

Curriculum Guide

COURSE MISSION

Empower students to make informed, goal-oriented decisions about their future, and provide them with the skills they need to reach those goals.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Keys To Your Future is a digital course created to deliver critical college and career readiness skills to all high school students. This course will help all high school students identify goals related to their future and realize the steps they need to take in order to achieve them. It will prepare students for 2- or 4-year colleges and the workforce, offering them various pathways to reach their goals, regardless of cultural or economic background. Keys To Your Future will provide soft skill development, financial guidance, and transferable skills to help students identify personal goals, and succeed now and in the future.

- **Recommended Grade Level:** 9–12
- **Total Curriculum:** 6 Lessons; Approx. 15 minutes Each; Total Time: 1.5–2 Hours
- **Subject Fit:** Advisory/Homeroom, Social Studies, School Counseling, CTE Exploratory
- **Standards Alignment:** ASCA National Standards, CTE National Standards, CASEL Competencies

COURSE OVERVIEW

TOPIC AREAS

Academic preparation for higher education

Exploring career pathways

The college admissions process

Paying for college

Soft skills needed to succeed both in college and in a chosen career

COURSE STRUCTURE

Pre-survey	My Life Goals	Preparing in High School	Choosing a Path	Balancing Daily Life	Starting Your Career	Career Success	Post-survey
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Each lesson is approximately 15 minutes.

Key Learning Outcomes

After taking this course, students will...

- Recognize the importance of setting short-term and long-term goals.
- Understand that soft skills are keys to success.
- Describe the steps and actions to take to prepare for college and a career.
- Understand that a career pathway is an investment in yourself which requires lifelong learning and adaptability.

DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE

Lesson: My Life Goals

Students learn the importance of setting short-term and long-term goals in relation to their career aspirations. They are exposed to a variety of industries and occupations, evaluate their own skills and interests, and gain insight into the process of building a career. Learners will explore skills needed for a variety of occupations and the pathways that can lead there.

Learners earn the “Understanding Yourself” as the Key to Your Future for this lesson.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to...

- Define and differentiate between short-term and long-term goals.
- Identify personal skills, interests, and abilities and relate them to career choices.
- Identify resources for assistance in career exploration.
- Define career.
- Describe how short-term goals lead to career goals.

ACTIVITY TOPIC	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Concept Overview	Learners will understand the difference between long-term and short-term goals, how short-term goals help reach long-term goals, and how the biggest long-term goal is working toward and developing a career.
Explore Careers	Learners will explore careers and industries to help determine a career path to follow.
Personal Preferences	Learners will identify their own preferences when it comes to aspects of various workplaces. They will compare their personal preferences, skills and personality traits to occupational and workforce data.
Action Plan	Learners will receive guidance on how to further explore careers and actions they can do now to get closer to their long-term goal of a career.
Model of Success	Learners will explore the paths others took to end up in a variety of careers. This includes the educational pathways that are more likely to lead to a particular career.
Conclusion	Lesson concludes with advice on protecting mental health needs as learners face making hard choices about their future.

Lesson: Preparing in High School

This lesson explores how learners can prepare for their future by succeeding in high school. Learners earn the key to success of developing strong academic skills by practicing goal setting, study skills, organization,

prioritization, and time management. Learners raise the GPA of a character to achieve a high school diploma and learn how these skills are applicable to lifelong learning and career success.

Learners earn “Academic Skills” as the Key to Your Future for this lesson.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to...

- Describe the relationship between acquiring skills and academic performance.
- Explain how goal setting and time management contribute to academic and career success.
- Explain how connections with others can increase one’s own ability to reach goals.

ACTIVITY TOPIC	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Concept Overview	This lesson builds off the discussion of short- and long-term goals to position success in high school as a stepping stone to attaining them. Learners will understand that attending to the academic skills of organization, time management, study skills and prioritization will not only raise a GPA but also lay the foundation of habits that can be used throughout a life devoted to accomplishing personal goals.
Modeling of Academic Skills	Learners explore how one character improved their GPA and made progress towards short- and long-term goals. This modeling activity incorporates a change over time so learners can see success not as a constant personality trait but the result of the consistent application of academic skills.
Practicing Academic Skills	Learners are challenged to practice academic skills by helping a character meet their short-term goal of being eligible to compete in an upcoming track meet. The learner practices time management skills by prioritizing tasks on a calendar and aligning them to goals while practicing study skills by chunking big projects into smaller tasks.
Action Plan	Students make an action plan to incorporate goal setting, time management, prioritization, and study skills into their own lives.
Conclusion	Ending message to reiterate the importance of building skills to achieve goals.

Lesson: Choosing a Path

Students learn how their long-term career goals connect to shorter-term decisions and goals related to post-secondary education. This lesson explores different post-secondary options available, as well as returns on investment. It identifies methods to help learners make strong, educated choices, and how networking can impact the process.

Learners earn “Investing in Yourself” as the Key to Your Future for this lesson.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to...

- Identify personal skills, interests, & abilities and relate them to academic & career choices.
- Identify resources for assistance in choosing and preparing for a college and/or career.
- Explain how self-motivation, self-efficacy, and teamwork contribute to academic and career success.
- Describe how connections with others can increase one’s own ability to reach goals.

ACTIVITY TOPIC	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Concept Overview	Learners will understand that having a successful career down the road means investing in themselves and their future. They'll learn what their different post-secondary options are and that making decisions about their future is dependent on what matters to them, because each person's path is different and no path is set in stone.
Modeling of Investing in Yourself	Learners explore how a character got to a successful career by exploring their timeline to see the steps they took along the way. The modeling focuses on using information about goals, skills & interests to decide on a pathway and adapt to setbacks, standing out when applying, financing school, and making a choice when faced with multiple options.
Practicing Investing in Yourself	Learners explore the college application process with a goal of standing out. They explore personal networks for cultivating references and complete a college financing exercise.
Action Plan	Learners review what they should do in order to make a post-secondary education choice, prepare application materials and explore finance options.
Conclusion	Ending message to reiterate that continuing education and training is an investment in yourself and there are resources available to help throughout the application process.

Lesson: Balancing Daily Life

This lesson focuses on the soft skills of balancing daily life through the experience of higher education. Students will learn the skills to successfully navigate academic, social, financial and personal aspects in life to achieve well-being while pursuing long-term goals. This lesson is designed to inform students about the competing priorities of college life while developing the skills to attain a well-balanced lifestyle.

Learners earn "Balancing Daily Life" as the Key to Your Future for this lesson.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to...

- Explain how self-management can increase the ability to reach short- and long-term goals.
- Identify how to solve problems through responsible decision-making.
- Analyze how self and social awareness improve one's ability to resolve conflicts.
- Identify effective communication techniques for relationship-building.

ACTIVITY TOPIC	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Concept Overview	This lesson focuses on achieving balance while pursuing long-term goals. Learners will explore these themes while learning about managing life in college.
Modeling Balancing Daily Life	The modeling section of this lesson allows learners to see how a college student successfully navigated balancing academic, social, financial, and personal needs. SEL skills to be addressed include self-advocacy, social engagement, responsible decision-making, and stress management.

ACTIVITY TOPIC	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Practicing Balancing Daily Life	Learners practice managing academic time with social life in order to devote enough preparation time to achieve their long-term GPA goals. Faced with economic challenges they then must make budgeting decisions that impact their life's balance. Lesson closes with key points to consider how to manage stress and well-being.
Action Plan	Learners create action plan to incorporate managing and balancing daily life in high school using the skills learned throughout the lesson.
Conclusion	Ending message to reiterate that finding balance through prioritization and responsible decision-making is a life skill that will facilitate the pursuit of long-term goals.

Lesson: Starting Your Career

Students learn how to successfully navigate the process of entering their chosen career by applying to a first job. The focus of this lesson is on the relationship-building aspects of the job search such as determining if a job is the right fit and using personal networks to secure introductions and insight. Self-presentation and communication are important topics that are covered to prepare students for how they will be evaluated before and during interviews.

Learners earn “Building and Maintaining Relationships” as the Key to Your Future for this lesson.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to...

- Identify resources for assistance in choosing and preparing for a college and/or career.
- Describe how connections with others can increase one's own ability to reach goals.
- List ways in which self-presentation can impact career opportunities.
- Describe ways in which strong written, verbal, and non-verbal communication can improve one's ability to reach career goals.

ACTIVITY TOPIC	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Concept Overview	This lesson focuses on the job search and application process through the lens of building and maintaining relationships. It is not a tactical approach to writing cover letters or resumes but a global approach to understanding the importance of doing research to find a job that is the right fit and building a relationship with a potential employer through using personal networks, paying attention to self-presentation, and communicating clearly throughout the process.
Modeling Building and Maintaining Relationships	Learners follow a character throughout her job search process and see how she landed a job that was the right fit for her. Examples include setbacks and missteps to demonstrate that the job application process is not smooth or a lock-step process.
Practicing Building and Maintaining Relationships	Learners practice conducting research to determine resources to find a “right fit” job, engage in networking, review best practices for online and in-person presentation and dissect effective written, verbal, and non-verbal communication techniques.

ACTIVITY TOPIC	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Action Plan	Learners create an action plan to evaluate job-seeking steps that they wish to remember and use as they search for jobs in the near future or apply to college.
Conclusion	Ending message to reiterate that finding that job is about building and maintaining relationships with future employers.

Lesson: Career Success

This lesson focuses on the skills needed to thrive in a career. Lifelong learning and adaptability are two themes that are woven throughout this lesson as students learn how to do well on the job and prepare to advance or respond to changes in their own employment status. Thriving on the job also involves respecting colleagues and learning to collaborate and resolve conflicts. The overall focus of this lesson is building technical and interpersonal skills to create opportunities now and in the future.

Learners earn “Respecting Yourself and Others” as the Key to Your Future for this lesson.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to...

- List the benefits of collaboration and teamwork.
- Identify effective communication techniques for self-advocacy and relationship-building.
- List personal characteristics that lead to success in the workplace.
- Describe how growth-mindset and initiative relate to career advancement.
- Describe why relationship building is important to career success.

ACTIVITY TOPIC	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Concept Overview	This lesson focuses on doing well on the job by understanding and following expectations but also focuses learner's attention on personal development as way to thrive now and in the future. Respecting yourself is framed as striving for personal goals and respecting others is essential for collaboration and teamwork which contribute to career advancement.
Modeling Respecting Yourself and Others	Learners explore the growth of a character's career and how it can be attributed to their being a lifelong learner, adaptable and a team player.
Practicing Respecting Yourself and Others	The practice section of this lesson challenges students to determine if characters have performed well on given jobs by evaluating them on demeanor, reliability, communication, and teamwork. Learners also practice working collaboratively on a team navigating conflicts and adapting to changes in the workplace.
Action Plan	Learners create an action plan to assess what skills they may need to strengthen in order to thrive on a job as well as currently in high school. These skills include building relationships, being a lifelong learner, problem solving skills and goal setting.
Conclusion	Thriving in a career means not only doing well on current tasks and meeting expectations but also means working towards long-term goals through lifelong learning and adaptability.