



Application Workbook

Success Skills

for High School, College, and Career

Deepen and Personalize Your Success Skills Development

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Success Skills for High School, College, and Career

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Version 1.5 November 2020

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Introduction to the Application Workbook

Thank you for using this application workbook. The following pages contain several questions, exercises, tips, and checklists to help you deepen and personalize your success skills development. Note that this is an *application* workbook. You must apply what you learn in the book and in this workbook to truly develop your success skills.

Reading and applying the information in the book and workbook empowers you to:

- Construct realistic expectations for achieving success.
- Develop self-awareness.
- Build a future-oriented attitude.
- Improve your academic success skills, leadership skills, and soft skills.

The skills you will develop are practical, impactful, and immediately applicable. Specifically, you will be able to:

- Develop key academic success skills for high school and college.
- Develop leadership skills.
- Make a smooth transition to college.
- Achieve educational and career goals aligned with your strengths and values.
- Build skills that employers seek: communication, collaboration, goal setting, time management, critical thinking, problem-solving, professionalism, and accountability.
- Document and articulate skills on applications for scholarships, awards, college, and jobs.

This workbook is designed to be used in conjunction with the *Success Skills for High School, College, and Career* book. Please have that book available as you work through the activities contained herein. You can purchase a copy at the [Skills 4 Students, LLC, Online Bookstore](#).

Further, be sure to develop your own responses rather than merely paraphrasing what is written in the book. Discuss the activities with your parents, teachers, and mentor (PTM). Please contact me if you have questions (cary@skills4students.com).

I plan to regularly update and expand this workbook. Send me an email if you want to be notified when I do so.

Finally, be sure to check out the free resources available at [Skills4Students.com](#). You will find articles and videos. You also will find a free financial aid calculator, college search tool, and a scholarship database. These powerful tools are provided at no cost to you by my friends at [My College Corner](#).

Suggested Step-by-Step Lesson Schedule

Lesson #	Chapter	Section
1	Introduction to the Application Workbook, Introduction	Success Skills Defined, The Importance of Success Skills, Developing Success Skills, Getting the Most Out of The Book
Part I Readiness		
2	Chapter 1: Know Yourself	Use Your Strengths, Manage Your Weaknesses, Work Hard and Work Smart
3	Chapter 1: Know Yourself	Challenge Yourself, Reflect on Your Experiences, Recognize Your Stressors and Motivators
4	Chapter 2: The Importance of a Positive Attitude	Maintain a Positive Attitude, The Benefits of a Positive Attitude, The Limiting Effects of a Bad Attitude, Your Inner Circle
5	Chapter 3: Balance Your Life and Keep Learning	A Balancing Act, Live and Learn
6	Chapter 4: Maintain the Proper Context	Keep Your Eyes on the Prize, Down but Not Out
Part II Relationships		
7	Chapter 5: Communicate Effectively	Professional Communication, Focus on Your Audience, Communicate Your Expectations
8	Chapter 5: Communicate Effectively	Managing Difficult Conversations and Conflict
9	Chapter 6: Be Professional	Professional Communication Revisited, Never Sacrifice Your Integrity, Commitment is Essential
10	Chapter 6: Be Professional	Dress for Success, Work Effectively with Others
11	Chapter 7: Develop Synergy	Synergistic Teams, Diversity Revisited
12	Chapter 7: Develop Synergy, Chapter 8: Embrace Mentoring	Keep Responsibility Where It Belongs, Selecting a Mentor, Maximize Your Mentoring Opportunity
Part III Results		
13	Chapter 9: Know Where You Are Going	The Target, Make Success Personal
14	Chapter 9: Know Where You Are Going	Setting and Achieving Goals, Parable of the Garage Sale
15	Chapter 10: Prioritize	Determine Your Priorities, Focus on Your Priorities, Planning and Completing Projects
16	Chapter 11: Think Critically and Solve Problems	Critical Thinking, Define the Problem
17	Chapter 11: Think Critically and Solve Problems	A Six-Step Approach to Problem Solving, Parable of the Pole Position

Lesson #	Chapter	Section
18	Chapter 12: Be Accountable	Accountability Counts, Quality Matters
19	Chapter 12: Be Accountable	Handling Mistakes
Part IV Academic Success Skills		
20	Chapter 13: Academic Success Best Practices	Note-Taking, Reading For Understanding, Preparing For and Taking Tests
	Chapter 13: Academic Success Best Practices	Conquering Procrastination, Stay on Track
21	Chapter 14: Academic Success Resources	People, Places, Things
22	Summary and Implementation	Learning Outcomes Revisited, A Final Word of Encouragement

Introduction

“A well-developed skill set allows you to perform at the level of your ability.”

1. Reflect on the statement above. Describe its meaning to you.

Success Skills Defined

1. Define leadership in your own words.
2. Describe “soft skills.” How do these skills differ from hard skills?
3. Define academic success skills in your own words.
4. What is meant by the phrase “performing at the level of your academic ability?”

The Importance of Success Skills

1. Why do you think employers value leadership and soft skills?
2. Estimate the educational expenses of a year of college for your preferred college.
3. Estimate the starting salary for your preferred career.
4. How can success skills help a college student earn money and save money?

Developing Success Skills

1. Describe the three keys to developing your skills.
2. Successful leaders balance their confidence with humility. Why is this balance important? How can you achieve this balance in your life?

Getting the Most Out of This Book

1. The following tips will help you get the most out of this book:
 - ✓ Skim the whole book before you answer the questions and complete the exercises.
 - ✓ Reflect on opportunities to apply what you learn.
 - ✓ Keep a journal of your thoughts and questions as you read the book and work through the exercises.
 - ✓ Discuss what you learn with your PTM.

Reflect on what you learned in this chapter by completing the following application questions and activities:

- What are the three most significant things you learned from this chapter?
- List one specific action you will take in response to what you learned from this chapter.
- What benefit will you experience by following through on this action?

Part I: Readiness

“I discuss readiness in terms of being prepared to handle whatever comes your way. Successful people are ready to take advantage of opportunities and to handle occasional setbacks.”

1. Discuss the importance of being ready to take advantage of opportunities and to handle occasional trials and setbacks.

Chapter 1: Know Yourself

“Knowing yourself enables you to take advantage of opportunities and to overcome challenges. We each have skills, abilities, and perspectives that allow us to make unique contributions. The better you recognize your strengths and your unique ability to make a difference, the readier you will be to leverage your opportunities.”

1. Read “The I in Team.” Describe its meaning to you.

Use Your Strengths

1. If you are a student, contact your advisor or counselor to identify resources available to help you discover your strengths. University students can find resources at the campus career center.
2. Begin identifying your strengths by asking your PTM for insight, and then answer the following questions:
 - What do you think your strengths are?
 - What do your friends say your strengths are? (Ask three or four friends.)
 - What are you passionate about?
 - What do people ask you to do?

Tip: The following are links to websites with assessments to help you identify your strengths.

- <https://www.crackmycode.com/>
- <https://www.gallupstrengthscenter.com/home/en-us>
- <https://www.themyersbriggs.com/en-US/Products-and-Services/Strong>
- <https://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/take-the-mbti-instrument/>
- <https://cashcrunchcareers.us/>

3. Based on what you have discovered, please list your strengths below:



4. Remember, your strengths will only help you if you use them. Below, list opportunities to leverage your strengths, and then make a commitment to follow through on each opportunity. Ask your PTM to help you identify opportunities.



Manage Your Weaknesses

1. Begin identifying your weaknesses by asking your PTM for insight, and then answer the following questions:

- What do you think your weaknesses are?
- What do your friends say your weaknesses are? (Ask three or four friends.)
- What do you try to avoid doing? (We often avoid areas of weakness.)
- What has caused you to fail at completing a task or performing at a high level?
- What has caused problems in your relationships?

2. Use the information derived from the questions above, and then list your areas for improvement:



3. The following steps will help you manage your weaknesses:

- ✓ Identify your weakness.
- ✓ Believe you can improve.
- ✓ Find resources.
- ✓ Create a plan to manage your weakness.
- ✓ Define the impact of successfully implementing your plan.
- ✓ Implement your plan.
- ✓ Assess your progress.
- ✓ Celebrate your progress.

Ask your PTM for insight as you develop and implement your plan.

Tip: Review in the book my example of overcoming the weakness of perfectionism.

Tip: Remember that a weakness may be an over-expressed strength.

Work Hard and Work Smart

1. “An apparent weakness in ability may be overcome with hard work and/or by learning new skills.” Reflect on that statement and describe its meaning to you.
2. Describe in your own words the importance of working hard and working smart.
3. Are there any areas in your life where you have experienced a setback or where you are not performing at the level of your ability? If so, are you working hard and smart? Share your experience with your PTM and ask for their insight.
4. Have you given up on a goal or dream because it seemed unattainable? If so, are you truly working hard and smart? Discuss the situation with your PTM and ask for their insight.
5. What should you do if you are working hard and working smart but still struggle?

Tip: New and improved skills are needed each time you advance in your education and career.

Challenge Yourself

1. What are the benefits of engaging in challenging opportunities that stretch you?
2. What goals or dreams are you considering but are too fearful or intimidated to pursue? Discuss your answer with your PTM.
3. Have you gone through any opportunities that stretched you beyond your abilities? If so, answer the following questions:
 - What were you most worried about with this activity?
 - How did you expect the activity to improve your skills?
 - What was the most difficult aspect of this activity?
 - What did you learn about yourself as you stepped up to this activity?
 - Describe how this activity helped you grow as a leader.
4. How can you use this information to effectively conquer future challenges in your life?
5. List below three stretching activities you can pursue.

-
-
-

Reflect on Your Experiences

1. What are two key outcomes of your activities?
2. Reflect on your activities by asking:
 - ✓ What worked well?
 - ✓ What did not work well?
 - ✓ What would I do differently if I repeated this activity?
 - ✓ What did I learn that I can apply in the future?
3. Reflect on your recent successes and situations in which you came up short. Identify factors that contribute to your success and those that are holding you back. Talk with your PTM to get their insight and advice.

Recognize Your Stressors and Motivators

1. What are your signs of stress?
2. Be sure to talk to your PTM or school counselor if you feel stressed or anxious.
3. Describe the benefits of assessing your progress based on outcome achieved rather than on time invested.
4. Why are motives important? Discuss your answer with your PTM.
5. Review the motive examples below. Reflect on your recent actions. Are you demonstrating good motives? If not, how can you do so?

Poor Motives	Good Motives
Helping your teacher rearrange the classroom furniture because you think you might get extra credit.	Helping someone simply because they need help and because you are able to help them.
Making sarcastic comments or putting others down to make yourself look better.	Making encouraging, positive, and supportive comments to build up someone.

Reflect on what you learned in this chapter by completing the following application questions and activities:

- What are the three most significant things you learned from this chapter?
- List one specific action you will take in response to what you learned from this chapter.
- What benefit will you experience by following through on this action?

Chapter 2: The Importance of a Positive Attitude

“You can increase your likelihood of succeeding by maintaining a positive attitude and striving to be and do your best. That’s the way successful leaders live their lives.”

1. Reflect on the statement above. Describe its meaning to you.

Maintain a Positive Attitude

1. How can you control your attitude, even when you can’t control your circumstances?
2. Reflect on a situation that worked out well even though you had been anxious or worried about the outcome. What did you learn through the experience?
3. Why is it generally better to address an issue sooner rather than later? (Of course, you must be prepared to address the issue before you do so.)

Tip: Optimize everything within your control. Don’t stress over factors beyond your control.

The Benefits of a Positive Attitude

1. Describe the benefits of a positive attitude for leaders.
2. How does attitude influence our decisions and actions?
3. Think of a person you admire and with whom you most like to spend time. List his or her characteristics below. Do the same for the person with whom you least like to spend time.
4. List the characteristics of the person with whom you most like to spend time:
 -
 -
 -
 -
5. List the characteristics of the person with whom you least like to spend time:
 -
 -
 -
 -
6. What did you learn from this exercise? How many of the characteristics are related to attitude?
7. List three specific ways in which you will maintain a positive attitude this week:
 -
 -
 -

The Limiting Effects of a Bad Attitude

1. Describe in your own words how a bad attitude can limit your growth as a leader.

2. Below, list five characteristics of a bad attitude that you may exhibit. Make a commitment to work through your list until none remain. Ask a few close friends and your PTM for input; they may see attitude characteristics that you don't.

-
-
-
-
-

3. Develop a plan to eliminate any characteristics of a bad attitude that you exhibit. Get input from your PTM.

Your Inner Circle

1. How can your inner circle of friends influence your attitude and actions?
2. Reflect on the list of characteristics below. Surround yourself with people who have the following:
 - ✓ A positive outlook
 - ✓ Goals and ambitions
 - ✓ A strong work ethic
 - ✓ An encouraging attitude
 - ✓ The ability to inspire you to achieve
 - ✓ The self-confidence to celebrate your successes

Reflect on what you learned in this chapter by completing the following application questions and activities:

- What are the three most significant things you learned from this chapter?
- List one specific action you will take in response to what you learned from this chapter.
- What benefit will you experience by following through on this action?

Chapter 3: Balance Your Life and Keep Learning

“Generally, you are more successful and happier when your life is in balance. Conversely, if your life is not balanced, productivity and happiness can be difficult to sustain.”

A Balancing Act

1. Describe in your own words a balanced life.
2. Table 1 shows an example exercise that can provide insight into your life balance. I have listed in Table 1 several potential areas of importance in your life, and you can tailor the list to suit your needs.

First, rank the importance of each area listed as Very Important, Average Importance, or Not Important. At this point in your life, everything may seem important. You don't have unlimited time, however, so you must decide what is most important and invest your time accordingly.

Second, estimate the time you currently spend in each area as Too Much, About Right, or Not Enough. Then, for the next three or four weeks, track the time you spend in each area. Of course, the amount of time spent in each area does not tell the whole story; be sure to evaluate the impact you are having in each area, as well as the time you invest.

Finally, assess your results and reflect on the following questions:

- ✓ Did your original estimate of “Importance” and “Time Spent” in each area match how you spent your time?
- ✓ If not, what changes are needed?
- ✓ Are you truly investing your time in each of the important areas in your life?
- ✓ Do you have more peace and contentment as you balance your life?
- ✓ What is the most important thing you learned from this exercise?

Let's look at a couple of examples in Table 1. Consider a person who listed “Exercise” as “Average Importance” and has a goal to exercise an hour a day. The time log shown in Table 1 revealed that the person exercised five hours per week, falling short of the seven-hour weekly exercise goal. The action plan is to increase the exercise frequency to one hour per day.

Consider someone who listed “Family” as “Very Important” but discovered they need to dedicate more time for their family. The action plan, of course, is to spend more time with family. As you complete this exercise, be sure to put specific activities in your plan. In this example, the specific activity is taking your little sister to a movie.

Table 1. Life-balance action plan example.

Area	Importance	Estimated time spent	Actual time spent	Assessment	Action plan
Exercise	Average	Not enough	5 hr./wk.	Need more exercise	1 hr./day
Family	Very	About right	3 hr./wk.	Need more family time	Take sister to movie
Friends					
Goals					
Hobbies					
School					
Social media/gaming					
Sports					
Time alone					
Volunteering					
Work					
Other					

- Use Table 2 and the information you gained in this exercise to develop and implement a life-balance action plan.

Table 2. Life-balance action plan worksheet.

Area	Importance	Estimated time spent	Actual time spent	Assessment	Action plan
Exercise					
Family					
Friends					
Goals					
Hobbies					
School					
Social media/gaming					
Sports					
Time alone					
Volunteering					
Work					
Other					

Live and Learn

1. “When I graduated from college with my bachelor’s degree, I felt I knew less than when I started college.” Reflect on that statement. Describe its meaning to you.
2. How does the “ten-two run” illustration apply to your growth as a young leader?
3. Define in your own words lifelong learning.
4. Identify a student club or service organization in which you can engage to enhance your skills.

Reflect on what you learned in this chapter by completing the following application questions and activities:

- What are the three most significant things you learned from this chapter?
- List one specific action you will take in response to what you learned from this chapter.
- What benefit will you experience by following through on this action?

Down but Not Out

1. Describe how maintaining the proper context is important for handling life's inevitable trials and tribulations.
2. Ask your PTM to describe how they overcame a setback. Ask what happened. Ask if they thought they would ever get over it. Ask what they learned, and then learn from their experiences.

Tip: Remember how I went from a D to a PhD. Don't focus on what knocked you down; focus on what you can achieve.

Reflect on what you learned in this chapter by completing the following application questions and activities:

- What are the three most significant things you learned from this chapter?
- List one specific action you will take in response to what you learned from this chapter.
- What benefit will you experience by following through on this action?

Part II: Relationships

“To succeed, you must be competent, and you also must work effectively with others.”

1. “Successful people excel in the competence of their chosen field and also create and maintain relationships.” How can you apply that statement to your life?

Chapter 5: Communicate Effectively

“Effective communication skills are important for your relationships, and for your success in the classroom and on the job.”

1. Make a list of the written and oral communication courses available at your school. Look for AP courses and those available through your local community college.
2. Talk with your advisor about enrolling in these courses.

Professional Communication

1. Explain in your own words the importance of clarity in communication. Reflect on the examples below. Make a commitment to communicate clearly.

Vague	Clear
“Hey, man. Ya get that done?”	“Keegan, at the last student council meeting, you agreed to find three local businesses to donate items for our charity auction. [Context.] I am following up to ask if you have gotten the donations. [Intent.]”
“Leo Club car wash this Saturday.”	“The Leo Club, a service and leadership development organization for youth, is having a car wash on August 5 th from 1-5 p.m. at the high school. Donations received will be used to buy school supplies for children in need.”

2. Evaluate your current writing assignments or application documents for clarity of context, content, and intent.
3. What is “direct communication,” and why is communicating directly important for leaders?
4. How can you express your opinions, challenge ideas, and provide constructive criticism without creating conflict? A few examples are below.
 - Rather than telling a person he is not making sense, state that you don’t understand. (The issue is that you don’t understand, not that the person is confusing.)
 - Rather than telling a teammate that her project costs too much and that “we will never be able to pay for it,” ask “How will your project be funded?” (Give her a chance to explain her plan before torpedoing her idea based on your assumptions.)

5. Your professional communication skills are also valuable in other aspects of your life.
 - Rather than telling the waiter that he messed up your order, state that you ordered chicken salad but received a cheeseburger. (The problem is the order, not the waiter.)

Tip: Strive to be accountable and maintain high standards but do so constructively. Think before you speak. Avoid unnecessarily confrontational tones and words.

6. In the book, review the discussion of my job interview. What can you learn from my experience?
7. Discuss the importance of self-control. What problems can be created by a lack of self-control?
8. Reflect on a situation in which you or someone you know lost their self-control. What was the outcome? How could the situation have been better handled?

Focus on Your Audience

1. Describe in your own words “focusing on the audience.” How do you actually do so? Why is focusing on your audience important?
2. Reflect on this statement: “Effective communicators listen actively and strive to understand.”
3. The following tips can improve your active listening skills:

✓ Stay focused	✓ Summarize
✓ Don’t mentally rehearse your response	✓ Ask questions
	✓ Nod occasionally
4. How can active listening help students?
5. Try this listening exercise with a partner. Take turns speaking and listening. One of you speak while the other person remains completely silent. Use durations of 30 seconds, one, two, and three minutes. Then discuss these questions with your partner:
 - What did you learn from this exercise?
 - How did you feel when you were listened to?
 - What nonverbal cues did you observe in yourself and in your partner?
 - What were your greatest challenges in simply listening? Be aware of these challenges and work to minimize them.
6. Review the following list of common nonverbal communication cues.

Positive Nonverbal Cues	Negative Nonverbal Cues
Maintaining eye contact	Frowning
Leaning slightly forward	Looking around
Nodding assuredly	Fidgeting
Smiling appropriately	Slouching
Using appropriate tone of voice	Crossing your arms

7. Watch your nonverbal communication and that of others over the next few days. Record your observations to the following questions:
 - What nonverbal communication cues did you observe?

- What did the nonverbal cues communicate to you?

Tip: Search for “nonverbal communication” videos online to learn more.

8. Make a commitment to communicate gratitude and encouragement.

Tip: Write a note of encouragement or gratitude to a friend or to your PTM today.

Communicate Your Expectations

1. Describe a situation in which unmet expectations caused conflict.

Tip: Bolster accountability and productivity by communicating X, Y, and Z: what needs to be done (X), who will do it (Y), and what is the deadline (Z).

2. Have you ever wanted something and were disappointed that you did not get it? If so, did you ask for it? If you asked for what you wanted, did you receive what you asked for?
3. In the space below, list three things you want but for which you have not asked. Make a commitment to ask for them.



4. How can leaders benefit by asking for what they want?

Managing Difficult Conversations and Conflict

1. Describe a difficult conversation in which you were engaged. What was the underlying source of the conflict?
2. Why is defining the underlying source of conflict vital to resolving conflict?
3. In the context of managing difficult conversations, explain in your own words the following statement: “You are merely complaining if you can’t articulate your preferred solution, and it is doubtful that you will see improvement.”

Tip: The following questions can provide insight into the conflict from the perspective of the other person:

- Why is this issue important to him?
- What does he stand to gain or lose?
- What is his background and understanding?
- Do you know something he doesn’t?
- Does he know something you don’t?
- What is his preferred solution?

4. Describe “finding common ground” as a tool for resolving conflict.

5. Conflict resolution often requires flexibility and a willingness to compromise. How can you demonstrate flexibility and a willingness to compromise while honoring your values and integrity?
6. Bias means that you are favorable towards something or are against it, perhaps for no valid reason. Describe the effect of bias on navigating conflict and difficult conversations.
7. Discuss the importance of accountability in resolving conflict.
8. What is meant by “agreeing to disagree?” Why is this outcome acceptable for some conflicts? Discuss this question with your PTM.

Tip: The following are things you should avoid during a difficult conversation:

- Avoid accusatory “you” statements.
- Don’t make things personal.
- Don’t take things personally.
- Don’t become defensive.
- Don’t immediately dismiss the perspective of the other person.
- Don’t immediately give in.

Tip: Review the communication examples in the “Professional Communication” section of this workbook.

9. Reflect on a difficult conversation or conflict you have had. Based on what you have learned here, what would you have done differently? How can you apply what you now know to future difficult conversations and conflicts?
10. “If you win an argument with a friend but damage or destroy your relationship, you have lost something far more important.” How can you apply that statement to your life?

Reflect on what you learned in this chapter by completing the following application questions and activities:

- What are the three most significant things you learned from this chapter?
- List one specific action you will take in response to what you learned from this chapter.
- What benefit will you experience by following through on this action?

Chapter 6: Be Professional

“The ability to get the job done is critical for success; make no mistake about that. Competence alone, however, is not enough. Other aspects of professionalism are required for success. Professionalism refers to standards of behavior and performance in the workplace.”

1. Describe professionalism in your own words.
2. What are some tangible ways by which you can demonstrate professionalism?
3. Review the following common examples of unprofessionalism. Be sure to avoid these issues.
 - Arriving late to work or class
 - Producing low quality output
 - Wasting time at work (i.e., personal texting, social media, etc.)
 - Gossiping
 - Complaining
 - Having a sloppy appearance
 - Making excuses

Professional Communication Revisited

Tip: Set up a professional email account in the following format: `firstname.lastname@...`

1. Below are example professional signature lines to consider including with your email correspondence.

✓ Bobby Q. Freshman	✓ Jane R. Student
Biology Student at XYZ	Student Council President
University	ABC High School
B.S. May 2023 (Anticipated)	
2. Below is an example of a professional email requesting a reference letter.

Professor Smith:
My name is Bobby Q. Freshman, and I am a student in your Biology 101-002 course.

I am writing to ask you to consider writing a reference letter in support of my application for the XYZ Scholarship. The deadline for receipt of reference letters is February 1, 2021.

Should you agree to write the reference, I will provide a copy of my resume and application materials. Please respond by Dec 5, 2020 to let me know whether you are able to provide a reference letter.

If you have questions or want more information, please contact me at the email address attached to this message.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bobby Q. Freshman
Freshman Biology Student

Tip: Search for scholarship opportunities using the free database on the [Tools for Families](#) page of my website.

3. Reflect on your recent communications with teachers or employers. Have you learned anything in “Professional Communication” that can improve your communication skills? How will you put that knowledge into action?
4. Tips for producing error-free writing
 - ✓ Proofread your own writing
 - ✓ Have someone review your writing
 - ✓ Plan to write more than one draft

Never Sacrifice Your Integrity

1. Describe in your own words the meaning and importance of integrity.
2. How can you maintain your integrity?

Commitment Is Essential

1. Describe in your own words the importance of commitment. How can you demonstrate commitment as a student, team member, and employee?
2. Reflect on the following list of practical examples of commitment. Ensure that you are following through on all your commitments.
 - If you say you will be somewhere at a certain time, be there at that time.
 - If you join an organization, show up and contribute.
 - If you enroll in a class, show up on time and put forth your best effort.
 - If you say you will do something, do it to the best of your ability.
 - If your job requires you to be at work at a certain time, be there and be ready to work on time.
3. I state in the book that “failure to follow through is detrimental to your reputation, even when your intentions are good.” How can good intentions result in unintended negative consequences?
4. How does your level of commitment influence your reputation?

Tips for creating and maintaining an excellent reputation:

- Completely understand your commitments.
 - Do everything you say you will do.
 - Do everything to the best of your ability.
 - Meet deadlines.
5. List your pending commitments and then make a deliberate plan to follow through on them:
 -
 -
 -
 -

Tip: Consider your potential commitments carefully so you don't over-commit and under-perform.

Dress for Success

1. How can your attire influence your professional brand?
2. How do you know what attire is appropriate for an event or workplace? (Hint: Ask!)
3. Using your own wardrobe, what would you wear to a "business professional" event?
4. Using your own wardrobe, what would you wear to a "business casual" event?

Tip: Check with your career center or advisor if you need professional attire for graduation or interviews.

Tip: Organize a clothes drive to collect professional attire for students in need in your community and on your campus.

Work Effectively with Others

Professionalism requires an appreciation for diversity and the ability to consider opinions that are different from your own. Professionals put aside biases and effectively work with others.

Understand that:

- A person who is different from you can have good ideas.
- A person who disagrees with you can have good ideas.
- A person with whom you don't get along can have good ideas.
- A person who constantly complains can have good ideas.

1. How can bias against an individual be detrimental to team productivity?
2. Interpret the following statement: "Professionalism does not require that you agree with everyone or adopt their beliefs, but that you are able to work effectively with people who are different from you." How can you apply this concept?

Reflect on what you learned in this chapter by completing the following application questions and activities:

- What are the three most significant things you learned from this chapter?
- List one specific action you will take in response to what you learned from this chapter.
- What benefit will you experience by following through on this action?

Chapter 7: Develop Synergy

“Synergy is the increased productivity of a team relative to the sum of the productivities of individual team members. Synergy is a key benefit of teamwork.”

1. Describe synergy in your own words.

Synergistic Teams

1. List and describe four characteristics of synergistic teams.
2. Using examples from your own experience working as part of a team or group, how have you stepped up, showed up, and spoke up? Have you missed opportunities to do so in the past? How can you step up in the future?
3. Define “self-motivation” and “team-oriented.”
4. How can you be self-motivated and team-oriented at the same time?
5. Reflect on your best and worst experiences working on a team or collaborating with others:
 - What worked well in your best experience?
 - What problems did you encounter in your worst experience?
 - How were the problems addressed?
6. Write your thoughts on the questions above in your journal. Have you learned anything in the book and workbook that could have minimized or prevented the problems you have encountered?

Diversity Revisited

1. How does diversity contribute to team productivity?

Keep Responsibility Where It Belongs

1. How does keeping responsibility where it belongs relate to teamwork?
2. Distinguish between providing input and micromanaging.
3. Ask your boss for help when you need it, and be prepared to answer the following questions:
 - Why are you stuck? (See Student B example below.)
 - What do you need to move forward?
 - What potential solutions do you recommend?

4. Review the following examples of students asking a teacher for help. Which student is more diligent? Which approach is more effective? Explain.

Student A	Student B
“I don’t know how to do the homework. Please help me.”	“I tried to do the homework, but I got stuck on question three. I went to the help session, reviewed my notes, and read the book, but I am still confused. Please help me.”

Tip: Use Student B’s example as a model when you ask your teacher for help or when you take a problem to your boss.

5. What is delegation?
6. Why is delegation important?
7. How can a leader effectively delegate tasks to others?

Reflect on what you learned in this chapter by completing the following application questions and activities:

- What are the three most significant things you learned from this chapter?
- List one specific action you will take in response to what you learned from this chapter.
- What benefit will you experience by following through on this action?

Chapter 8: Embrace Mentoring

“Mentoring—the process of helping others grow by providing advice and perspective—is a powerful catalyst for developing your success skills. When you help others on their journey, you can make a positive impact on their lives.”

1. Reflect on the following statement, “My mentors taught me things that I didn’t know that I didn’t know.” What does this statement mean to you?
2. How can you learn things that you don’t know that you don’t know?
3. Why is mentoring important for developing your leadership skills?
4. Why won’t a mentor “just give you the answer”?

Selecting a Mentor

1. Describe the three approaches to selecting a mentor. Which one is best for you now?
2. List three potential mentors. Make a commitment to discuss mentoring with each of them.
 -
 -
 -

Maximize Your Mentoring Opportunity

1. Using the information provided in the book, develop a list of 3-5 questions to ask your mentor.
2. Review the list of “characteristics of an ideal mentee.” How can you make the most of your mentoring opportunity?

Reflect on what you learned in this chapter by completing the following application questions and activities:

- What are the three most significant things you learned from this chapter?
- List one specific action you will take in response to what you learned from this chapter.
- What benefit will you experience by following through on this action?

Part III: Results

“Success requires a focus on results, and producing results is different from being busy. Understanding the difference between doing something and doing something important is vital to your success.”

1. Distinguish between doing something and doing something important.
2. Distinguish between spending time on things that are not important and investing time in your priorities.
3. Distinguish between busyness and productivity.

Chapter 9: Know Where You Are Going

“Many people drift through life without any real direction or plan. These people may find success, but then again, they may not. You increase your likelihood of achieving success by figuring out what you want in life and then deliberately moving toward it.”

1. Reflect on the statement above. What does the statement mean to you as an aspiring leader? How can you apply this concept to your life?

The Target

2. Review “The Target” story. What is the key point of the story? How can you apply what you learned by reading this story?
3. What targets should a leader pursue?
4. Make a list of the “right targets” for your life. Why are these targets important to you?
 -
 -
 -
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Make Success Personal

1. Define in your own words values, goals, and priorities.
2. Reflect on the life balance exercise in Chapter 3 and on how you described “living a successful life” in the same chapter. Expand those exercises to help you further identify your values by prayerfully answering the following questions:
 - What are you truly passionate about?
 - What makes you happy?
 - What gives you fulfillment?
 - How would you like to be described by family and friends?
3. If you are a student, contact your advisor or counselor to identify resources available to help you identify your values. Ask your PTM to help you identify your values.

4. As an example, I have a list of my values below. Of course, your values will be uniquely yours.
- My faith
 - My wife and daughter
 - Leadership
 - Excellence
 - Adding value to others
 - Health and fitness
 - Professional development
 - Production capacity
5. Based on what you have determined so far, list your values.
- -
 -
 -
 -

Setting and Achieving Goals

1. Why do you think you should strive to align your goals with your values?
2. Using Table 4, develop specific goals for your values. For example, I value leadership, adding value to others, and professional development. For these values, I have the following goal: write a success-skills book for young leaders.

Table 4. Values and goals alignment worksheet.

Values	Goals
Leadership, adding value to others, professional development.	Write a success-skills book for young leaders.

3. How do your values influence your goals?
4. What might long-term (years), medium-term (months), and short-term (days and weeks) goals look like for a college student?
 - A long-term goal could be earning your college degree in four years.
 - Medium-term goals include earning a 3.0 GPA this semester and completing your research paper this month.

- Short-term goals include finishing your biology lab experiment and lab report this week or meeting with your chemistry tutor on Thursday.
5. Following are some steps to help you achieve your goals:
 - ✓ Align your goals with your values.
 - ✓ Define the outcomes of your goals.
 - ✓ Define the benefits of your goals.
 - ✓ Identify the major steps required to achieve your goals.
 - ✓ Stay focused on priorities.
 - ✓ Review progress regularly.
 - ✓ Maintain accountability.
 - ✓ Reflect and assess.
 6. Answer the following questions as you define the benefits:
 - When I achieve this goal, I will benefit by ...
 - Achieving this goal will allow me to ...
 - Achieving this goal is important to me because ...
 7. Periodically assess your progress, and ask yourself the following questions:
 - Am I on track with my plan?
 - What are my next steps?
 - Are there specific next steps that are behind schedule?
 - Is this goal still a priority?
 - Am I letting other things get in the way of this goal?
 8. As you reflect, ask yourself the following questions and write your answers in your journal:
 - What worked well?
 - What didn't work well?
 - What have you learned that you can apply to your efforts to reach other goals?

Parable of the Garage Sale

1. Read the "Parable of the Garage Sale." What is the key point of this story? Can you share a personal example related to this story? Ask your PTM to share an example. How can you apply what you learned?
2. How might a young student press on toward their academic and career goals? Practical examples of future-oriented activities for college-bound high school students include the following:
 - Researching potential universities to attend.
 - Visiting the online career centers at several universities and going through their assessments to identify potential careers.
 - Reviewing degrees offered at several universities and identifying potential areas to major in.
 - Identifying universities you want to visit and determining how to schedule a campus tour.

Practical examples of priority activities for college students include:

- Searching for summer internships or study-abroad opportunities.
 - Reviewing online job descriptions to learn about education and experience requirements, as well as the duties and responsibilities for careers you are interested in.
 - Reviewing the website of the career center at your school. Be sure you are utilizing the resources available to you.
3. Investing time in these future-oriented activities is much more productive than wasting hours on social media. Put this powerful concept into action by listing (and completing) three future-oriented activities in which you can engage:
- -
 -

Reflect on what you learned in this chapter by completing the following application questions and activities:

- What are the three most significant things you learned from this chapter?
- List one specific action you will take in response to what you learned from this chapter.
- What benefit will you experience by following through on this action?

Chapter 10: Prioritize

“We may think we are making progress simply because we are busy, but this thinking is incorrect. Successful people understand that busyness does not necessarily lead to productivity.”

1. Describe in your own words the meaning of “Not all ‘important’ activities are equal, and ‘good’ activities can get in the way of your true priorities.” Reflect on your activities. Are you letting good activities interfere with your true priorities?
2. Assess your skills in prioritization (and time management) by answering the following questions:
 - ✓ Are you busy but not productive?
 - ✓ Do you often think you could have done better on a task if you had more time?
 - ✓ Do you consistently miss deadlines?
 - ✓ Do you consistently ask for extra time to get your work done?
 - ✓ Do you have to pull all-nighters or rush at the last minute to get your work done?If you answered “yes” to these questions, your time-management skills can likely be improved.

Tip: Be sure to include time management and prioritization in the action plan you will develop at the end of this workbook.

Determine Your Priorities

1. Review your current priorities by considering the following questions:
 - ✓ Does this activity align with my values and goals?
 - ✓ Is this activity part of my responsibilities?
 - ✓ Does the activity have a long-term impact?
2. What does focusing on your priorities mean to you?
3. Distinguish between urgent and important.
4. Consider this question: If you have urgent activities and important activities competing for your time, which would you work on first?
5. Reflect on your current activities. Are you working on important priorities, or are you chasing urgent activities?

Focus on Your Priorities

1. Have you ever thought, “I don’t have enough time to get everything done”? If so, how can focusing on your priorities increase your productivity? Discuss your response with your PTM and ask for their insight.
2. Distinguish between “doing things right” and “doing the right things.”
3. As discussed in “Commitment Is Essential” in Chapter 6, you are wise critically evaluate potential commitments before volunteering or agreeing to take on additional responsibilities. Use the following questions to evaluate the responsibility:
 - ✓ Is this activity a priority for me?
 - ✓ Does this activity align with my values and goals?
 - ✓ Is this activity part of my responsibilities?

- ✓ Does the activity have a long-term impact?

Planning and Completing Projects

1. Review “Setting and Achieving Goals” in the previous chapter.
2. The following is a list of steps to help set a goal or plan a project:
 - ✓ Outline the steps needed to complete the project.
 - ✓ Estimate the time required to complete each step.
 - ✓ Determine the deadline for each step.
 - ✓ Schedule in your calendar time to complete each step.
 - ✓ Stay focused on your priorities.
 - ✓ Assess your progress and stay on track.

Tip: Be sure to adjust all deadlines so you can finish your project by its deadline. You can build in a cushion of a day or two, just in case you need some extra time.

3. Review the planning example and discussion in the book and in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Project-planning template example.

Step #	Description	Duration	Deadline	Schedule time to complete each step.		
					Date and Time	
1	Select topic	1	4/15	Apr 15, 1-2 p.m.		
2	Make an outline	2	4/16	Apr 15, 2-3 p.m.	Apr 16, 9-10 a.m.	
3	Conduct research	6	4/25	Apr 17, 3-5 p.m.	Apr 19, 1-3 p.m.	Apr 24, 8-10 a.m.
4	Revise outline	1	4/26	Apr 26, 2-3 p.m.		
5	Write first draft	3	4/27	Apr 26, 3-5 p.m.	Apr 27, 10-11 a.m.	
6	Review draft	1	4/29	Apr 29, 4-5 p.m.		
7	Conduct additional research	2	4/30	Apr 30, 8-10 a.m.		
8	Write second draft	2	5/2	May 1, 1-2 p.m.	May 2, 3-4 p.m.	
9	Have someone review second draft	NA	5/2	NA		
10	Write final draft	2	5/12	May 11, 1-2 p.m.	May 12, 8-9 a.m.	
11	Final edits and final polishing	1	5/13	May 13, 9-10 a.m.		
12	Submit	NA	5/14	NA		

Use the steps described above and Table 6 to plan your goals and projects.

Table 6. Project-planning template worksheet.

				Schedule time to complete each step.		
Step #	Description	Duration	Deadline		Date and Time	
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						

Tip: At the beginning of each semester, add to your calendar your class schedule, work schedule, student organization meetings, and other known time commitments for the entire semester. Set aside time each week of the semester to complete your schoolwork. You might schedule six or eight 2-hour blocks each week. Doing so will ensure you always have time available each week to complete your schoolwork.

Reflect on what you learned in this chapter by completing the following application questions and activities:

- What are the three most significant things you learned from this chapter?
- List one specific action you will take in response to what you learned from this chapter.
- What benefit will you experience by following through on this action?

Chapter 11: Think Critically and Solve Problems

“Critical thinking is the process of using evidence and logic to evaluate information, construct reasoned opinions, make informed decisions, and solve problems.”

1. Describe in your own words “critical thinking.”
2. Distinguish between being critical and thinking critically. Discuss your answer with your PTM.
3. Why is it important to think for yourself rather than simply accepting whatever everyone thinks?

Critical Thinking

1. Distinguish between memorizing facts and thinking critically.
2. Put your critical-thinking skills to use in the following exercise. Watch a debate between two people who have different opinions of an issue. You can find these discussions on news programs, online, or on your campus. Apply your critical-thinking skills to evaluate the discussion and answer the following questions:
 - ✓ Can you distinguish facts from opinions? Explain.
 - ✓ What evidence was presented?
 - ✓ Describe any biases you observed.
 - ✓ Which speaker was more convincing? Justify your opinion.
 - ✓ Did your view on the subject change after listening to the discussion? Explain.
 - ✓ What did you learn about developing and presenting an opinion?
3. Repeat the exercise and invite a couple of friends to participate. Discuss the questions above. Did everyone reach the same conclusion? Why or why not? How will you apply what you learned?
4. Review the “Salesman” example in the book. The salesman’s evidence seemed to support his conclusion, but, in reality, the evidence was flawed. I don’t think the salesman was trying to trick anyone, but his conclusion was not supported as he claimed. What did you learn about critical thinking from this example? How will you apply this knowledge to critically evaluate evidence in the future?

Define the Problem

1. Why is defining a problem so important to finding a solution?
2. How do you define a problem?

Tip: Remember the importance of defining a problem before trying to solve it.

A Six-Step Approach to Problem-Solving

1. Problem-solving skills can be developed, and as you gain experience, you will develop a process that works for you. The following is a simple six-step process that can serve as a framework to enhance your problem-solving skills:

- ✓ Identify the problem.
 - ✓ Determine the underlying cause of the problem.
 - ✓ Determine possible solutions.
 - ✓ Select a solution.
 - ✓ Implement the solution.
 - ✓ Assess the solution.
2. Review the “Poor Attendance” example. What did you learn from this example? How can you apply what you learn?
 3. What was the underlying problem with plant growth in the “Salesman” example? (Hint: Think about the growing environment.)
 4. Did the salesman understand the underlying problem with plant growth?
 5. How did the underlying problem influence the outcome and conclusion of the salesman’s experiment?
 6. What did you learn about critical thinking and problem solving from this example? How can you apply what you learned?
 7. Review the “how much soil is in a hole” question. What did you learn from that question? How will you use this knowledge to solve problems in the future?

Parable of the Pole Position

1. Describe the “Parable of the Pole Position” in your own words. What did you learn from this analogy? How can you apply this knowledge to your life? Discuss this parable with your PTM.
2. Distinguish between the “Parable of the Pole Position” and a sense of entitlement. Which way of thinking more closely reflects your approach to life?

Additional Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Exercises

Put your critical thinking and problem-solving skills to use by completing the following exercises. Then, review the material and answer the additional questions in the “Solutions” section that follows.

Exercise 1. I have two bills that total \$6.00. What are the two bills? (Before you answer the question, please understand that one of the bills is not a one-dollar bill.)

Exercise 2. Three people rented a rototiller online for \$75; each person paid \$25. There was a sale the day the rototiller was picked it up, and the rental fee was reduced to \$70. The salesperson provided a \$5 refund. Each person agreed to take a \$1 refund, and the salesperson kept a \$2 tip.

Let's review the evidence:

- ✓ Each person paid \$24 (\$25 initial payment - \$1 refund).
- ✓ \$24 per person times 3 people = \$72.
- ✓ The salesperson kept a \$2 tip.
- ✓ \$72 paid by the three people + \$2 tip = \$74.

The original rental payment was \$75. After the refund, however, the total amount added up to \$74. Where is the missing dollar?

Solutions for the Additional Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Exercises

Exercise 1. I have two bills that total \$6.00. What are the two bills? (Before you answer the question, please understand that one of the bills is not a one-dollar bill.)

1. What are your assumptions about the bills?
2. Is it possible for me to have a one-dollar bill within the constraints of this exercise (i.e., “one of the bills is not a one-dollar bill”)?
3. What are the two bills?

The solution to this exercise is that I have a \$1 bill and a \$5 bill. One of the bills is not a one-dollar bill, but the other bill is.

4. When you read that one of the bills was not a one-dollar bill, did you assume that a one-dollar bill could not be part of the solution to the problem?
5. Did you think that one of the bills must be a one-dollar bill and then did you dismiss that conclusion because of your assumption that one of the bills is not a one-dollar bill?

Students who successfully solve this problem prioritize their knowledge over their assumptions. In other words, the only possible solution is that I must have a \$1 bill and a \$5 bill. Close examination shows that this solution does not conflict with the constraint that one of the bills is not a one-dollar bill (i.e., the \$ 5 bill is not a \$1 bill).

Students who struggle to solve this problem prioritize the “You said that one of the bills was not a one-dollar bill” assumption over their knowledge, even though they “know” that the solution must be that I have a \$1 bill and a \$5 bill.

In this exercise, the facts of paper money denominations tell us that only \$1 and \$5 bills are available. (A few old \$2 bills may be floating around, but including a \$2 bill doesn’t provide a solution.)

The apparent conflict between our assumptions and the facts in this exercise is resolved by relying on the facts. Of course, we may not always know all the facts.

6. How can you solve a problem when your assumptions and your knowledge of the facts conflict?

Bonus Exercise: I challenge you to think of another valid solution to this exercise.

Now, let's consider the Case of the Missing Dollar.

Exercise 2. Three people rented a rototiller online for \$75; each person paid \$25. There was a sale the day the rototiller was picked it up, and the rental fee was reduced to \$70. The salesperson provided a \$5 refund. Each person agreed to take back \$1, and the salesperson kept a \$2 tip.

Let's review the evidence:

- ✓ Each person paid \$24 (\$25 initial payment - \$1 refund).
- ✓ \$24 per person times 3 people = \$72.
- ✓ The salesperson received a \$2 tip.
- ✓ \$72 paid by the three people + \$2 tip = \$74.

The original rental payment was \$75. After the refund, however, the total amount of money only added up to \$74.

7. Where is the missing dollar?

I purposely presented the evidence as shown above to illustrate the point that critical thinking and problem-solving often require a thorough evaluation of data, assumptions, and evidence to get a clear understanding of a problem and to find the correct solution.

- 8. How did your assumptions influence your ability to solve this problem?
- 9. How can you evaluate your assumptions?

Let's think about this problem differently.

- ✓ The people paid \$70 to rent the tiller.
- ✓ The people receive a \$3 refund (\$1 per person).
- ✓ The salesperson received a \$2 tip.
- ✓ \$70 rental fee + \$3 refund + \$2 tip = \$75.

10. Is a dollar missing?

Evaluating the evidence as shown above indicates that no money is missing.

This example illustrates the importance of critically evaluating evidence rather than simply accepting all evidence as presented. Common sense tells us that the total amount of money should add up to \$75, but the evidence as initially presented didn't support that conclusion (i.e., "something doesn't add up").

If the data, assumptions, and evidence don't appear to support the conclusion:

- ✓ Verify the assumptions. (i.e., One bill is not a \$1 bill versus neither bill is a \$1 bill; is a dollar missing?)
- ✓ Understand the facts by asking questions and researching the information provided. (i.e., what bills are available that add up to \$6?)

Solution to Bonus Exercise

Nearly everyone who attempts the “What bills do I have?” exercise assumes that “bill” refers to an instrument of currency. A bill, of course, may also refer to an amount of money that is owed.

Using the latter definition, a solution to the exercise could be that I have bills showing that I owe \$4.95 to the bike shop for a tire repair, and I owe \$1.05 for a postage-due package.

In other words, I have receipts showing I owe \$6. Any numerical combination of two “bills” that add up to \$6 will satisfy the criteria of this exercise.

And, of course, we need not assume that I owe the money. Consider, for example, that I am going to deliver a \$5.75 bill to my neighbors for mowing their lawn. I also have a \$0.25 bill for tutoring my friend on the importance of understanding assumptions.

So, please understand that our assumptions greatly influence our decisions, actions, and our ability to solve problems. Below are examples of limiting assumptions that students have expressed to me. Have you ever made similar assumptions? The assumptions may not represent facts, but the assumptions can limit your success.

- I am going to flunk my math test, so I am not going to waste time studying.
- This test is going to be easy, so I am not going to waste time studying.
- There is no way I will get the internship, so I am not going to apply.
- I don't have any questions to ask a mentor, so I don't need a mentor.

Before accepting an assumption as fact, be sure to verify that assumption. Otherwise, you may be unintentionally limiting yourself.

11. What did you learn about assumptions from these exercises? How can you apply what you learned?

Reflect on what you learned in this chapter by completing the following application questions and activities:

- What are the three most significant things you learned from this chapter?
- List one specific action you will take in response to what you learned from this chapter.
- What benefit will you experience by following through on this action?

Chapter 12: Be Accountable

“Accountability requires that you take responsibility for your productivity, behavior, attitude, and mistakes. Successful people also are accountable for their effort and strive to be the best they can be.”

1. Describe “accountability” in your own words.

Accountability Counts

1. Review the discussion of the leading scorer. Why is “performing at the level of *your* ability” important?
2. Accountability also dictates that you avoid making excuses. As a student, have you ever used any of the following excuses?
 - “I didn’t like the professor.”
 - “That class was at eight a.m., and I am not a morning person.”
 - “I’m not good at chemistry.”
 - “The teacher is unorganized.”
 - “The teacher goes too fast.”
3. Are you using excuses rather than being accountable for anything in your life now? If so, how will you be more accountable?
4. Listen for excuses over the next few days. Reflect on what you observe.

Quality Matters

1. Describe “putting forth your best effort” in your own words.
2. How do aspiring young leaders benefit from putting forth their best work?

Tip: Successful people put forth your best effort, even when working on things that are not enjoyable.

Handling Mistakes

1. Why must you be accountable for your mistakes?
2. You can’t go back in time and undo a mistake, but there are helpful things you can do going forward. The following steps will help you move beyond your mistakes:
 - ✓ Recognize you made a mistake.
 - ✓ Take responsibility for it.
 - ✓ Apologize for it.
 - ✓ Fix it if you can.
 - ✓ Take the necessary steps to ensure it does not happen again (i.e., learn from it).
 - ✓ Move ahead.
3. How can you benefit from a mistake?

Tip: Always reflect on your mistakes so that you can learn from them.

Reflect on what you learned in this chapter by completing the following application questions and activities:

- What are the three most significant things you learned from this chapter?
- List one specific action you will take in response to what you learned from this chapter.
- What benefit will you experience by following through on this action?

Part IV: Academic Success Skills

“Well-developed academic success skills are essential for students. Conversely, poorly developed academic success skills can limit you.”

1. Define in your own words “academic success.”
2. How do academic success skills contribute to academic success?
3. Review my example of struggling in freshman chemistry and my ultimate triumph in chemistry. What did you learn about the importance of academic success skills from this example? How can you apply this knowledge?

Tip: Remember my “D to PhD” illustration and prioritize the development of your academic success skills.

Chapter 13: Academic Success Best Practices

Successful students are intentional about their education, and they employ best practices that contribute to learning. A simple list of best practices is shown below:

- ✓ Attend class regularly and sit near the front.
- ✓ Ask questions.
- ✓ Avoid distractions.
- ✓ Set goals for your education.
- ✓ Record in your planner test dates and deadlines for your assignments.

Note-Taking

1. Why are note-taking skills important for students?
2. Some students say, “My teacher is so unorganized,” or, “My teacher goes too fast.” Who is responsible for the quality of your notes?

Tip: Different note-taking techniques work for different situations. For example, I prefer using mind-mapping for organizing existing notes and also to plan presentations, papers, and other projects. I prefer using outlining and the Cornell System for capturing notes during classes and meetings.

3. Below are examples of using the outline, mind map, and Cornell method for taking notes from the “Preparing for Test” section of the book. Review each of the methods and practice each technique to determine which one(s) work well for you.

The following are notes taken from the “Preparing for Tests” section by using outlining.

- 1) Introduction
 - a) Ideal
 - i) Test score indicates understanding

- b) Reality
 - i) Test score indicates ability to
 - (1) Prepare for tests
 - (2) Take tests
 - c) Maximize score with effective test-prep and test-taking techniques
 - i) Goal is to learn material
 - (1) Current test
 - ii) Subsequent tests
 - (1) Beyond school
 - (a) Solve problems
 - (b) Positively contribute
- 2) Ongoing Process
 - a) Not a last-minute cram session
 - 3) Review lecture notes daily
 - 4) Review 1 hour each class/week
 - a) Lecture notes
 - b) Reading assignment outlines
 - c) Small group discussions
 - 5) Week before test
 - a) Spend as much time as needed
 - 6) Week of test
 - a) Spend 2-3 hours studying
 - b) Focus on learning not just time
 - 7) Use practice questions
 - a) Write your own
 - i) Answer without using notes
 - b) Use old tests (if allowed)
 - i) Ask teacher to review
 - 8) Comprehensive final exam
 - a) Lots of material
 - i) Greater time
 - ii) Greater effort
 - b) May cover material not covered on previous exams
 - i) Study this material
 - c) May cover material covered on previous exams
 - i) Study this material
 - d) Review
 - i) Course objectives
 - ii) Your old tests
- iii) Practice tests you used

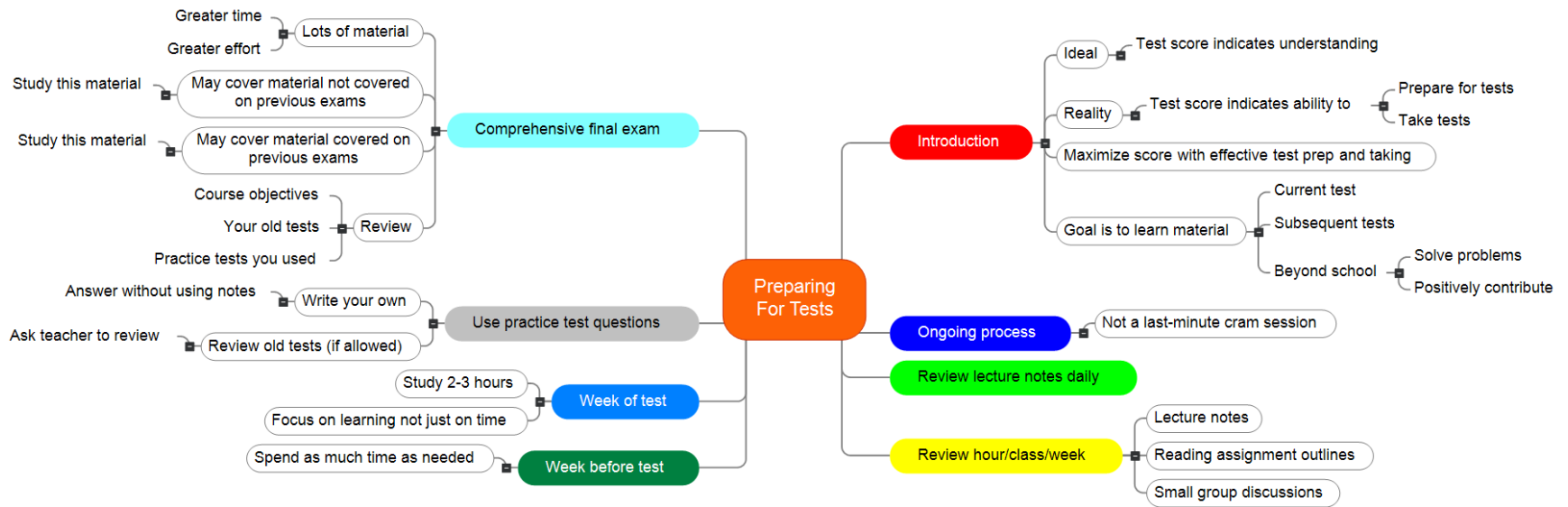


Figure 1. Notes taken from the “Preparing for Tests” section by using mind mapping.

The Cornell method was developed by Dr. Walter Pauk at Cornell University (Pauk, 1962). To use the Cornell method:

- ✓ Divide your note paper into three sections by drawing a vertical line two or three inches from the left edge and by drawing a horizontal line two or three inches from the bottom of the page (figure 2)
- ✓ Capture your notes in the main section.
- ✓ Highlight main points and keywords in the left-hand column.
- ✓ Write questions in the left-hand column as well.
- ✓ Use the bottom section to summarize your notes after each class.
- ✓ Review this summary before the next class to refresh your memory and provide continuity for new material.

Refer to Pauk and Owens (2013) for additional details on the Cornell note-taking method. You can purchase a copy at the [Skills 4 Students, LLC, Online Bookstore](#).

	Test preparation
Learn to prep for and take tests	Tests show how well you prep and take tests. Max score by learning to prep and take tests
Learn mtl, not just for current test	Goals: learn for current test, solve problems, contribute
Review notes daily	Review lecture notes daily Review notes, readings, discussions 1 hour/class/week
On-going process	
Don't cram	Week before, as much time as needed
Focus on learning not time studying	Test week, 2-3 hours, base on learning not clock Use practice question, write own, old tests
Old tests avail??	Take like real test, ask teacher to review
Is final comp??	Comprehensive final, lots more material study all material, not just what was tested earlier Review course objectives, old tests, practice questions
Need to learn how to effectively prepare for and take tests.	
Focus on really learning the material, not just for the test.	
Use lots of practice questions, write my own, use old tests.	
Study all material for final exam. Teacher may re-emphasize or add new.	

Figure 2. Notes taken from the “Preparing for Tests” section by using the Cornell method.

Reading for Understanding

The SQR3 method is useful for improving reading comprehension. This technique was developed by Robinson (1970).

1. Survey
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Conclusion
 - c. Summary
 - d. Headings
 - e. Subheadings
 - f. Tables and Figures
2. Question
 - a. What are the main points?
 - b. What evidence is provided?
 - c. Develop questions around the material in your initial survey.
3. Read
 - a. By section.
 - b. Look for answers to the questions listed above.
4. Recite
 - a. “Talk” through the material as though you were teaching a classmate.
 - b. Answer the questions listed above.
5. Review
 - a. Review your notes and highlighted material.
 - b. Review your questions and answers.
 - c. Develop additional questions as needed.
 - d. Make additional notes as needed.

Tip: Develop your SQR3 skills by using them to study *Success Skills for High School, College, and Career*.

Preparing For and Taking Tests

Refer to the “Note-Taking” section for an overview of test preparation tips. The following tips will help you take tests more effectively.

1. True-False
 - a. Read the entire statement. The entire statement must be true, or the statement is false.
 - b. Watch for absolutes. Terms such as “always,” “never,” and “only” usually (but not always) make the statement false.
 - c. Terms such as “usually,” “generally,” and “often” usually (but not always) make the statement true.
 - d. Rely on your understanding of the test material rather than on trying to guess which guideline applies.

2. Multiple Choice

- a. Read each question carefully and try to answer the question before reading the choices.
- b. Read all answers because a *right* answer might not be the *best* answer.
- c. Watch for “a” versus “an” and singular versus plural agreement between questions and answers.
- d. Rule out obviously incorrect choices.
- e. Continue to narrow down your choices by eliminating less-plausible answers.
- f. Recognize that multiple-choice questions involving calculations often include common miscalculations as potential answers. Don’t be lulled into a false sense of security by the fact that your calculated answer is a choice. Double-check your calculations as time allows.

3. Short Answer

- a. These questions are called “short answer” for a reason. Be thorough, but brief. Address the question, but don’t write excessively.
- b. Manage your time so you can answer all questions. If you get stuck, jot down some notes or clues, move on, and return after finishing other questions.
- c. Be sure your answer directly addresses the question. A correct statement can be, and often is, an incorrect answer if it doesn’t directly address the question.

4. Essay

- a. Read the question before you start writing your answer.
- b. Be sure you completely understand the question.
- c. Manage your time so you can answer all questions. If you get stuck, jot down some notes or clues, move on, and return after finishing other questions.
- d. Be sure your answer directly addresses the question. A correct statement can be, and often is, an incorrect answer if it doesn’t directly address the question.
- e. Use your critical thinking skills to adequately support your conclusions.

Tip: Minimize potential anxiety by envisioning yourself performing well and be sure to utilize the best-practices described in this chapter to prepare for your tests. If anxiety is affecting your productivity, or if you are concerned about the level of your anxiety, visit the academic success center at your school or speak to your advisor.

5. If you flunk a test, or don’t do as well as you would have liked, follow the steps below to maximize your chance of success for subsequent tests:
 - ✓ Review your test with your teacher and ask for advice for doing better in the future.
 - ✓ Ensure that you are utilizing the best practices described in the book and in this workbook.
 - ✓ Meet with an advisor at the academic success center and ask them to help you.

A Few Simple Multiple-Choice Test Questions

Practice your test-taking skills by answering the following multiple-choice questions. The solutions are provided on the following pages.

1. Which number below is the correct value of Pi?
 - A. 3.14519
 - B. 3.14159
 - C. 3.15914
 - D. 3.14591

2. A dog:
 - A. Is an animal
 - B. Lives in trees
 - C. Lives in oceans
 - D. Is an animal and a common pet

3. An _____ is an example of a raptor: (Bird of prey)
 - A. Sparrow
 - B. Crow
 - C. Osprey
 - D. Owls

4. Calculate the area of a circle with a diameter of 10 cm. (Area = Pi times the radius squared. Radius = diameter/2. Pi = 3.14159).
 - A. 314 cm²
 - B. 16 cm²
 - C. 79 cm²
 - D. 31 cm²

Solutions For A Few Simple Multiple-Choice Test Questions

1. Which number below is the correct value of Pi?
 - A. 3.14519
 - B. 3.14159
 - C. 3.15914
 - D. 3.14591

If you don't have Pi memorized to the 5th decimal place, how can you answer this question? You may have noticed that the value of Pi was given in question 4. (The correct choice is B.)

You occasionally may find information relevant to one question buried within the details of other questions on your exam. Look for this information and use it as needed. Think of it like this: You can't look for answers on someone else's exam, but you can look on your own exam.

2. A dog:
 - A. Is an animal
 - B. Lives in trees
 - C. Lives in oceans
 - D. Is an animal and a common pet

A is correct, and D is also correct. Choice D, however, provides a more thorough description of a dog and therefore is the better choice. If a student were to read Choice A and not read the other choices, then the student might select Choice A and miss Choice D.

3. An _____ is an example of a raptor: (Bird of prey)
 - A. Sparrow
 - B. Crow
 - C. Osprey
 - D. Owls

The "an" in the sentence tells us that the correct choice should start with a vowel. So, the correct choice must be either Osprey or Owls. Since "an example" is singular, the correct answer is Osprey.

If the question had said, _____ are examples of raptors, then Owls would be the correct choice, since "Owls" is plural.

These simple examples illustrate that the written structure of the question may help you narrow down the choices.

These tips are not, however, foolproof. The best approach, of course, is to thoroughly prepare for your tests and answer the questions based on your knowledge. Use these tips

to help you narrow down the choices or to guide a guess when you can't determine the correct answer based on your knowledge.

4. Calculate the area of a circle with a diameter of 10 cm. (Area = Pi times the radius squared. Radius = diameter/2. Pi = 3.14159).
- A. 314 cm²
 - B. 16 cm²
 - C. 79 cm²
 - D. 31 cm²

The area of a circle is calculated by multiplying Pi by the square of the radius. The radius is one-half of the diameter.

In this example, the diameter of the circle is 10 cm, so the radius is 5 cm (half of the diameter). The area of the circle is Pi times 5 squared (3.14159 times 25) which equals 79 cm² (Choice C).

What if you forget to divide the diameter by 2 to get the radius? Then you incorrectly calculate Pi times the diameter squared, and the area is 314 cm², which is Choice A.

Choice B results from multiplying Pi by the radius instead of by the radius squared, and Choice D results from multiplying Pi by the diameter.

This simple example illustrates that the results of common miscalculations can easily show up as potential choices. Always check your calculations for accuracy, even if your calculated answer is listed as choice.

Conquering Procrastination

1. Following are tips for conquering procrastination:
 - (1) If you feel overwhelmed by all you must do, and you don't know where to start:
 - (a) Complete a couple easy tasks first.
 - (b) Complete remaining tasks in priority order.
 - (2) If you don't know how to start:
 - (a) Break projects into smaller steps.
 - (b) Develop deadlines for each step.
 - (c) Work on steps in order.
 - (d) Share deadlines with your accountability partner.
 - (e) Get started.
 - (f) Prioritize getting started rather than perfection.
 - (3) If you don't know how to do what you need to do:
 - (a) Ask for more information.
 - (4) If you don't know what's expected:

- (a) Ask for more information.
- (5) If you want to avoid failure, conflict, and unpleasant situations:
 - (a) Resolve that you will start and finish.
 - (b) Talk to your PTM if you need advice for your specific concern.

Staying on Track

1. Follow these practical tips to help you stay on track academically, even when you don't feel motivated:
 - ✓ Set a specific time to study every day.
 - ✓ Find a quiet, distraction-free place to study. Be sure to turn off your cell phone and social media/messaging apps. Avoiding distractions is more effective than trying to ignore them.
 - ✓ Break 90- or 120-minute study sessions into three or four 30-minute blocks. Tailor the sessions to optimize your study time. Remember to assess your progress based on learning rather than on the amount of time you study.
 - ✓ Take a 5- or 10-minute break between blocks.
 - ✓ Build in goals for each study session. Your goals should be challenging but realistic.
 - ✓ Reward yourself by doing something you enjoy after each study session.
 - ✓ Use the best-practices described above.
 - ✓ Use the resources described below.
 - ✓ Stick with this plan, even when you don't feel like it.

References

- Pauk, W. 1962. *How to Study in College*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Pauk, W., and R. J. Q. Owens. 2013. *How to Study in College*. 11th. Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
- Robinson, F.P. 1970. *Effective Study*. New York: Harper and Row.

Chapter 14: Academic Success Resources

“Educational institutions are committed to your success, and they provide resources to help you succeed. Successful students familiarize themselves with the academic success resources available to them and take full advantage of the resources. Access to many academic success resources is included in your tuition and fees, so you likely can utilize them without additional cost.”

People

1. The following are tips for working with academic resource people:
 - ✓ Connect with your college academic advisor as soon as possible after you are accepted into your major.
 - ✓ Schedule advising appointments as soon as academic advising is available.
 - ✓ Draft a tentative academic schedule based on your degree plan prior to meeting with your advisor.
 - ✓ Register for classes as soon as you can.
 - ✓ Obtain preferred contact information, office location, and office hours for your teachers and advisor.
 - ✓ Attend all review sessions for your courses.
 - ✓ Visit faculty during office hours as needed.
 - ✓ Prepare adequately for your faculty visits (see example in “Keep Responsibility Where It Belongs”).
 - ✓ Inquire about opportunities to participate in faculty research or other scholarly activities.
2. Locate your school’s academic calendar and add to your planner important dates: registering for classes, drop/add deadlines, last day to drop a class with a full refund, last day to drop a class, and deadline to declare intent to graduate.
3. Determine whether your school offers academic coaches and tutors. If so, enroll and take full advantage of these excellent resources.

Places

1. Employ the following tips to take full advantage of your resources:
 - ✓ Visit the academic success center, the writing center, and the career center on your campus to learn about the academic success resources available to you through your school.
 - ✓ Utilize all academic success resources available to you.
 - ✓ Take strengths/college major/career assessments available from your college (or high school) academic success office.
 - ✓ Sign up for the mailing list and/or follow the centers’ social media platforms.
 - ✓ Review the calendar of upcoming seminars and training opportunities and sign up for those that are relevant.
 - ✓ Plan to attend career fairs. Be sure to update your resume and get input on it from career center personnel.
2. Following is a list of other useful places to familiarize yourself with:

- ✓ Students with children can take advantage of services offered by an on-campus childcare center. Expect to be put on a waiting list and expect to pay for this service.
- ✓ Navigating the financial aspects of a college education can be daunting, and the staff at the financial aid office can assist you in obtaining and accessing any financial aid for which you qualify.
- ✓ High-achieving students should review the admission and graduation requirements for the honors college. Due to its selectivity, students in the honors college enjoy smaller classes, many of which are taught by the best faculty on campus. Honors students must complete a creative, scholarly project. Jump on the opportunity to be an honors student if you meet the qualifications!
- ✓ The office staff of student legal services provides legal advice and can review contracts for students.
- ✓ Finally, the campus recreation center provides many opportunities for intramural sports, aerobics, and weight training. Students usually can borrow equipment for camping, canoeing, and other outdoor activities.

Things

1. Review the following article to learn more about “High-Impact Practices: Engagement Indicators & High-Impact Practices.” Retrieved May 16, 2019, from Indiana University School of Education: http://nsse.indiana.edu/pdf/EIs_and_HIPs_2015.pdf.
2. Research the availability of learning communities at your university and prioritize joining one that matches your interests.
3. Talk to your teachers, advisor, and career center staff to learn about service-learning courses, undergraduate research, internship programs, study abroad, and capstone courses available at your school.
4. The following tips will help you maximize your internship experience:
 - ✓ Prior to starting your internship, connect with your campus internship advisor to clearly define your learning outcomes and requirements for college credit.
 - ✓ Discuss your internship position description with your on-site internship supervisor to determine the specific requirements of your internship.
 - ✓ Ask how your performance will be evaluated.
 - ✓ Ask about the specifications and deadlines for progress reports and for a final report or presentation.
 - ✓ Develop your internship goals based on your position description and evaluation criteria.
 - ✓ Arrive on time (early).
 - ✓ Don't waste time texting or checking your social media while working.
 - ✓ Ask your supervisor and coworkers for input on your performance.
 - ✓ Ask coworkers and your supervisor for advice on the experience and knowledge needed to succeed in your chosen field.
 - ✓ Ask which skills are essential for career success, and also ask for input on beneficial college courses to take.
 - ✓ Keep a journal of your internship experience.

- ✓ Create a portfolio to document the skills you develop, the knowledge you construct, and the insight you gain. Include specific examples of how you used feedback to improve your performance.
 - ✓ Be sure to ask your supervisor for a reference letter and place it in your portfolio. Also include in your portfolio a copy of your final report or presentation. (Be mindful of intellectual property and non-disclosure rules.)
5. Develop a student portfolio if you have not done so. Digital portfolios are popular, and many online resources are available to help you develop and maintain your portfolio. Below are excellent articles to help you create and utilize portfolios:
- ✓ <https://www.gettingsmart.com/2015/06/every-student-should-have-a-digital-portfolio/>
 - ✓ <https://www.gettingsmart.com/2016/01/10-tools-to-create-online-student-portfolios/>
6. A student portfolio contains a collection of your schoolwork and other educational accomplishments. Include the following items in your portfolio:
- ✓ Evidence of progress toward academic goals.
 - ✓ Evidence of your accomplishments.
 - ✓ Demonstration of your skills.
 - ✓ Copies of your best writing assignments and tests, scholarships and award letters,
 - ✓ Final projects from internships and service-learning projects.
 - ✓ Description of research skills and experience developed from your undergraduate research project.
 - ✓ Publications, posters, or other intellectual property (with approval from your employer) you create.
 - ✓ Reference letters from your supervisors.

Tip: Reflect on your improved writing skills by discussing input you received from your teachers and the resultant changes you made. Include a copy of your latest and greatest writing assignment to demonstrate your improved writing skills.

Summary and Implementation

“As you develop a better understanding of your skills and abilities, you will very likely discover that you are capable of achieving more than you currently think. Believing you can achieve success is foundational to achieving success.”

1. Read the following paragraph. Reflect on its meaning and application in your life.

Clarifying your definition of success is also foundational to achieving success. But doing so may seem paradoxical at this point in your life because you may not know what you want to achieve. The key is willingness to move forward, believing you will succeed—even though you may not know what you will achieve.

2. How can you apply the following concept: “Don’t limit your future based on your current skills and abilities. Empower your future by daring to believe in what you will become!”

Learning Outcomes Revisited

1. Reflect on the learning outcomes for the book, and describe how you are making progress on each outcome:

- ✓ Construct realistic expectations for achieving success.
- ✓ Develop self-awareness.
- ✓ Build a future-oriented attitude.
- ✓ Improve your academic success skills, leadership skills, and soft skills.

Discuss your progress with your PTM.

2. Make a deliberate effort to identify and eliminate gaps as you develop your skills.

- ✓ Current practices vs. best-practices.
- ✓ Planning vs. action.
- ✓ Action vs. impact.

3. Assess your current skills against the information provided in the book. For example:

- ✓ Are your test-preparation skills at the level described in this book?
- ✓ Do you communicate clearly?
- ✓ Have you already participated in, or are you planning to participate in, internships in college?

Discuss your progress with your PTM.

4. Develop an action plan based on the following outcomes:

- ✓ Develop key academic success skills for high school and college.
- ✓ Develop leadership skills.
- ✓ Make a smooth transition to college.
- ✓ Achieve educational and career goals aligned with your strengths and values.
- ✓ Build skills that employers seek: communication, collaboration, goal setting, time management, critical thinking, problem-solving, professionalism, and accountability.

- ✓ Document and articulate skills on applications for scholarships, awards, colleges, and jobs.

An example success skills development action plan is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Example of a success skills development action plan.

Learning Outcome	Goal	Action Plan
Develop key academic success skills for high school and college.	Improve note-taking skills.	Develop skills with mind maps and Cornell method by copying old class notes or by summarizing a book chapter.
Develop leadership skills.	Improve collaboration skills.	Lead volunteer project.
Make a smooth transition to college.	Build relationships.	Contact advisor ASAP. Research learning community opportunities and join one.
Achieve educational and career goals aligned with your strengths and values.	Develop better understanding of your strengths.	Take online assessments. Check with counselor to see what resources are available at school. Reflect on what you believe your strengths to be. Discuss strengths with PTM.
Build skills that employers seek	Improve communication skills.	Talk to advisor about comm classes available at school. Enroll in comm class. Join speech and debate team. Enter public speaking contest.
Document and articulate skills	Create an ongoing inventory of your skills and experiences	Keep a journal of your leadership activities including specific skills developed/used. Research electronic portfolio apps/programs.

5. Use Table 8 to develop your success skills development action plan. Discuss your plan with your PTM.

Table 8. Success skills development action plan worksheet.

Learning Outcome	Goal	Action Plan
Develop key academic success skills for high school and college.		
Develop leadership skills.		
Make a smooth transition to college.		
Achieve educational and career goals aligned with your strengths and values.		
Build skills that employers seek		
Document and articulate skills		

6. Assess your progress as you implement your plan. Reflect on whether your skills are improving. Ask your PTM for insight and feedback.

- ✓ Are you meeting deadlines and following through on all your commitments?
- ✓ Are you a more successful student or employee than you were a year ago?
- ✓ Have your leadership skills improved in the last few months? Refine your plan as needed to continually make progress.

A Final Word of Encouragement

1. Reflect on the following passage: “If you believe in yourself, remain fiercely committed to your goals, and put forth your best effort, you will be limited only by your imagination.” How will you apply this statement to your life?
2. Why do you think serving others is important?
3. Make a list of service organizations present in your school and community. Make a commitment to get involved.