



Student Guide

Skills for Student Success

A product of

The  Education
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Business and Community for Public Schools

Acknowledgements

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The Education Alliance is a 501(c)(3) organization whose vision is to ensure every West Virginia public school student graduates ready to begin a career or pursue additional education and training.

Table Contents

Unit 1: Introduction.....	3
Unit 2: Planning for the Year	5
Unit 3: Respect	9
Unit 4: Responsibility.....	11
Unit 5: Study Skills	13
Unit 6: Creating Your Dreams Worksheet	17
Unit 7: Punctuality	20
Unit 8: Gratitude.....	22
Unit 9: Coping Skills.....	25
Unit 10: Cooperation	29
Unit 11: Manners.....	31
Unit 12: Ending the Year	33

Unit 1: Introduction



Definition: Introduction: A way to become acquainted



Goal: To help you get to know your group and to set behavioral expectations by establishing group ground rules.



Objective: You, your mentor, and other students in your group will discuss personal expectations for the group experience and will set expectations for how the group should proceed during the year.

Student Worksheet — Unit 1: Introduction New Group

What is your name?

Who do you live with? Who else lives in your home?

What are your hobbies? What kind of extracurricular activities do you participate in?

What do you want to do after you graduate from high school?

What do you want to get from this group?

What kinds of behavior expectations are necessary for the group to be successful?

Unit 2: Planning for the Year



Definition: **Plan:** A method for accomplishing an objective



Goal: To help you prepare for the academic year



Objective: With your mentor's help, identify important dates for the school year and fill out your agenda book. You will identify any classes you need to make up and will begin creating a plan for how to do that with your mentor.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Worksheet — Unit 2: Planning for the Year

1. Complete your calendar for the year by putting the following in your agenda book:
 - Semester dates—when each semester begins and ends
 - Finals
 - ½ days and no school days
 - Holiday breaks
 - Testing dates—WESTEST, AP test, etc
2. Review the financial aid brochures with your mentor and put important dates in your agenda book.
3. Look over each class syllabus - put the following information in your agenda book:
 - Test dates
 - Homework due dates
 - Project due dates
 - Contact information of peers or teachers
4. Review the graduation requirements chart (next page) with your mentor:
 - Do you have to make up any failed classes?
 - What are your options for making up classes?
 - Take the information from the graduation requirements chart to a meeting with your guidance counselor; also take the counselor worksheet. Fill out the counselor worksheet and bring it back to the next mentoring session.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Graduation Requirements

Directions: To graduate high school you must receive twenty-five credits with a set number of credits in your core courses, electives and additional graduation requirements. Use the following tracking sheet to see where you stand. Each semester you receive a half (.5) credit for completing each course with a D or better. Using your transcript mark off (entering a .5 or check mark) each semester you receive credit for completing a course. Total the courses completed column vertically for credits earned each year and horizontally for credits per course. After completing both semesters in core courses check off the appropriate check box. Once the credits needed column equals the credits needed column you can check off the complete column. After completing this form meet with you counselor to make sure you didn't miss anything.

Core Courses	9 th Grade		10 th Grade		11 th Grade		12 th Grade		Total Credits Earned	Credits Needed	Complete
	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2			
English: <input type="checkbox"/> 9 th <input type="checkbox"/> 10 th <input type="checkbox"/> 11 th <input type="checkbox"/> 12 th										4	
Math: <input type="checkbox"/> 9 th <input type="checkbox"/> 10 th <input type="checkbox"/> 11 th <input type="checkbox"/> 12 th										4	
Science: <input type="checkbox"/> 9 th <input type="checkbox"/> 10 th <input type="checkbox"/> 11 th <input type="checkbox"/> 12 th										4 PP 3 SP	
Social Studies: <input type="checkbox"/> 9 th <input type="checkbox"/> 10 th <input type="checkbox"/> 11 th <input type="checkbox"/> 12 th										4	
Sub-Total (Section A)										16 PP 15 SP	
Additional Graduation Requirements											
Physical Education/Wellness										1	
Health										1	
The Arts										1	
Computer Applications										.5	
Speech										.5	
Foreign Language										2	
Career Concentration										4-6	
Sub-Total (Section B)										10-12	
Electives											
Sub-Total (Section C)											
Final Total										25	

Name: _____ Date: _____

Counselor Worksheet

Please complete the following information for this student

1. What classes do I need to make up by the end of this year and/or by graduation?

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

2. What classes do I need to complete this year?

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

3. What important information about financial aid do I need to know?

Unit 3: Respect



Definition: **Respect:** To take into consideration the views and desires of others and to incorporate these into your actions and decisions



Goal: To help you understand the importance of respecting yourself and others



Objective: The group discussion on the importance of respect and the “THINK” strategy will help you develop the ability to respect yourself and others.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Worksheet — Unit 3: Respect

What does RESPECT mean to you?

Who do you RESPECT?

What qualities make you RESPECT those people?

How do you show RESPECT to others?

How do you show RESPECT in the classroom?

Are there any people you do not RESPECT? Why?

How can you interact with people you do not RESPECT so you do not get into trouble?

Why is RESPECT important in a work environment? (At your job?)

Is RESPECT earned or given? How do you earn RESPECT from others?

Unit 4: Responsibility



Definition: **Being responsible:** Fulfilling your obligations; being able to choose between right and wrong; being accountable for your actions or choices, to be trustworthy



Goal: To help you understand the importance of being responsible for your actions and choices



Objective: The group discussion on the importance of responsibility will help you develop a plan to fulfill your obligations and be accountable for your actions.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Worksheet — Unit 4: Responsibility

What does RESPONSIBILITY mean to you?

What are some school rules or expectations?

Why do schools have these rules or expectations?

Who is RESPONSIBLE for making sure you abide by these rules/expectations?

What kinds of things are you RESPONSIBLE for at home?

What kinds of things are people RESPONSIBLE for at their jobs?

A RESPONSIBLE person takes charge of him- or herself and accepts the consequences for his or her actions and words. What does this mean to you?

Unit 5: Study Skills



Definition: **Study Skills:** Skills necessary to understand and retain information for class



Goal: To give you the necessary skills to use time management, organization, and prioritizing to study effectively



Objective: The organization, time management, and prioritizing tips will help you develop a plan to study more effectively.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Worksheet — Unit 5: Study Skills

Keep track of deadlines and due dates. How can you do this?

Keep your work for each class organized. How can you do this?

Find a quiet place and time to study. When is the best time for you to study? Where is the best place for you to study?

Review the handouts on study skills. Which ones sound like they would work for you? Make a plan.

What kind of supplies do you need to be successful? Can you locate these supplies?

Try to get 7-8 hours of sleep a night. Why does sleep support good study skills?

Eat a balanced diet. Why does good nutrition support good study skills?

Try to get 30-60 minutes of physical activity per day. Why does physical activity support good study skills?

Student Tips - Unit 5: Study Skills

Set aside time and find a quiet place to study.

Try to study at the same time every day—this will become a habit.

TESTS AND QUIZZES

- 1. Get the information you need to study:** Show up for class on time, pay attention in class, take good notes, and ask questions if you do not understand or you need clarification. Read your class syllabus. Find out what pages or material you need to study.
- 2. Have the right environment:** Make sure the lighting is adequate. Your study surface (desk, floor, and/or table) should be large enough to accommodate all your materials.
- 3. Have all the tools you need to study:** This means your textbook, notes, calculator, dictionary, computer, etc.
- 4. Don't wait until the last minute to start studying:** Cramming does not work all the time. As your classes get harder and more involved, you really need to understand the material, not just memorize it for a brief time. If you don't understand the work, ask for a tutor or ask for clarification from your teacher.
- 5. Be specific about what you are going to work on:** Prioritize your studying. Try to work on the hardest subject or the one you like the least first. Don't keep putting it off.
- 6. Scan over the material:** Look over the material one time quickly to see how it is formatted (set up). This will help you figure out how to gather important information or how to find important formulas.
- 7. Use study aids to help:**
 - Use highlighters to identify key words, dates, and other information so you can review it again quickly.
 - Take notes on your reading to help you remember what you have just read. You can take notes on notebook paper, index cards, and computers. Index cards are helpful for testing yourself later.
 - Make sure you review the material several times.
 - Take time to test yourself.

Have a study buddy: Sometimes group study skills can be helpful. If it turns into a social gathering, start a new group or study by yourself. Also, consider calling a peer who understands the material.

PROJECTS OR PAPERS

- 1. Understand the assignment:** Make sure you know what you are supposed to write about or present. If you are not clear, ask for some additional guidance from your teacher. There is a good chance that if you do not understand the objective, some of your peers do not either.
- 2. Do not procrastinate:** Far-off deadlines do not mean you should start later. It means the final project should be very well thought out and put together. Do your research as soon as you can. If the project is broken into several deadlines, make sure you meet all of them. Teachers will give you credit for meeting the smaller deadlines, and their periodic feedback will help you know if you are on the right track.
- 3. Make sure you have the right tools/materials:** This usually means poster board, colored markers, computer, printer, etc.
- 4. Final product:** Make sure your final paper or project is well-polished. Your information should be accurate and have correct spelling and grammar. Have someone look over your work before you turn it in.

Unit 6: Creating Your Dreams Worksheet



Definition: A worksheet to help you visualize your future



Goal: To help you start thinking of goals for your futures



Objective: When questioned, many students who drop out of school do not have dreams or goals. This activity will help you begin to develop a picture of what your future life could look like.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Worksheet — Unit 6: Creating Your Dreams Worksheet

Education After Graduation

Associate's Degree Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Doctorate Degree
 Technical School Apprenticeship Military Other

Area of study: _____

Major/Degree: _____

Spouse/Significant Other

Relationship status (circle one): Married Not Married

Desired qualities in spouse: _____

Children

Desire to become a parent (circle one): Yes No

How many: _____

Children's activities: _____

Children's academics: _____

Pets

Desire to have pets (circle one): Yes No

How many: _____ Type: _____

Job/Career

Type of employment (circle one): Full time Part time Stay-at-home parent

Environment (circle one): Inside Outside At a computer

Location (circle one): In state Out of state

Hours of work (circle one): Day shift Mid-shift Night shift

Career Field: _____

Occupation (job): _____

Salary: _____

Transportation

Desire to have a car (circle one): Yes No

Make: _____ Model: _____ Year: _____

Other transportation: _____

Home

 Two-story Ranch Apartment Loft Doublewide Other

Color/style: _____ Location: _____

Yard: Large Small Amenities: _____

Specifics of home: _____

Hobbies

List all that apply: _____

Athletics

Desired type (circle all that apply): Fun League Professional

What specifically? _____

Community Involvement

List all that apply: _____

Other

List all that apply: _____

Unit 7: Punctuality



Definition: **Punctuality:** Being on time



Goal: To help you understand the importance of being on time



Objective: The group discussion on the importance of being punctual and how not being punctual impacts others will make you more aware of the importance of meeting deadlines and being dependable.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Worksheet — Unit 7: Punctuality

What does it mean to be punctual at home? What happens when you are not punctual at home?

What does it mean to be punctual at school? What happens when you are not punctual at school?

What does it mean to be punctual at a job? What happens when you are not punctual at a job?

How do you feel about people who always arrive late to do something with you, to give you something, or to take you somewhere?

How do you think your parents, friends, or teachers feel when you are not punctual?

What prevents you from being punctual? What are your barriers?

What changes can you make so that you always keep your word and meet your expectations?

Unit 8: Gratitude



Definition: **Gratitude:** The state of being grateful—thankfulness



Goal: To help you understand the importance of being grateful for what others do for you



Objective: The activity and discussion will help you learn how to express gratitude appropriately. Focusing on how to be more grateful, you will become more aware of how much others do for you. You will also learn that expressing gratitude helps build strong, positive relationships with others.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Worksheet — Unit 8: Gratitude

Why is it important to say “thank you” to someone?

What actions do other people take to make your life easier, happier, or more interesting? Who are these people?

What are different ways of saying “thank you”?

How can saying “thank you” help build good relationships with others?

How do you feel when you do something nice for someone and he or she does not say “thank you”?

How can saying “thank you” make you feel better?

Why is it important to be grateful?

Handout — Unit 8: Gratitude

Think of two people whom you would like to thank—one at home and one at school. Write them a “thank you” card. Use the following template as a guide:

1. Dear _____,
(If this is too formal, you can say Hi _____, or just put the person’s first name.)
2. Thank you for _____.
This could be for a gift (be descriptive, i.e., I like the soft pink scarf) or for when someone does something nice for you (like encouraging you when you wanted to give up, spending extra time to help you understand how to complete a problem, making your breakfast every morning, listening when you were sad).
3. Add a sentence about the item or gesture:
 - The scarf matches many of my outfits and is my favorite color.
 - I feel like I am more prepared for my test because of your support.
 - I always start my day off with more energy because you take the time to prepare breakfast for me.
 - I feel so lucky to have a friend who will take time out of the day to make sure I am OK.
4. Send positive wishes to the person:
 - I love your fashion sense. Now, I can look as good as you.
 - Good luck on your upcoming test.
 - I hope you have a great week, summer, holiday, etc.
5. End the note with one of the following salutations: Love, Warm regards, Best wishes, Yours truly, Respectfully, etc.
6. Sign your name. Make sure the signature is readable so the person knows who sent the nice card!

Unit 9: Coping Skills



Definition: **Coping Skills:** Skills you use to get through a challenging time



Goal: To help you feel more confident when you enter into challenging situations or deal with challenging people



Objective: The activity and process will help you deal with stress in a positive manner.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Worksheet — Unit 9: Coping

How did it feel to hold the balloon, knowing it may pop at any time?

Did you want to stand next to other people who had full balloons? Why not?

Did you let the air out of your balloon slowly? How did it feel? What did the balloon look like?

Did you let the balloon go? What did it do?

How do people act and what do they do when they are stressed out?

What do you do when you are stressed out?

What helps you feel less stressed?

Review the handout on how to relieve stress. Which one of these coping strategies are you going to try next time you feel stressed, mad, and overwhelmed?

“Stress Buster” Handout - Unit 9: Coping Skills

People who are stressed have difficulty controlling themselves. Sometimes they become aggressive, use substances to cope, do not sleep well, overeat or undereat, or break down. If you feel stressed, ask an adult for help, and utilize the tactics below to help cope with the situation.

- Remind yourself that a lot of stress is temporary—it will pass, and you will be OK. Think about other times you have gotten through stressful situations, and remind yourself how strong you are.
- If other people are causing the stress, talk to them about it. Remember to talk to them in a calm tone. If talking does not work, try to move away from the person.
- Distract yourself with positive outlets: music, exercise, reading, etc.
- Try thinking about the present instead of focusing on what “could be.” To accomplish this, you can sit in a quiet place, allow yourself to become aware of your surroundings, and concentrate on your breathing.
- Become familiar with the unknown. If you are stressed about a situation because you are unaware of the details, determine the best method for getting more information. Methods could include the following: ask questions, research/learn facts, and do not make up results.
- Beat the stress to the punch. If you know you get stressed during certain times of the year or in certain situations, think of ways you can prepare yourself, and decide how to do the things differently.
- Come up with a mantra, a relaxing phrase that is repeated to overcome the stress and refocus. Examples include the following:
 - Just Do It!
 - It’s not about ability; it’s about motivation and perseverance.
 - I think I can!
 - It’s all about attitude.

Use visualization. Visualize yourself getting through the situation, and practice ways you can deal with the obstacles. This will make you will feel more prepared.

Be prepared. Do not wait until the last minute. Complete your work on time or early. Can you think of some patterns or choices that tend to lead to you not having enough time to get your work done? How can you break those patterns?

Get enough sleep. Sleep can make a huge difference in your ability to deal with stress. Even though it is hard to go to bed early, try your best. What can make it challenging for you to get enough rest?

Eat well. People who eat enough food and a well-balanced diet are more productive. Overeating or undereating can cause stress or heighten stress levels. Can you identify problem areas in your efforts to eat right? What or who could help you eat better?

Remember the BIG picture—do not get caught up in small petty things.

Remember what your ultimate goal is. Be careful about putting too much pressure on yourself. Who can you talk to if you realize you are under a lot of pressure?

You can find information and ideas about managing stress, as well as information about other topics that may be important to you online. See <http://teenshealth.org/teen/> for ideas, or ask your local librarian how to find books about topics of your choice. Getting more information often helps reduce stress and can build your coping skills!

Unit 10: Cooperation



Definition: **Cooperation:** To act or work together toward a common purpose or end



Goal: To help you understand the benefit of working well with others



Objective: The group discussion on the importance of cooperation will help you learn that cooperating with others is a win-win situation.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Worksheet — Unit 10: Cooperation

What was easy about the activity? What was hard about the activity?

Did everyone have a role? Did everyone have input? Who was the leader? Why?

What does cooperation mean to you?

Is listening to others important for cooperation? Why?

Who wins when you cooperate?

Why is cooperation important at home?

Why is cooperation important at school?

Why is cooperation important at a job?

Unit 11: Manners



Definition: **Manners:** Behaving in a socially appropriate way for the setting



Goal: To help you understand the importance of using good manners



Objective: The group discussion on the importance of good manners will help you become more aware of how you appear to others based on how you act.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Worksheet — Unit 11: Manners

What are good manners?

What are important manners to have at home? How can good manners help you at home?

What are important manners to have at school? How can good manners help you at school?

What are important manners to have at a job? How can good manners help you in a job?

Unit 12: Ending the Year



Definition: **The End:** Where something stops



Goal: To help you bring closure to the year and to reflect on what you have learned



Objective: You will learn how to end one chapter and look forward to another.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Worksheet - Unit 12: Ending the Year

Have you passed all the classes you needed to pass?

Have you checked to see if you have any outstanding fees that can prevent you from graduating?

Have you applied to college if you plan on attending?

Have you filled out job applications if you are going into the workforce?

Have you sent “thank you” notes to the people at school who have made a difference in your life?

What have you learned from this group?

What will you miss about this group?

What are you looking forward to next year?

Resources for More Information on Each Unit Topic

Unit Two: Planning the Year

You can access your school's calendar by visiting your school's website or contacting your school counselor. Information on colleges, financial aid and scholarships can be found on the College Foundation of West Virginia's (CFWV) website: <http://www.cfwv.com>.

Unit Three: Respect

For information about respect and on adolescent learning, consider books written by Dawn Huebner, available online and from your local library.

Unit Four: Responsibility

For additional support for adolescent learning about responsibility, consider *Community Service and Social Responsibility in Youth* or similar books available online or from your local library.

Unit Five: Study Skills

For additional information about study skills, consider online resources like Virginia Tech's study skills self-help information online at <http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/stdyhlp.html/>

Unit Six: Creating Your Dreams Worksheet

For additional information about goal setting and planning, consider online resources like Mind Tools' *Planning to Live Your Life Your Way* post online at <http://www.mindtools.com/page6.html>

Unit Seven: Punctuality

Consider simply searching for the word "punctuality" on Amazon.com for some terrific perspectives on the issue; resources range from self-help books to children's books about the dynamics of the punctuality-challenged!

Unit Eight: Gratitude, Unit Nine: Coping Skills, and Unit Ten: Cooperation

LessonPlanet.com has a searchable database of lesson plans for teachers. Use "gratitude, coping skills, and cooperation" as search terms to pull up some ideas to spark your thinking about these issues.

Unit Eleven: Manners

Using any Internet search engine to research "manners for young adults" results in a variety of resources you may find enriching for facilitating your group through Unit 11.