As the future leaders of our families, communities, government, and workforce, it is imperative that you develop the skills you need to succeed in work and life. This appendix covers these 21st Century skills in the following sections:

- Making Decisions
- Setting Goals
- Solving Problems
- Managing Time
- Thinking Critically

- Communicating Effectively
- Cooperating and Collaborating
- Behaving Ethically
- Using Technology
- Suggested Activities
Making Decisions

Any time you make up your mind about something, or choose one option over another, you are making a decision. Some decisions are simple—what time will I leave for school? Some are more difficult—should I tell my friend I don’t like her hair style? The results—or consequences—of your decisions affect you in big and small ways.

- If the consequences of a decision are positive and contribute to your well-being, it means you made a healthy—or good—choice.
- If the consequences are negative and interfere with your well-being, that means you made an unhealthy—or poor—choice.

Most decisions actually have both long-term and short-term consequences. Long-term, what you eat for breakfast might affect your health and wellness. Short-term, it might affect how you do on a test.

Sometimes consequences have both positive and negative results. The good news is that you can learn how to make healthy decisions that turn out positive more often than they turn out negative. Decisions give you power and control over your life. When you make a decision, you are showing yourself and others that you are independent and responsible.

Six Steps to a Decision  You can take some of the uncertainty and doubt out of decision-making by turning it into a process. A process is a series of steps that leads to a conclusion.

1. **Identify the decision to be made.** Make sure you recognize and understand the choice. Define the decision as a goal—what do I want to achieve with this choice?

2. **Consider all possible options.** You usually have lots of options for each decision. Try to think of as many as you can, and write them down. Don’t just consider the obvious choice; some of the best options might seem pretty bizarre at first. Consider your available resources, and what you are trying to achieve.

3. **Identify the consequences of each option.** Each option will have consequences—some positive and some negative; some long-term and some short-term. Recognizing all the consequences will help you predict the outcome of your decision.

4. **Select the best option.** Once you consider the options and identify the consequences, you have the information you need to make your decision.

5. **Make and implement a plan of action.** Making the decision is not the end of the process. You must take steps to make it happen. Until you do, the decision is just an idea or thought in your head.
6. **Evaluate the decision, process, and outcome.** After you have acted on your decision, you can look back and evaluate it, based on your values and standards. Did you achieve the goal you defined in step 1? Did you miss any possible options? Did you correctly identify the consequences? Did you make use of your resources? Was the outcome what you hoped for?

**Thoughtful Decision-Making** We all make mistakes. Despite our best intentions, we make poor choices. Most of the time, it doesn’t matter too much. If you cut your hair too short, it will grow back. Sometimes, though, we must live with the consequences of our actions for a long time—maybe even our whole lives. For example, if you text while driving and get into an accident, that’s your responsibility.

But, even when we make a poor choice with long-term consequences, we can learn from our mistakes and try to make better choices going forward.

It is important that you consider how your decisions will affect other people. When you are evaluating your options while making a decision, consider these questions:

- Is it hurtful to me?
- Is it hurtful to someone else?
- Is it fair?
- Is it honest?
- Is it legal?
- Is it practical?

If the answer is to the first two questions is “Yes,” you might want to look for other alternatives. If the answer to the remaining questions is “Yes,” you are on the right track.

**Setting Goals**

A goal is something you are trying to achieve. Goals help direct your actions and guide your decision-making because they give you something to work toward. They help give your life meaning, because you know that there is a purpose in what you do. When you achieve a goal, you can be proud and express satisfaction.

If all you do is think about a goal, it’s just a dream. You make goals real by deciding what you want to achieve and then planning how to get there. While you should set goals that are within reach, there is nothing wrong with challenging yourself to push harder.

**Short-Term and Long-Term Goals** When you want to achieve something quickly, you set short-term goals. You can accomplish short-term goals in the near future—maybe even today. For example, finishing your homework on time is a short-term goal. It is usually easy to define short-term goals because they are specific and not very complicated. If you keep a to-do
list, it is full of short-term goals—meet friends at the mall, call your grandmother, make your bed.

A long-term goal is something you want to achieve in the more distant future—maybe a year from now, or maybe even more distant than that. Graduating from college is a long-term goal. So is buying a car. Defining long-term goals may be more difficult than defining short-term goals. You might know you want to travel, but you don’t know where or how.

Sometimes it’s harder to stay focused on a long-term goal—it seems far away. Breaking the long-term goal down into a series of short-term goals—or milestones—makes it easier to stay on track. Becoming a computer programmer might be a long-term goal. To achieve that goal, you can set short-term goals of:

- Taking programming classes
- Graduating from high school
- Attending college

**Five Steps to a Goal**  
There’s a process you can use to help identify, assess, and set goals:

1. **Identify the goal.** Write down the goal using as much detail as you can. This helps you understand and recognize the goal. Be positive, not negative: I will attend the club meeting rather than I won’t skip the club meeting.

2. **Assess whether the goal is something you really want.** It might be a fad, or something that sounds good, or even something someone else wants for you.

3. **Make a plan for achieving the goal.** This step will help you identify whether or not the goal is reasonable and attainable. What resources will you need? If you cannot come up with a plan that works, you may need to go back to step 1.

4. **Write down your action plan for achieving the goal, being as specific as possible.**

5. **Every once in a while, reevaluate your goals.** Make sure they are still important to you and, if so, that you are on track to achieve them.

**Solving Problems**

Any barrier or obstacle between you and a goal is a problem. Problems pop up all the time. Mostly, we come up with a solution without thinking too hard. Say you want to go to the movies Saturday night, but your mother says you can’t go out until you clean your room.

- The problem: Your messy room is an obstacle between you and the movies.
- The solution: You clean your room.
Some problems sneak up on us over time, sometimes hidden by something else. You might want to do well in Social Studies, but you fall asleep in class every day. Is the problem that your teacher is boring, that your classroom is too warm, or is it that you are staying up late at night playing video games?

**Taking Responsibility** One difficulty with solving problems is figuring out whose problem it really is. Generally, the person who is blocked from a goal is the one who owns the problem. If your friend loses his math book and wants to borrow yours, is it your problem or his? What if you loan him the book and he loses it?

If you own the problem, you are responsible for solving it. If someone else owns the problem, you may be able to help solve it, but ultimately it is not your responsibility.

Taking responsibility for your own problems, and working to find solutions, shows that you are independent and capable.

**Six Steps to a Solution** When problems are harder to identify, or harder to solve, you can use the decision-making process to figure out the best solution:

1. **Identify the problem.** This is your chance to be honest, acknowledge the problem, and determine what goal it is blocking.
2. **Consider all possible solutions.** There may be one obvious solution, or there may be many possible solutions. Write down as many as you can think of. You will need to consider your values, standards, and resources, too. Some solutions might be harder to make happen, or take longer than others. Some might cost money and some might be free. Some might solve only part of the problem.
3. **Identify the consequences of each solution.** Like decisions, each solution will have consequences, and it is important to recognize how the consequences will affect you and others. Again, write them down.
4. **Select the best solution.** The best solution offers the best possible opportunity for you to continue your progress toward your goal.
5. **Make and implement a plan of action.** Recognizing and selecting a solution are only part of the process. You must take the necessary steps to make the solution real.
6. **Evaluate the solution, process, and outcome.** Did your solution work? Did you achieve your goal? Would you do anything differently if you had the same problem again?

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**Figure 3** Why is it important to be able to solve problems at home, in school, and in the workplace?
Managing Time

Time management means organizing your schedule so you have time to complete tasks and meet your responsibilities. Combining goal-setting with time management is a very effective way to make sure you get things done.

- Create a time journal or log to figure out exactly how you currently spend your time.
- Set specific, realistic, and attainable goals using schedules. Scheduling helps you plan ahead, so you know when you will do something, and you can be ready for it. You can schedule by any time period, but the most useful are by month, week, and day. Different schedules can help you identify tasks that must be accomplished within a specific timeframe.
- Make use of the calendar program on your computer or handheld. You can enter schedules, phone calls, and appointments. Use the tasks list feature to record and prioritize the things you need to accomplish. Set the program to display a message or make a sound to remind you of deadlines.
- Create to-do lists, and rank list items in order of importance.
- Learn to say no. Some people may ask for too much of your time. They may expect you to take on more responsibility than you can handle. It is OK to say no. Be polite and respectful, but explain that your schedule is full.
- Ask for help. If you are having trouble completing tasks that are part of your assigned responsibilities, you will need to find a way to get them done. Ask your teacher, a counselor, a family member, or a friend to help you learn how to organize your time, or find ways to be more efficient.

Managing Resources  Keeping your time and to-do list organized is critical, but if the resources you need are not organized, you will not succeed at the task at hand. For example, if you complete the research for a project on time, but cannot find it in order to write the report, you will be unable to complete the assignment. Set up a system of folders—both on your computer and, if you deal with paper, in a filing cabinet—that you keep organized so that you can always find the resources that you need.
Thinking Critically

Critical thinking can help you evaluate your options in many situations. You can use it when you are making decisions, setting goals, and solving problems. When you think critically, you are honest, rational, and open-minded about your options. You consider all possibilities before rushing to judgment.

- Being honest means acknowledging selfish feeling and preexisting opinions.
- Being rational means relying on reason and thought instead of on emotion or impulse.
- Being open-minded means being willing to evaluate all possible options—even those that are unpopular.

You can think critically about a lot of things, not just decisions and problems. You don’t have to believe everything you hear or read. You can question a news report, look deeper into the meaning of a magazine article, or investigate the truth behind a rumor.

When you think critically, you consider all possible options and other points of view. You look objectively at information. Objective means fairly, without emotion or prejudice. Then, you use your values, standards, and ethics to interpret the information subjectively. Subjective means affected by existing opinions, feelings, and beliefs.

Looking at things both objectively and subjectively can help you make choices that are right for you. For example, you can look at a candidate for class president objectively and see that she is smart, hard-working, and honest. Subjectively, you can disagree with everything she stands for, and vote for someone else.

Communicating Effectively

Communicating is how people connect with others. Communication prevents misunderstandings. It gives you a way to share ideas. It even makes it easier for you to appreciate and respect other people’s opinions. At its most basic, communication is an exchange between a sender and a receiver. The sender transmits the message with a specific intent. The receiver interprets the message and responds. Effective communication is when the receiver interprets the message the way the sender intended. Ineffective communication is when the receiver misinterprets the message.

Sometimes barriers get in the way of effective communication. When you recognize any potential communication barriers, such as language barriers, cultural barriers, or value/belief barriers, you can take steps to overcome them—both when you listen and when you speak.

Figure 5 Communicating with people of different backgrounds or from different countries helps you build global awareness and understanding. How can you find ways to interact with students from different cultures?
Verbal Communication  Verbal communication is the exchange of messages by speaking or writing. For most of us, verbal communication is the most common way we stay in touch with other people in our lives. We talk face-to-face or on the phone. We send text messages, e-mails, and instant messages. We write blogs, pass notes, and send cards.

Talking is usually a very effective form of verbal communication. When you speak clearly and use language the receiver understands, he or she almost always gets the message the way you intend it.

Nonverbal Communication  Nonverbal communication helps put words into context. This form of communication includes visual messages that the receiver can see, such as a smile when you are talking. It also includes physical messages, such as a pat on the back. During a conversation, the tone of your voice and the language you use combine to provide context for the words. When you write, you lose some of the context, which can make the communication less effective. Exchanging written messages doesn’t take the place of face-to-face communication. When the receiver can’t hear your voice, he or she might misinterpret the message.

Active Listening  Active listening is an important part of effective communication. When you are an active listener, you pay attention to the speaker, and make sure you hear and understand the message. Active listening is a sign of respect. It shows you are willing to communicate and that you care about the speaker and the message. When you listen actively, the other person is more likely to listen when you speak, too.

Use these skills to be an active listener:

• Show interest using eye contact and positive nonverbal messages.
• Let the other person finish speaking before you respond.
• Ignore distractions such as cell phones and other people.
• Set your predetermined opinions and emotions aside.
• Repeat the message that you hear out loud, to make sure you received it correctly.

The Communication Process  You can communicate effectively by using a six-step process:

1. Be clear. Use words and body language that the other person can understand, and that send a clear message.

2. Be personal. Address the other person by his or her name or title. Use “I” statements to show that you take responsibility for your role in the conflict.

3. Be positive. State your message in positive terms directed at how to achieve your common goal.
4. Get to the point. Explain why you feel or think this way.
5. Use active listening. Be sure you hear the response.
6. Think before you respond. Use critical thinking instead of emotions.

Cooperating and Collaborating

Any group that works together to achieve a common goal is a team. When you are part of a team, you have access to all the knowledge, experience, and abilities of your teammates. Together you can have more ideas, achieve more goals, and solve more problems. A successful team relationship depends on all team members working together. They depend on each other. They trust one another. If one team member does not do his or her share, the entire team suffers. The challenges of a team relationship come from having different people working together. Even if everyone agrees on a common goal, they may not agree on how to achieve that goal.

Developing a Team Relationship

Teams are influenced by different things, including the personal qualities of the team members, the resources available, and the purpose or goals of the team. When a team first forms, team members might feel nervous or uncomfortable. You might not know each other very well. You might wonder what to expect.

At first, you might misunderstand each other, or misinterpret communications. One teammate might say she can’t come to a meeting, and you might think she means she doesn’t want to be part of the team. Another teammate might have lots of plans and ideas, and the rest of you might think he is trying to take over and be the boss.

As you get to know each other, and learn how to communicate, you might feel a sense of belonging. You might develop common bonds. You might give your team a name and identify with your teammates. You will be able to work together to achieve your goal.

Being a Leader

Teams benefit from strong leadership. Leaders exhibit positive qualities that other people respect, such as self-confidence. They use skills such as goal setting and critical thinking to make healthy decisions for the benefit of the team. Being the leader does not mean you are always right. The leader’s opinion does not count more than the opinions of the other team members. An effective leader keeps the team on track and focused on achieving its goals.

Being a Team Member

While a strong leader is important to the success of a team, team members must also be committed to the group’s success. An effective team member helps teammates if they need help, does not blame teammates for problems or
mistakes, and offers ideas and suggestions instead of criticism. You are a good team member if you are:

• Open minded
• Willing to compromise
• Cooperative
• Friendly
• Trustworthy

**Bullying** A bully is someone who tries to hurt others on purpose, not just once but over and over. Bullies can be boys or girls, big or small, young or old. Bullies can be found at school, but they can also turn up in other areas of your life, including in your neighborhood, at work, and even at home.

Bullies behave badly because it gets them attention. Bullies respond when witnesses laugh by bullying more. They respond when victims cry by bullying more. The more people react, the worse the bullying gets.

Some of the things bullies do include:

• Physically hurting others by tripping, pushing, kicking, pinching, or punching
• Calling people names
• Teasing people about the way they look, the way they act, or their values
• Excluding someone—leaving someone out

Bullies tend to pick on people who are smaller, who don’t know how to stand up for themselves, who are easily upset, and who don’t have a lot of friends. If you are being bullied, you need to take action right away.

• Tell someone!
• Avoid the bully as much as you can.
• Refuse to do what the bully says.
• Stand up for yourself!

Cyberbullies, are bullies who use technology such as the Internet, cell phones, and interactive gaming devices to hurt others. They might:

• Send threatening or harassing messages
• Steal passwords and pretend to be someone else online
• Use blogs or social networking sites to spread rumors
• Send private pictures through e-mail or cell phones
• Create hurtful Web sites
• Distribute someone else’s personal information
Cyberbullying can be tricky to stop, because it is anonymous and takes place away from school. If you are being cyberbullied, you can take many of the same steps you would take with a face-to-face bully. But, if the cyberbully doesn’t stop, you may have to report it to the Internet or telephone service provider. If the behavior is illegal, you may have to report it to the police.

**Behaving Ethically**

Ethics are a set of beliefs about what is right and what is wrong. Some ethics are established by society. They determine how people are supposed to behave, usually in terms of human rights, responsibilities, and justice. They may be based on customs or on law. Some ethics are established by groups of people, such as the members of certain professions. For example, doctors and lawyers must abide by strict ethical standards, or they can lose their licenses to practice. Some ethics are personal and usually measure virtues—or positive character traits—such as honesty, compassion, and loyalty.

People don’t always agree on what is ethical. One student may think it is ethical to let a friend copy his homework, while another student may think it is unethical. Even when there are laws defining what is ethical, some people still don’t agree. For example, one person might think it is ethical to download movies or share music files, even though it is illegal.

**Using Technology**

Technology is a varied resource that impacts all areas of your life. It makes everyday life easier, more fun, and more rewarding. As with any resource, knowing when and how to use technology can help you be more productive. Using technology just because it’s there or seems cool might be fun; it can also end up wasting other resources, such as time, energy, or money.

For example, the Internet is a technology we use all the time. It can provide many benefits when you use it wisely. You can find information to complete a homework assignment, communicate with friends, or shop. If you don’t use the Internet wisely, you might waste time looking at Web sites that provide incorrect or misleading information. You might spend so much time online that you put your real relationships at risk. Or, you might accidentally send personal information to identity thieves.

Critical thinking can help you recognize how best to use technology in your own life. You can decide whether technology will be a solution to a problem you are facing, or if it will cause new problems.

**Types of Technology** Technology can be classified into many different categories. You might use or encounter the following common types of technology.
• Information technology is likely to be the type of technology you use and that impacts your daily life the most. It refers to the use of computers to collect, store, and distribute information. For example, you use information technology to write, edit, and print a letter, or to store a name and address in a computerized contact list. You also use information technology to search the Internet or read a news story online, or for online shopping.

• Communications technology is part of information technology. It refers to the use of technology to make communication easier and more efficient. It includes cell phones, as well as video conferencing, voice over Internet protocol (VoIP), and social networking.

• Agricultural technology is the use of technology to control the growth and harvesting of animal and plant products. It includes a wide range of areas, such as soil preparation, harvesting and planting techniques, and the use of chemicals for growth or pest control.

• Medical technology is the use of technology to improve the management and delivery of health care. It includes areas such as medical imaging technology, nuclear medicine technology, and veterinary medical technology.

• Banking technology also stems from information technology. It includes areas such as software for managing online banking, controlling access to accounts, and technology for automated teller machines, as well as debit and credit card readers.

Benefits and Drawbacks of Technology  Is it always better to use technology? There are obvious benefits to using technology, but there are also drawbacks. Most new technologies have both positive and negative effects.

• Manufacturing is faster when you use assembly lines, robots, and automated management systems, than when you build products by hand. But, manufacturing processes may release chemicals into the environment, causing pollution.

• Water filtration systems, access to electricity, and advancements in medical care are a few ways technology has improved health and the quality of life. Technology also creates ethical dilemmas, such as testing medical products on animals, or genetically modifying food products.
• Jet engines make it possible for people to travel quickly and easily. But, passengers on airplanes are exposed to radiation, and can rapidly transmit disease from one country to another.

• Computers provide access to information and keep people connected. They also store personal information that can lead to invasions of privacy or identity theft.

Some newer technologies can help reverse problems caused by older technologies. For example, pollution caused by technology brought some animals to the brink of extinction. Genetic technology is helping animal breeding programs to restore the animal populations. Understanding the positive and negative effects can help you make choices about how best to use technology.

Cyberspace Is a Risky Place  Using the Internet is usually fun. It can also lead to risk. Consider the following:

• How much do you really know about someone online who you’ve never met? You can’t see him. You can’t hear his voice. An adult can pretend to be a teen, and you would never know.

• How much information do you want everyone to know? Everything you put on the Internet—including messages sent from a cell phone—is public, and it never goes away. A blog you post today will still be around five years from now.

• How much control are you willing to give up? As soon as you put information online, you no longer control it. You might send a picture or message to a friend, who forwards it to someone else, who forwards it to someone else, who posts it on a social networking site.

Suggested Activities

• Write down three decisions you have faced in the last two days. As a class, discuss the decisions. If more than one of you faced the same decision, discuss the different—or similar—choices you made and why. Compare the outcomes of the choices made by different people.

• For a week, keep track of how you spend your time—how much time you spend socializing with friends, doing homework, spending time with your family, etc. Write a short paragraph on ways in which you can improve your time-management skills. If you have access to an electronic bulletin board, post your paragraphs to the board.
• How much does peer pressure influence decisions?

1. Think of a question you could ask your classmate, such as whether she wants a test on Thursday or Friday.

2. Ask five people the question, without saying anything else: “Do you want the test on Thursday or Friday?”

3. Ask five other people the question, but add a comment that indicates their peers have already made a choice: “Do you want the test on Thursday or Friday? Most people have been picking Thursday.”

4. Make a chart comparing the results, and discuss it as a class.

• As a class, develop a list of positive personal qualities such as flexibility, open-mindedness, initiative, listening attentively to speakers, and willingness to learn new knowledge and skills. Consider which of these personal qualities you have and which ones you need to develop. For a week, keep a journal and describe events where you exhibited the qualities listed. At the end of week, use the documentation to make a poster or presentation.

• Being able to lead a team is an important skill. Working with a partner, brainstorm the qualities that it takes to be a good leader. Make a two-column chart listing the qualities on the left and describing the ways you exhibit the quality on the right. Present your findings to the class in a multimedia presentation, a song or rap, or a poster.

• Technology is constantly changing and improving. Not that long ago, students would have to type up their reports and schoolwork using a typewriter. This meant that if they made a major error, they would have to start all over again. Write a short report describing ways in which technology impacts how students learn and study.