



BE LIFE READY®

Keys to Be Life Ready®

This guidebook provides practical information and commonsense approaches which act as a catalyst for teens and adults to gain confidence and learn how to achieve greater academic, career, and personal success.

A Life Decisions Group, LLC Initiative

BE LIFE READY®

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BE LIFE READY®

WHAT IS BE LIFE READY®?

Be Life Ready® is an initiative to act as a catalyst for teens and adults to gain important information which will help them create a more satisfying life and increase their chances of achieving greater academic, career, and personal success.

WHY WAS BE LIFE READY® CREATED?

Be Life Ready® was created based on an understanding that the quality of a person's life is a direct result of the choices he or she makes. The more proficient a person becomes at making decisions that produce favorable outcomes, the more likely a happier, more successful life will result. All it takes is a willingness to commit time and energy to learn how to make the right choices.

WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM BE LIFE READY®?

People of all ages can benefit from Be Life Ready®. Students in high school and college or adults searching for more satisfying careers and lives, will discover how to better control and enhance the overall quality of their lives by addressing specific Keys to Be Life Ready®. The knowledge gained from each key and the tools provided will help create a more productive life.

HOW CAN BE LIFE READY® IMPACT AMERICA'S GREATEST SOCIAL PROBLEMS?

Be Life Ready® can be used to address and impact some of the most prominent social problems in America today. There are many individuals who are in a period of transition and need to reevaluate their lives. Be Life Ready® can help them regain their confidence and make new decisions to be self-sufficient. Large groups such as veterans, immigrants, reformed prisoners, high school and college dropouts, current at-risk students, the unemployed, people living in poverty on welfare, and the homeless can all benefit by gaining information included in the Keys to Be Life Ready®.

WHAT IS THE BE LIFE READY® GUIDEBOOK?

The Be Life Ready® guidebook is a concise resource to help people gather insight and information about themselves which will help address many academic, career, and personal decisions. The guidebook can be used as a valuable learning tool by individuals who want to achieve greater success in school, work, and life, or it can be utilized by anyone in a position to influence and teach others the skills to be life ready.

WHAT ARE THE KEYS TO BE LIFE READY®?

The Keys to Be Life Ready® provide individuals with valuable information to help them be better prepared to create a more satisfying and productive life. The following 9 Keys to Be Life Ready® include practical, commonsense approaches which will benefit those who want to achieve their full potential:

#1 BE EDUCATED AND A LIFELONG LEARNER.

#2 CREATE AND MAINTAIN A SUCCESS TEAM.

#3 DEVELOP A SUCCESS PLAN.

#4 USE AN EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.

#5 MAKE GOOD BIG-TICKET DECISIONS.

#6 FOCUS ON PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT.

#7 BE KNOWLEDGEABLE OF SKILLS.

#8 MARKET YOURSELF AND INTERVIEW POSITIVELY.

#9 UNDERSTAND HOW TO FIND A JOB.



Key to Be Life Ready® #1: Be Educated and a Lifelong Learner

Education is power. To achieve a lifetime of success a strong foundation in reading, writing and math is essential. By having this foundation you'll be better prepared and more likely to graduate high school and to continue your education at a two or four-year college or to gain access to job training opportunities. Commit to staying in school, becoming educated, and to making good academic and career decisions by developing a realistic educational plan that results in achieving your academic and career goals.

Education Impacts Level of Success and Income Potential

After completing high school, whether you continue on to earn a career certificate or a two or four-year college degree, you will achieve even greater success. Numerous research studies have revealed that high school dropouts are less likely to be steadily employed, and earn less income when they are employed, compared with those who graduate from high school. Approximately one-third of high school dropouts nationwide are steadily employed and more than twice as likely to live in poverty. The median income for high school dropouts is much lower than the median income for high school graduates and significantly lower than college graduates.

Commit to Lifelong Learning

If you are a youth and have thoughts about dropping out of school, ask individuals whom you view as successful how they approached learning in their lives. Then, ask individuals who work at jobs that you find unappealing or unchallenging, how seriously they took their education. If they were poor students, do they wish they had tried harder? If they dropped out, do they wish they had stayed in school? Would they approach education differently if they were given another chance? Then ask yourself how much of a commitment to education you are willing to make today and throughout your life. Committing to education is necessary not only to get a job but to keep one. By keeping up with rapid advances in technology and new developments in today's workplace requires a personal responsibility for lifelong learning.

Action Steps and Timeline



Key to Be Life Ready® #2: Create and Maintain a Success Team

In sports individual players don't win games, teams do and they rely on teamwork and the support from others to achieve success. People striving for success need to build and effectively manage their own success team.

Have you ever played any team sport? If so, do you think you could win a game all by yourself? If you never played a sport, have you been in a play or a member of a band or chorus? Could you perform every role in the play or entertain all alone? There are few, if any times in life when success can be achieved individually.

Few People, Succeed Alone

Teams have coaches to help players support each other and succeed. This kind of team success happens not only on the playing field but also in life. For you to succeed in school and in life you need to be part of a team that will provide you with the assistance and support to overcome obstacles which may stand in the way of reaching your academic and career goals. As soon as you identify potential obstacles, determine if you can overcome them on your own. If not, admit that you need help and take action to get the assistance you need. Once you develop this philosophy of enlisting support from others, you will utilize it throughout your life. Keep in mind that few of us, if any, succeed alone.

Create Your Own Success Team

In order to fulfill your academic and career goals you will want to create your own success team. There are people who care about you and want to help you succeed. Invite individuals to join your team who will be supportive and assist you as you identify and overcome personal or academic issues that stand in your way. Develop these relationships and utilize any and all support services available to you.

Now, using the Success Team Inventory on the next page, begin to assemble your success team.

Action Steps and Timeline

BE LIFE READY®

Success Team Inventory

Identify Primary Success Advisor _____

I. DETERMINING EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL GOALS

Team Members:

- ☐ Complete interest survey
- ☐ Clarify educational and career goals
- ☐ Determine needs for further education

II. ACADEMIC ISSUES

Team Members:

Select areas in which you may need assistance.

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic advisement | <input type="checkbox"/> Study skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time management | <input type="checkbox"/> Language barrier |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Test anxiety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Course selection | <input type="checkbox"/> Math anxiety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Degree requirements | <input type="checkbox"/> Job readiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class attendance | <input type="checkbox"/> Interview preparation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Resume preparation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grades | <input type="checkbox"/> Job application |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring | Other: _____ |

III. EXTRA CURRICULAR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Team Members:

Select activities in which you may have an interest.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athletics | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer organizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performing arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Clubs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student/local government | Other: _____ |

IV. OVERCOMING POTENTIAL OBSTACLES

Team Members:

Identify obstacles to achieving your educational or vocational goals.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial | <input type="checkbox"/> Relationships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing | Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care | |

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Success Team Inventory

V. HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Consider any health and wellness concerns you may want to address.

___ Drug use

___ Alcohol abuse

___ Eating disorders

___ Weight concerns

___ Pregnancy

___ Physical concerns

___ Visual/hearing concerns

___ Lack of exercise

___ Depression

Other: _____

Team Members:

VI. PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Consider any personal or family concerns that might interfere with your ability to succeed in school or at work.

___Unemployed family member

___Lack of family support

___Parent separation or divorce

___Family member in jail

Other: _____

Team Members:

Action Steps and Timelines

[illegible]

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Key to Be Life Ready® #3: Develop a Success Plan

People who achieve success develop a Success Plan to guide them as they make important decisions critical to their futures. Use the Success Planner to begin to collect information that will help you set your academic, career, and personal goals.

BE LIFE READY®SUCCESS PLANNER

This planner will help you collect important information about yourself. Update the information periodically as your interests and abilities change.

Personal Traits

Employers seek people who possess a variety of positive personality traits. What experiences have you had that show the following traits are part of your development?

Responsibility: _____

Self-esteem: _____

Sociability: _____

Integrity/Honesty: _____

Cooperation: _____

Values and Goals

What values are important to you in your choice of a career? _____

What are your short (less than one year), medium (1 to 5 years), and long range, (5 to 10 years) goals? _____

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Interests and Hobbies

Describe the things you enjoy doing in your leisure time. _____

Job Skills

What skills or abilities do you have that might interest an employer? _____

Aptitudes and Learning Styles

Considering grades and standardized test scores, what are your strengths academically? _____

Have you ever taken a learning style assessment? If so, what is your learning style? _____

Accomplishments

List a few accomplishments, projects, or activities that you are proud of. _____

Plans after High School (if applicable)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Two-year college |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Four-year college | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade/vocational school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Military: Branch? | <input type="checkbox"/> Job training/apprenticeship |

Other: _____

Career Exploration

I have interests in and have learned about the following careers: _____

Using knowledge about myself, these careers are (or are not) suitable for me because: _____



Results of Career Assessment Tools (If applicable)

Name of Assessment	Date	Results

Work Experience (include volunteer and work experience)

Name of Employer	Date	Type of work/ skills

Developmental Activities and Tasks Completed

- ☐ added members to SuccessTeam
- ☐ talked to parents/adults about career plan
- ☐ participated in school activities
- ☐ volunteered in community activities
- ☐ researched career information
- ☐ held leadership positions
- ☐ requested recommendation letters
- ☐ held a part-time, full-time or summer job
- ☐ listened to speakers (college reps, etc.)
- ☐ took an interest inventory
- ☐ interviewed, observed, shadowed worker
- ☐ took a career-related field trip/visit
- ☐ participated in a practice interview
- ☐ took part in a career day/college/job fair

Important Documentation

- ☐ Transcript of grades
- ☐ Employment credentials: skill competencies or certificates
- ☐ Completed resume
- ☐ Copies of completed job and/or college applications
- Standardized test scores: HSPA____ ACT _____ SAT____
- ASVAB _____ Competency Exam_____ Other_____
- ☐ Copies of special achievement awards

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Key to Be Life Ready® #4: Use an Effective Decision-Making Process

Regardless of what point you are in life, you probably have been asked to make important decisions. How did you make those decisions? Did you choose the first thing that came to mind? Did you let others make those decisions for you? Did you avoid making the decision as long as possible? If you are like most people you have never been taught how to make decisions properly even though decision-making impacts all areas of your life. Decision making isn't something that comes naturally. It is a skill that needs to be learned. Becoming successful requires the ability to make good decisions, ones that lead to favorable outcomes.

Use an Effective Decision-Making Process

Accept responsibility for learning to make good academic, career and personal choices utilizing an effective decision-making process. Having to make important decisions can become overwhelming given the number and importance of the decisions to be made. With the outcomes directly impacting the rest of your life, it is important that you learn how to use a deliberate and thoughtful approach to make decisions and that you make the right ones. The decisions you should care about the most are the ones you make from today forward. These are the decisions that will improve your life the most.

Decision Making is a Six-Step Process

Decision making is a process that takes time and practice to perfect. In life, good decisions lead to good outcomes and bad decisions result in poor outcomes and missed opportunities. Your goal is to make choices that result in favorable outcomes. The key to becoming more successful is to learn the following six decision-making steps and utilize them whenever you need to make any important decisions:

Define the decision to be made.

Evaluate your needs and wants.

Compile a list of realistic alternatives.

Investigate each alternative.

Determine the best alternative.

Establish a plan and implement it.

D E C I D E

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Utilize a Decision-Making Chart

Utilize a decision-making chart to organize the information you gather and to evaluate the alternatives identified through your research. First, list the ten interests, needs, and wants that are most important to you in making the decision at hand. Then, use this as a sort of personal filter system to rank the alternatives. The alternative that meets the most of your ten criteria is the choice that is the most “right” for you. Two charts follow to help you visualize this part of the decision-making process.

SAMPLE JOB DECISION CHART

Needs/Wants	Choice A	Choice B	Choice C	Choice D
Salary	X		X	
Work Environment	X		X	X
Pleasant People		X	X	X
Work Activities	X		X	X
Challenges/Problems		X	X	X
Weekend Hours	X	X	X	
Psychological Rewards		X		X
Job Security	X		X	X
Close to Home	X	X	X	
Flexible Schedule			X	X
	60%	50%	90%	70%

SAMPLE COLLEGE DECISION CHART

Needs/Wants	Choice A	Choice B	Choice C	Choice D
Curriculum	X	X		X
Location/Environment	X		X	X
Quality of Academics	X	X	X	
Cost (\$5,000-\$15,000)			X	X
Financial Aid (Scholarships)	X	X	X	
Size (7,500-12,000)	X	X	X	X
Class Size (<35)	X		X	
Co-op/Internships	X			X
Facilities	X	X		X
Recreation/Clubs	X		X	
	90%	50%	70%	60%



Utilize a Decision-Making Chart

Decision _____

Most Important Criteria

Alternatives

Needs/Wants

Choice A

Choice B

Choice C

Choice D

1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
	___%	___%	___%	___%

Best alternative: _____

Second best: _____

Third best: _____

Fourth best: _____

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Be Life Ready® Key # 5: Make Good Big-Ticket Decisions

The role that decision-making plays might be easier to understand if you look at the areas of your life that have the greatest impact on its quality. Throughout your life, you will make decisions in “big-ticket” areas, and the choices that you make along the way will define your life and the direction it will take.

Become an effective decision-maker, gain greater control of your life, and find more satisfaction in the choices you make. You will be better prepared to make the following big-ticket decisions, you will have greater confidence in the decisions you make, and you will realize greater academic, career and personal success in your life.

7 Big Ticket Decisions

There are seven areas in which your decisions will have a big impact on how satisfied you are with your life.

1. Education

Identify the type of education you need (formal, informal) and how to access it.

2. Field of Study

Determine your interests and then research different career fields.

3. Career Choice

Examine what is important to you in a career (money, making a difference, prestige, etc.)
then find a career that will satisfy you.

4. Living and Work Environments

Your living and working environment impact your happiness.

5. Relationships

Choose healthy, positive relationships.

6. Health and wellness

Find balance in mental and physical health.

7. Leisure Activities

Make good use of time away from school and work.

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Education

Individuals who understand the importance of education and the role it can play in their lives are much more likely to be successful in school and at work. Giving some thought to what you might want to do is a great way to begin. What careers or occupations might interest you? What are you good at? How will you define success as an adult? Is money, status, power, or happiness important to you? Do you want your work to help others or the environment or the world?

Look at your options and the education they will require. Will you need more than a high school education? Vocational training? Some college? A college degree? You may not know exactly what you want to do, but what is important is to understand that without education, you limit your future. Education opens doors and gives you options. Lack of education limits those options. Through education, you acquire knowledge and skills which will be useful in work and in life. Keep your future in your sights. Set goals and then, once you have reached them, set new goals.

Field of Study

Why choose courses or a field of study? Why not just leave your options completely open? As we mature and experience life, we learn more about ourselves. We can identify our strengths and our weaknesses. We learn what interests us and, just as importantly, what does not. That self-knowledge is critical information when it comes to choosing an occupation or a career.

Occupational clusters will also help you with your career exploration and your research will clarify what level of education you will need. As you move through high school and college, you will want to choose courses and a major that will prepare you for occupations in which you will most likely be successful and satisfied.

Career Choice

Begin the process of identifying possible careers by gathering information. The first kind of information you will need is obtained through self-assessment. Insight you gain about your own wants and needs will help you to narrow down career alternatives and work environments to those that are in line with your interests, skills and values. Interest inventories are valuable career exploration tools that may be helpful in this process. These inventories are based on personality theories that say that people who share similar likes and dislikes usually enjoy performing similar types of work in similar environments. Self-appraisal resources (e.g. interest surveys like the Self Directed Search or the Strong Interest Survey) are available through school counselors or on the Internet.

Next, you will gather information about careers that are compatible with your self-assessment data. Although there are thousands of occupations, the results of your interest inventories will identify careers that could be right for you. Then, utilizing occupational clusters which group similar careers together, you can focus your research on those that people with your personal traits are most likely to choose. These clusters allow you to be more efficient because you will focus on multiple, similar careers that most closely match your personality.

It is important that you do sufficient research and identify as many possible careers as you can. Unfortunately, people often limit their research to the few careers they know about and ignore the many other possibilities. At some point you will want to consider additional issues, such as career lifestyles and labor market demand for these careers, but for now, research occupations for which your self-assessment data indicate you would be best suited.

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Living and Work Environments

How we feel about where we live and work can have a significant influence on how satisfied we are with our lives. Your living environment includes what part of the country you live in, your community and neighborhood, your apartment or house and whether you live in an urban or rural setting. How do you feel about where you live? Are there things about it that you wish you could change?

Our work environment will also impact our satisfaction with our lives. What is important to you in a work environment? Do you prefer working indoors or outdoors? Would you rather move around during the day or be stationary? Which is more appealing, a small, medium, or large company? Are you more comfortable in a casual atmosphere or one that is more professional? Is working in a cubicle to your liking or would you want your own office? Every job has a corresponding environment and your objective is to find a job you like in a place you want to spend your time. People who fail to consider the work environment will likely be unsatisfied even if they are working in an occupation they enjoy.

Relationships

Unless you live alone on an island, you interact and develop relationships with other people on a daily basis. The quality of these relationships plays an important role in determining how satisfied you are with your life. When you are unhappy or dissatisfied with your life, you may overlook the part that relationships can play in that discontent. These relationships can influence your life in both positive and negative ways. Because of the significant roles that others play in your life, it is important that you approach decisions about relationships in the same manner that you do other big-ticket decisions.

Health and Wellness

Your physical health and wellness, in addition to your intellectual, social, and spiritual well-being, have significant influence on how you feel about your life. Assessing any and all of your health and wellness issues and making the right decisions in these areas will most likely improve your attitude toward the other big-ticket areas of your life.

Are you dissatisfied with how you look or how you feel? Does your self-esteem suffer because of that? Is your attitude or your behavior in other areas of your life affected? Do you smoke, drink alcohol, or abuse medications? Is your weight what it should be? Do you eat healthy foods? Do you exercise?

Take time to evaluate your personal habits, schedule a yearly physical, and address existing conditions. Assess your wellness behaviors and consider adopting a healthier lifestyle. Take control of your personal health and wellness by making thoughtful decisions and well-informed choices.

Leisure Activities

A satisfying life is one in which there is balance. Effective use of our leisure time can add to the balance in our lives. If a student, do you think of school as a boring place? Is your decision not to get involved in school activities the cause of your boredom? Do you allow time for leisure activities in your daily or weekly routine? Do you think about how you want to spend your free time or do you simply let it happen with no structure or routine? Being active in school and community activities is a great way to connect with others who have interests in common with you. Extracurricular school or community activities like chorus, orchestra, special-interest clubs and organizations, theatre, school or local government, intramural or team sports can not only give you opportunities for success but also give you the chance to develop skills that will be valuable in the workplace at a later time. At the very least, group activities may bring personal enjoyment and give you the chance to relax and be yourself.

Summary of Your Thoughts

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Key to Be Life Ready® #6: Focus on Personal Development

Keep Track of Your Developmental Experiences

Set Goals Each Year

Action Steps and Timeline

[illegible]

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Personal Developmental Checklist

Check off each task once it is completed. Since the tasks are developmental you may discover that you may want to repeat tasks in multiple years. Address each task as it becomes appropriate for you.

- ____ Developed personal Success Team
- ____ Took an interest inventory
- ____ Explored resources in library/career center
- ____ Used Internet to explore careers
- ____ Identified appropriate career cluster
- ____ Talked to adults about career plans
- ____ Mentored another individual
- ____ Participated in school/college activities
- ____ Volunteered in community activities
- ____ Held leadership positions
- ____ Took a career-related field trip
- ____ Attended employer presentations
- ____ Took part in a career day/ job fair
- ____ Listened to career speakers
- ____ Talked to college representatives
- ____ Spoke with employee in field of interest
- ____ Observed or shadowed an employee
- ____ Filled out a sample job application
- ____ Completed a real job application
- ____ Learned about and completed resume
- ____ Requested recommendation letters
- ____ Participated in a practice interview
- ____ Interviewed for a job
- ____ Held part-time or summer job

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Key to Be Life Ready® # 7: Be Knowledgeable of Skills

Most people have difficulty identifying their skills and applying those skills to a particular activity or occupation. Think of a skill as simply an ability to do something, whether it is a natural ability or one learned.

There are three basic skill types to consider: personal/self-management; functional/transferable; and technical/special knowledge. Being familiar with these different types of skills, will make it easier for you to describe yourself, the different kind of activities or functions you perform well, and the specific knowledge you possess.

Personal/Self-management Skills

Think about what kind of person you are. What qualities and personal characteristics would describe the manner or style with which you perform tasks or work activities? Individuals who lack work experience for example can draw upon their personal skills to prove their worth. Employers will often base a hiring decision on how well a person manages themselves and how their behavior matches a particular work environment.

To inventory your personal/self-management skills select the words that best describe you from the following list and when doing so think about how these traits may relate to the position or job you may be trying to attain. Ask yourself the question, "What kind of characteristics does a person need to have to be successful as a _____?"

accurate	courteous	faithful	persistent
adaptable	creative	flexible	persuasive
adventuresome	credible	friendly	positive
agreeable	daring	hard working	practical
ambitious	decisive	helpful	productive
approachable	dedicated	honest	punctual
articulate	dependable	humorous	reliable
assertive	detailed	imaginative	resourceful
attentive	determined	independent	responsible
balanced	diligent	industrious	respectful
broadminded	diplomatic	influential	self-confident
capable	disciplined	leader	self-starter
careful	dynamic	loyal	sensible
cheerful	easygoing	mature	sincere
competent	efficient	motivated	steady
competitive	energetic	neat	supportive
confident	enterprising	open-minded	tactful
congenial	ethical	optimistic	trustworthy
conscientious	enthusiastic	organized	versatile
consistent	exact	outgoing	vigorous
convincing	expressive	patient	willing to learn
cooperative	fair	perfectionist	

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After you have circled all the words, select the top five that best describe yourself.

Be prepared to give an example or two that support why you think you possess that trait.

Personal/Self-management Skill	Proof of Skill by Example

Functional/Transferable Skills

A functional/transferable skill may be defined as any ability that is not specific to a single job but is readily transferable from one situation to another. Once you have demonstrated or mastered a skill, you can easily transfer it from one environment to another, from one job to another, or from one career to another. When considering a job, think about what activities, tasks, and roles are required to be able to perform that job well and be prepared to provide proof that you have mastered those skills.

The following list was compiled to help you identify functional/transferable skills which are all action verbs. Circle each one that represents a skill that you are particularly good at doing.

achieving	copying	examining	lecturing	providing
accomplishing	correcting	executing	locating	recommending
administering	correlating	expanding	listening	recording
analyzing	corresponding	explaining	managing	reducing
arbitrating	counseling	exploring	mentoring	referring
arranging	creating	expressing	monitoring	repairing
articulating	debating	formulating	motivating	reporting
assembling	deciding	gathering	negotiating	researching
budgeting	defending	generating	observing	resolving
building	defining	guiding	obtaining	reviewing
calculating	delegating	handling	operating	scheduling
classifying	demonstrating	helping	organizing	searching
coaching	designing	identifying	originating	selling
collating	developing	illustrating	performing	separating
collecting	diagnosing	implementing	persuading	serving
communicating	diagramming	improving	planning	speaking
comparing	directing	increasing	playing	supervising
compiling	distributing	influencing	predicting	talking
composing	documenting	informing	preparing	teaching
computing	duplicating	initiating	prescribing	team-building
conducting	editing	instructing	presenting	training
comprehending	educating	integrating	problem-solving	translating
connecting	eliminating	interpreting	processing	writing
consulting	enforcing	interviewing	producing	
constructing	establishing	inventorying	programming	
controlling	estimating	investigating	projecting	
coordinating	evaluating	leading	promoting	

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After you have circled all the words select the top five that you want to use to describe your best functional/transferable skills. Be prepared to give an example or two that support why you think you possess that ability.

Functional/Transferable Skill	Proof of Skill by Example

A job description is actually a listing of the most important functions that an employer expects the person hired in the job to be able to perform. Skills are at the core of what an individual offers an employer. Prior to seeking a job research it to get a clear understanding of what are the most important functions required to perform that job well.

Technical/Special Knowledge Skills

Technical/Special knowledge skills are ones gained from a particular job, volunteer, or classroom activity. For example, a computer programmer must know computer languages, a laboratory technician must understand instrumentation techniques, and an accountant needs to understand accounting principles. To perform a certain job you will need to possess some special or technical knowledge about that field or subject matter.

As a way of evaluating your existing job skills, use the chart below to indicate the technical/special knowledge skills you have mastered and where you developed them.

Technical/Special Knowledge Skill	Where Skill Was Developed
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____



Key to Be Life Ready® #8: Market Yourself and Interview Positively

Throughout your life there will be times when you will be interviewed to determine your qualifications. You should understand the purpose for it and what you and the interviewer are seeking. The interview might be to gain acceptance into a school or college, to receive a scholarship, or to be hired for a paid or volunteer job. The ideal interview is one in which a conversation takes place and there is a mutual exchange of information. Prepare by visualizing yourself in that situation and tailor your presentation to market yourself accordingly.

When preparing for an interview, you must learn as much as you can about the topics to be covered. Since the main topic of the discussion will be you, you need to know yourself. Examine your strengths by understanding and inventorying your strongest abilities and skills. Be able to express what you prefer as far as the kind of activities, tasks, or roles you like to do. Be ready to provide supporting examples as proof of how you acquired the knowledge or skills that you say you possess.

Preparation is the key to a good interview and by being prepared you will also be able to approach the interview feeling less nervous and more confident. Below are some generic questions and suggestions to help you practice developing effective responses. Whenever you are asked a similar type question you'll be better prepared to promote your background and skills in a positive manner.

1. Can you tell me something about yourself? How would you describe your personality? How would others describe you?

This question is totally open-ended. However, it is an opportunity to briefly describe your personal/self-management skills as well as any of your current interests and why you are seeking whatever it is that you are being interviewed for. To best respond to this question prior to the interview spend time visualizing yourself in the position so that you can ensure your response focuses on how your strengths relate to whatever it is you are seeking.

2. Describe your level of education and what you feel it has prepared you to do? Which academic classes did you enjoy most? Least? Why? Do you feel you have done your best academically? Why or why not?

Every role or job you seek requires the solution to a problem. It is important that you are able to articulate how well your educational background relates to the problems that correlate to the position you want. Your ability to succeed will depend on how well you can convey your academic achievements and how the special knowledge you possess clearly connect to the requirements of the position for which you are interviewing.

3. What made you apply for this opportunity? Why do you want it? How can you contribute to the organization? Why should you be chosen for this position?

Explain that through your research you identified this particular organization's opportunity as one that interest you. Then tell them why. Provide several reasons why you believe that your current skills qualify you as a good applicant.

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4. What are your short and long range educational, career or personal goals?

People who can state their goals are viewed favorably as ones who are willing to work hard and are dedicated to wanting to achieve success. Think of short- range and mid-range goals that can be completed in 1 to 5 years and long-range goals taking 6 years and beyond to accomplish.

5. What is your greatest asset? Describe your major weakness. Describe the personal characteristics that you possess that you think are necessary for success in any situation?

The ability to identify and discuss your strengths is an indication of self-confidence. Be sure to focus on whatever assets you possess that relate directly to the available opportunity or position for which you are interviewing. By describing and proving your skills, you will be able to link your past experiences to the needs of the interviewer. If asked to describe a weakness, mention a relatively unimportant, non-related area that needed some improvement and then discuss what you already did to eliminate that weakness.

6. What kind of volunteer or work experiences do you have that qualify you for this opportunity? Describe the kind of experiences you have had and what skills you gained from them.

Highlight skills that will be thought of as relevant to the opportunity that you are being interviewed for. Be prepared with examples of past accomplishments and significant achievements that link to the current needs of the interviewer or employer.

7. Why did you select this type of work (activity, task, or role) to seek? What things are most important to you in a job? Why?

Stress how this opportunity relates to the interests, skills, and values you deem to be most important to you. Emphasize how courses that you excelled in relate to whatever it is that you are seeking. Highlight how your interests go hand-in-hand with the position and why it is appealing to you.

8. What have been your most significant accomplishments in life? Why? Describe one of the most significant tasks that you completed in school, at work or as a volunteer.

Keep your answers related to the interview. If you've done a thorough skills assessment, a number of achievements should come to mind. You will want to demonstrate pride, reliability, and completion of goals. Besides discussing your best accomplishments, be prepared to mention what you hope to accomplish.

9. What is most important to you in a job? If you could describe an ideal working environment, what would it be?

Draw attention to activities that satisfy you personally and point out that these could add to the interviewers programs and objectives. Emphasize that your ultimate goal is to find an opportunity in a favorable environment, interacting productively and comfortably with others who have similar interests and who enjoy solving similar problems.



Key to Be Life Ready® #9: Understand How to Find a Job

In order to locate a meaningful job in a rewarding career path that will take full advantage of your abilities and interests, you'll need to start by determining your most important needs and wants. Then, in keeping with the decision-making process, you'll want to identify, research, and select employment opportunities that are most appropriate for you. Keep in mind that ultimately, your success in the job search will depend on how well you can demonstrate the value of your abilities and interests to prospective employers.

Relate Skills to the Job Requirements

To figure out just what value you might have to an employer, begin by identifying and analyzing potential job opportunities. In doing so, realize that every job has a corresponding job description of simple phrases that summarizes the activities, tasks, and roles that an individual must be able to perform to meet the job's requirements. Consider all the possible ways that you can relate your skills and abilities to the functions required for the jobs you might want to pursue. Evaluate yourself honestly and completely.

Provide Proof of Required Job Skills

An employer must believe that you can satisfy the most significant needs of the organization. That employer has identified significant reasons to create the position and, therefore, has a need to want to fill it. You need to identify the job's purpose and determine the employer's most important problems and challenges.

After you understand the needs of the employer you'll realize that you're no longer just looking for a job. Instead you want to be viewed as the best solution to an employer's problems. Then it's just a matter of communicating that fact to the employer during an interview. You'll need to provide examples to prove that you possess the skills to perform all of the most important job functions. If you can verbalize that you have the strongest and most relevant qualities, the sooner you'll be employed. The greater the employer's problems, the more likely you will be paid a higher wage for the solution. If an employer recognizes you as a valuable asset to the organization and someone who can help meet the company's needs, you could earn what you think your worth.

Action Steps and Timeline

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JOB SEARCH FORMULA

Understanding the following job search formula will help you prepare and navigate through the different phases associated with looking for and acquiring a meaningful job. Take time researching and addressing each level of the process in order to increase the likelihood of being hired.



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Self-Reflection, Mentoring, Group Discussion Questions

The following questions are to help you reflect on your feelings regarding the Keys to Be Life Ready® and to prompt discussions in mentoring and group settings. *It is strongly recommended that you keep a journal of your answers so you can reflect on and explore your thoughts as time goes on.* Update your journal responses as your needs, wants, interests, values, and abilities change. Self-reflection is useful in understanding how you feel about significant areas of your life and what impact those feelings might have on decisions you will make in the future.

Key to Be Life Ready® #1: Be Educated and a Lifelong Learner

1. Describe the impact of not finishing high school or college would have on your life?
2. If, for whatever reason, you are thinking of dropping out who can you talk to about the consequences of such a decision?
3. How would you describe your study skills? Could they be better? How? Have you ever used a tutor? Was it a good experience? If you chose not to use one, even when you were struggling, why didn't you? Could you use extra help in one or more subjects?
4. Are you able to keep up with class assignments? Do you turn them in on time? Are they complete? If you answered no to any or all, is the problem that you do not understand the material or the assignments? Is it hard for you to find the time to do them? How do you manage your time? Who could you go to for help with these kinds of issues?
5. What opportunities are available within your community for you to register for credit or non-credit classes to earn a degree or certificate necessary to qualify for a job in a preferred occupational field?
6. Describe what steps you plan to take to ensure that you will always continue to learn and remain an educated person.

Key to Be Life Ready® #2: Create and Maintain a Success Team

1. Who can help you make career decisions? Who might be a good resource as you make educational decisions?
2. Are you willing to approach your teachers or other adults with questions or concerns? If so, give a few examples of individuals you approached recently. If you are not one to ask for assistance, do you wish you were? What is holding you back? Who could help you with this?
3. What obstacles are there that could get in the way of reaching your educational or vocational goals? Who are individuals you know who could help you overcome those obstacles? These are the people you want on your Success Team!
4. If you have a part-time job, are you able to balance the demands of work and school? Is one suffering? Is school your priority? Who could help you with the stresses of this situation?

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Self-Reflection, Mentoring, Group Discussion Questions

Key to Be Life Ready® #3: Develop a Success Plan

1. What information have you completed in your personal Success Plan? What sections do you need to complete?
2. What educational or career goals have you established?
3. Are you planning to continue your education beyond high school at a college or a technical school? If you are, do you know where you will go or what you will study?
4. What career tests, interest inventories, or skills assessments have you used to help you set your career goals? What occupations or careers have you identified that you might enjoy and be suitable to you?

Key to Be Life Ready® #4: Use an Effective Decision-Making Process

1. Have you used the six-step decision-making process to make any big decisions this year? Did the process work for you? Did you take shortcuts? Skip steps? Did you take action to implement the decision? If not, why not?
2. What “good” decisions have you made in the last year? Did you make any “bad” decisions? What made the difference between good and bad decisions? What could you have done differently?
3. Do you make your own decisions? Do you rely on others to make decisions for you? Who influences you when you are making decisions? Why might letting others make decisions for you have negative consequences?

Key to Be Life Ready® #5: Make Good Big-Ticket Decisions

1. Which big-ticket decisions - education, field of study, career, working and living environments, relationships, health and wellness, leisure time - are most important to you now? Why?
2. How would you describe your life over this past year – good or bad, satisfying or unsatisfying, happy or unhappy?
3. Identify three big-ticket areas in which you have made decisions this year. Were the outcomes of those decisions favorable or unfavorable? What would you do differently to change the unfavorable ones?

Key to Be Life Ready® #6: Focus on Personal Development

1. Do you have any hobbies or interests? What are they?
2. Do you participate in any community activities or organizations? What is your contribution?
4. Are you involved in any clubs? Are you an active participant? A leader? Why or why not?
5. Are there organizations that you would like to join or activities you might try in the future?
6. How can being in clubs and organizations benefit you later on in your life?



Self-Reflection, Mentoring, Group Discussion Questions

Key to Be Life Ready® #7: Be Knowledgeable of Skills

1. Can you describe the three different types of skills that you need to possess?
2. If you pretend that you are holding an imaginary basket in your arms, which of your past experiences would you place in your basket as examples of noteworthy accomplishments and significant achievements?
3. Having completed your skills inventory which skills did you identify as your strongest personal, functional, and special knowledge ones?
4. What specific examples would you give as proof that you possess each of the skills that you identify as being your strongest?
5. Which skills would you like to further develop? How do you feel possessing these skills would benefit you the most?

Key to Be Life Ready®#8: Market Yourself and Interview Positively

1. What would you say to demonstrate the value of your abilities to a prospective organization?
2. What opportunity are you presently seeking? How would you describe how you can fulfill the greatest needs of the organization where that opportunity exists?
3. How would you best describe the kind of person you are?
4. What is the greatest asset that you possess that you would want others to know?
5. What actions do you need to take to feel comfortable and able to communicate information about yourself clearly and confidently?

Key to Be Life Ready®#9: Understand How to Find a Job

1. What examples can you use to promote how in your past experiences you performed functions which an employer will deem important to its needs?
2. What kind of job would you describe as being the most ideal one for you? Why?
3. What kind of problems would you find gratifying and challenging in a job? What proof do you have that you would be the best candidate for solving difficult problems?
4. How would you describe the most ideal work environment for you? Why?

BE LIFE READY®

Start Today and Be Life Ready®!

The *Be Life Ready*® Guidebook is to help you be better prepared to live your life. The intent is to provide information and a framework for achieving your academic, career, and personal goals. Start today! Welcome this opportunity to look ahead to the important decisions you will make. Prepare for your future by utilizing an effective decision-making process, developing useful skills, making good choices, and achieving positive outcomes. Be Life Ready® and be successful!

Summary of Thoughts

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Action Steps and Timelines

This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook paper or a document template. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.




I, _____, make the commitment to accept responsibility and work hard to address the Keys to Be Life Ready®.

 Be educated and a lifelong learner.

 Create and maintain a Success Team.

 Develop a Success Plan.

 Use an effective decision-making process.

 Make good big-ticket decisions.

 Focus on personal development.

 Be knowledgeable of skills.

 Market yourself and interview positively.

 Understand how to find a job.

Signature: _____ Date: _____