we are not friendly?
- How do we feel when people are not friends to us?

Ask the class if they have a pet or to imagine a pet they would like.

- How would you care for it?
- How would you show it you loved it?
- How would you keep it healthy and safe?





# TEACHER TIME



**How do teachers spend their time in school?**

Teachers have an average of 210 working days every year

Teachers manage more than **40 children** for **36000 minutes** every year

Teachers get only 4830 minutes a year for lunch, tea and personal time! that's only

**23 minutes**  
a day

Teachers spend **9450 minutes** every year planning, preparing and collaborating for the perfect lesson plan

Teachers spend an average of **1050 hours** on academic instruction in class every year

Teachers spend an average of **15120 minutes** on grading, documenting and analysing **student work** every year

