

Thank you for purchasing college-prep materials from DreamCatcher Curriculum, LLC. We appreciate your business and hope that our products meet your needs for assisting students prepare for college. Although our materials can stand alone as a handout for students, the program guide will offer additional information and activities to share with students in a classroom or workshop setting.

The program guide is intended as a rough outline for the topic and can be adapted as you see fit to meet the needs of your program, school, or situation. The guide also includes copy-permissible pages for use in activities as a supplement to instruction. **Please note that color handouts are copyright-protected and duplication in any form is strictly prohibited.** See our website www.dreamcatchercurriculum.com for additional info, resources, and new curriculum topics.

➔ **BEFORE YOU BEGIN:** This workshop requires minimal prep, however, it is strongly recommended that you read and review the program guide along with the handout before meeting with students.

LIFE HACKS FOR BEING AN ADULT OBJECTIVE & INCLUDED TOPICS

To prepare students for the social etiquette expected and required of adults in society, introducing basic social skills and manners to use throughout adolescence and adulthood; *Conversational Etiquette, Making Introductions, Interview Etiquette, Acceptable Social Media Behavior, Introversion vs. Extroversion, Life Skills, Basic Manners & Social Norms*

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP /SESSION

This workshop is designed as a transitional topic for middle-to-high school level students, however the social skills covered in the material could easily adapt for any age group. The material emphasizes the importance of basic skills required to be an adult in society, providing necessary life skills and habits to cultivate for success in college and adulthood. Supplement the workshop by expounding upon topics like social media, dining etiquette, or writing thank-you notes.

DreamCatcher Extra: Provided on this guide is a copy-friendly *Guide to Writing Thanks*. If time permits, distribute to each student their own copy to aid in writing thank-you notes in the future. As an added activity, students could practice writing sample notes of thanks in different situations. If budget allows, purchase blank thank-you cards to provide each student to complete on their own in the future.

STEP ONE TIME: 5-10 MINUTES

Start by asking students if they know what “life hacks” are, or what the terminology might mean. Clarify that life hacks are tools or techniques to make aspects of one’s life easier or more efficient. Books, magazine articles, blogs, websites, YouTube videos, etc. exist to provide “hacks” for how to reduce chaos or time wasters, making life easier and saving time. Some examples of life hacks for teens:

Use an old lip balm tube (like Chapstick) to store rolled up money to keep in your bag or locker for “emergency” cash.

Struggling with a math problem? Go to mathway.com to enter your homework math problem and it will solve it for you (for FREE!), complete with step-by-step explanations.

Learning a new class schedule? Make it easy on the first day of school or semester by taking a photo of your schedule with your phone, then setting the picture as your lock screen so you can easily see which class you have next.

Instead of using basic Google to research topics for homework or writing essays, use scholar.google.com. This will streamline your search and make it much easier to find what you’re looking for with more relevant info.

If gum is allowed at your school, studies have shown that chewing the same flavor/brand of gum while studying for a test, and then while taking that test, can improve your memory of the material.

When meeting someone new and they tell you their name, repeat it back to them as you shake hands. You’ll be more likely to remember their name later.

Ask students to share some life hacks they know or use already. Transition discussion to introduce the handout and topic of *Life Hacks for Being an Adult*. Mention that a vital part to being successful in adulthood is the ability to get along with others and interact socially, using good manners and appropriate social etiquette.

LIFE HACKS Program Guide



STEP TWO TIME: 10-15 MINUTES

Distribute the *Life Hacks* handout. Read aloud the section titled *Social Skills Matter*. Take a moment to elaborate on how social connections can be beneficial:

- New opportunities, fresh perspectives, and greater knowledge from interactions with others
- Recommendations for college admission and scholarship applications from teachers, principals, employers, counselors, youth leaders, etc. who best know your strengths and leadership abilities
- Advice from people who know about careers, college, how to get money for college, and various personal support
- Professional references to use when applying for jobs
- Connections or referrals to full or part-time job opportunities
- Friendships that can provide support and camaraderie through all of life's ups and downs

Ask participants to name examples of "good" or appropriate social skills. Allow a few minutes of open discussion. Students might mention basic social skills or manners such as *not talking with your mouth full, not interrupting, saying please and thank you, not being rude to others*, etc. Explain that **social skills can take years of practice and be a lifelong exercise in learning social norms and behavior**. Ask if anyone has ever encountered a person who missed the mark socially, behaving awkwardly or inappropriately. What lessons can be learned from those encounters? Is it possible to alter your behavior to fit in with social norms, yet still be yourself? Read aloud the *You Be You* section.

Before moving to the inside of the handout, redirect the conversation to the importance of making a good first impression. Explain that first impressions are critical to successful social interactions. Read the following quote (if your location has a board to write, you could take a moment to write the quote for all to see, for greater impact):

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression." - Will Rogers

Provide a moment of "think time," then ask participants how they feel about the quote. More to the point, ask how they feel about the importance society puts upon first impressions. Ask *Are first impressions fair?*

STEP THREE TIME: 10-15 MINUTES

Ask for two volunteers to come forward. Tell the volunteers to imagine that they are strangers meeting for the first time. Instruct them to make introductions to one another as they would in a slightly formal setting, like an interview. (Allow to proceed with introductions.) How did they do? Feel free to offer helpful critique, perhaps asking for feedback from the group. Thank the volunteers and move to the inside of the handout, directing students to the *Social Awareness* section. Read aloud about picking up on social cues and adjusting behavior, then discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic has or will change social norms. You should mention that shaking hands has been very much an expectation in most formal situations, like interviews. Although it's still uncertain if that will change, it's probably a good idea to know how to shake hands properly. Depending on your comfort level with physical interaction in the workshop, you could distribute the included *Handshake Guide* and "practice" as you see fit (pretending to shake or bringing hand sanitizer for afterward).

Next, cover the *How to Make Introductions* section. Ask for another set of volunteers (or the original pair, if they'd like to try again) to reenact a formal introduction utilizing the proper rules for introductions. Critique as needed. Next, ask all students to find another person to introduce themselves to for the "first time" incorporating the tips learned. They should practice their technique with a few other students before returning to their seats. Some processing questions to ask: *How do you think your introductions went? Was it uncomfortable or awkward? How did your partner do? What would you do differently? Outside of today's activity, have you ever shaken someone's hand and they didn't follow the rules of good handshake etiquette? What might a "bone crusher" handshake convey about a person, even if they don't intend it to? How about a "limp fish" shake? What if the person you meet doesn't make or sustain eye contact? What might that say about them? How can you smile at someone (or tell if they are smiling back) if wearing a face mask?*

DreamCatcher Tip: For regaining control of workshop participants after an engagement activity, consider using a “Zynergy” or meditation chime. These chimes can be found very inexpensively online and work wonders to quickly refocus the group. Playing music (at reasonable levels, given the setting) can also work well for restoring attention. Simply stopping the music will draw focus. Using chimes or music is a great technique to incorporate in most group settings, for all ages of participants.

STEP FOUR TIME: 15-20 MINUTES

Direct students to the *How to Have a Conversation* part of the handout, reading aloud this section and the adjacent part about starting a conversation. Provide several minutes of quiet think time to consider and write down a few convo starters. Next, explain that the best way to improve conversation skills is to practice. For the following activity, students are to pretend that they are strangers striking up a conversation for the first time. Remind them to use the convo tips learned (asking questions, nodding head, maintaining a pleasant expression, eye contact, etc.). Students can use their own conversation starters or use the Convo Cards provided on this program guide to proceed with the activity, pairing up to initiate conversations. Allow time for convo partners to swap and start over with someone new.

Questions for processing the activity: *How did your conversations go? Learn anything new about your partner? Did you practice asking questions to clarify or move the conversation along? How about eye contact? Did your convo starter get things going, or did you need to try another topic? What is the hardest part about conversing with people you don't know?* Offer a reminder that conversation is as much about *listening* as it is about talking; it's not all about waiting for your turn to talk. In fact, the most skilled conversationalists *listen* more than they speak. The key is making others comfortable enough to open up by establishing trust and offering full attention, as well as truly hearing what they have to say.

DreamCatcher Extra: Included on this guide is a set of 8 different convo starter cards for the conversation activity. Print cards on cardstock and trim to size. Students should partner with someone holding a different card (or use their own convo starter).

STEP FIVE TIME: 10-15 MINUTES

Review and cover the remaining sections of the *Life Hacks* handout as time permits. Allow for discussion or questions as needed. For the section about interviews, stress the “GIVE THANKS” part of interview rules. Ask if anyone has ever written a thank-you note. Explain that thank-you notes are part of social etiquette as well as interview etiquette and a great habit to develop. People who give written (or electronic) notes of thanks stand out as considerate, thoughtful, and polite. Note that thank-you notes are NOT optional following interviews. Thank-you notes following an interview can be either hand-written or electronic and should be received no more than a week after the interview. Stress the urgency of writing any form of thanks as soon as possible. (See the included *A Guide to Writing Thanks* on this program guide.)

For the section about social media, feel free to offer any additional advice/warnings/suggestions as you see fit. The back of the handout includes additional *Life Skills to Learn* and interesting statistics, but introversion vs. extroversion is definitely worth noting. Provide a few moments of quiet think time for participants to read over this section and the accompanying characteristics of both introversion and extroversion. Next, ask in which category they belong (introvert/extrovert/ambivert) and if/how that could make social interactions more challenging. Offer this follow-up question for pondering: *How do social norms of behavior differ if you're shy?* The short (and not so simple) answer is: they don't. Explain that social norms apply to everyone, even if shy or introverted, because we live in an extroverted world with extroverted expectations. The fact is that outgoing behavior is often rewarded, which makes it difficult being an introvert, but practicing social life hacks can make it easier.

LAST STEP & ASSESSMENT TIME REMAINING

Provide a sampling of students (4 or 5) the included assessment and collect before students are dismissed.

LEARNING OUTCOME

At the end of this session, students will have learned critical life skills and social etiquette techniques to use from now through adult life. Students will be able to provide at least one “life hack” or skill for each of the following categories: introducing oneself, having a conversation, using social media, and behaving in an interview.

LIFE HACKS FOR BEING AN ADULT ASSESSMENT

WHAT THE HACK???

For the following situations, provide at least ONE life hack you learned today.

INTRODUCING YOURSELF ←↔

HAVING A CONVERSATION ←↔↔↔

USING SOCIAL MEDIA ←↔

ACING AN INTERVIEW ←↔



LIFE HACKS FOR BEING AN ADULT ASSESSMENT

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INTRODUCING YOURSELF ←↔

HAVING A CONVERSATION ←↔↔↔

USING SOCIAL MEDIA ←↔

ACING AN INTERVIEW ←↔

CONVO CARD ACTIVITY

WHAT WOULD YOUR PERFECT DAY CONSIST OF?
(BE SPECIFIC!)



www.dreamcatchercurriculum.com

IF YOU COULD MEET ANYONE, DEAD OR
ALIVE, WHO WOULD YOU MEET?



www.dreamcatchercurriculum.com

IF YOU COULD ONLY EAT ONE FOOD FOR THE
REST OF YOUR LIFE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?



www.dreamcatchercurriculum.com

WHAT DO YOU HOPE YOUR LIFE WILL BE LIKE
10 YEARS FROM NOW?



www.dreamcatchercurriculum.com

IF YOU COULD STAR IN ANY MOVIE, WHAT
MOVIE WOULD IT BE? EXPLAIN.



www.dreamcatchercurriculum.com

WHAT IS THE #1 THING ON YOUR BUCKET LIST
AND WHY DOES IT RANK FIRST?



www.dreamcatchercurriculum.com

IF YOU COULD LIVE ANY PLACE IN THE WHOLE
WORLD, WHERE WOULD IT BE AND WHY?



www.dreamcatchercurriculum.com

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK WHEN YOU
WERE LITTLE (OR NOW)?



www.dreamcatchercurriculum.com

A Guide to Writing Thanks

ON A PERSONAL NOTE...

Saying "thank you" is a critical part of social etiquette and goes beyond simply telling someone the words (although that's important, too!). You can express thanks by email, text message, or even message on social media, but in certain situations it is proper etiquette to put those words to paper and write out your gratitude by hand.

The hardest part of writing a "thank-you" note is simply starting! Use this template to make it easy. Remember that sending the note in a timely manner (no more than a week later for interviews) is part of social etiquette, as well. Write neatly and be attentive to details like spelling and grammar.

GREETING Make certain you're using the correct form and spelling of the person's name, as well as the proper prefix (use Ms. if you aren't sure of marital status).

Ms. Patterson,

Dear Aunt Carol,

EXPRESS YOUR THANKS Start with the two most important words: Thank you.

Thanks for being a reference... *Thank you so much for...*

ADD SPECIFIC DETAILS How will you use or benefit from their deed, gift, time, etc.? This shows you truly appreciate their effort, time, or thoughtfulness.

Your class taught me... *I plan to put the money toward...*

LOOK TO THE FUTURE Mention the next time you might see them or hope to hear from them.

Hope to see you at graduation... *I look forward to seeing you at Christmas...*

RESTATE YOUR THANKS Add a few details and thank them in a different way from before.

Again, thank you for... *Your generosity is much appreciated...*

END WITH YOUR REGARDS Use "sincerely" if this is a professional thank you, or a more affectionate closing if it's personal.

Sincerely,

With much love,

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HANDSHAKE GUIDE

HOW TO PROPERLY SHAKE HANDS

Although shaking hands may be considered socially taboo following the COVID-19 pandemic, there may still be times that you'll need to properly shake hands in the future, or in certain situations (like for interviews). Read the social cues to know what is expected. If someone extends their hand for a shake, it may seem rude to not reciprocate. It's best to plan ahead and learn to do it right. Hands can be washed or sanitized afterward (discreetly!).

The ideal handshake should convey confidence, friendliness, and an openness to knowing more about the other person.

Handshakes should be done in a standing position (always use the right hand).

Start by establishing and maintaining eye contact while extending your right arm, thumb held straight up toward the ceiling until palms meet.

Grasp with firm pressure, but don't go overboard (ouch!) or be wimpy (ew!).

Give the shake only two pumps (making sure your hand is dry before shaking).

During the shake, be sure to say brief pleasantries like, "Good afternoon."

Shaking hands is customary in both greeting and farewell in formal situations.

Since this is considered a social expectation and often the first impression you give to people, know how to do it correctly.

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