

# LIFE SKILLS SNAPSHOTS

FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

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# INTRODUCTION

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The Overcoming Obstacles Elementary, Middle, and High School Level curricula are the most comprehensive resources for life skills education available, providing educators with the tools to teach their students communication skills, decision making, goal setting, and much more. We developed *Snapshots for English Teachers* so you can now supplement and reinforce the Overcoming Obstacles lessons students are being taught already in your school; or, if life skills are not being taught, allow you the opportunity to bring invaluable instruction to your students.

Please contact us at [info@overcomingobstacles.org](mailto:info@overcomingobstacles.org) if you would like assistance with the implementation of *Snapshots for English Teachers*.

# Snapshots | **COMMUNICATION**

## CAN YOU HEAR ME?

15 MINUTES

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**OBJECTIVE:** Students analyze and identify good listening practices through writing and small group work.

Have students think about a time when someone was definitely not listening to them. Tell them to write about how they could tell the person wasn't listening and what that felt like. Have students share their writing in small groups and compile a class list of signs that someone isn't listening.

## THE OPPOSITE OF TALKING IS WAITING

10 MINUTES

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**OBJECTIVE:** Students develop their listening skills through critical thought, group discussion, and writing analysis.

Read this quote by writer Fran Lebowitz to your students, "The opposite of talking isn't listening. The opposite of talking is waiting." Ask students if they agree with the quote. Have them write captions for news photos of two people having a conversation. Tell them to include the thoughts of the "listener" and describe what he or she is really thinking.

## COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

10 MINUTES

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**OBJECTIVE:** Students will recollect relevant personal experiences and brainstorm ways to improve communication.

Have students write about a personal experience in which communication went awry due to poor listening. Have volunteers share their experiences, omitting any names. Brainstorm ways to improve communication in these situations.

## THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK

10 MINUTES

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**OBJECTIVE:** Students will use writing skills to learn about speaking responsibly.

Have students write about a time when they said something they didn't mean to say and wanted to take it back. Discuss how choosing words carefully is important to expressing opinions constructively.

# Snapshots | **DECISION MAKING**

## MAKING THE RIGHT DECISION

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10 MINUTES

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will consider their reputation and its impact in decision making.

Read this quote by Admiral Raymond Spruance to your students, “A man’s judgment is best when he can forget himself and any reputation he may have acquired and can concentrate wholly on making the right decisions.” Have students give examples of how the desire to protect their reputation can influence the decisions they make.

## YOUR DECISION

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15 MINUTES

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will reflect on a positive decision they made and analyze the steps that led to it.

Have students write about a decision of which they are proud. Have them describe how they made the decision, whether making the decision was difficult, and what consequences it had. Tell students that they will share their work. Have volunteers read their work in small groups. Encourage students to practice active listening by asking questions and summarizing what they have heard.

## OUT OF YOUR CONTROL?

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10 MINUTES

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will consider options for a choice that seemed out of their control.

Have students write about a choice that seemed completely out of their control. Have them write about available options that might have yielded a different outcome.

## GATHERING INFORMATION

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10 MINUTES

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will identify sources to help them make a decision.

Have students write about a decision they must soon make. Tell them to list possible sources of information that might help them make their decisions. Have volunteers share their work with the class.

## MEANT TO SAY NO

10 MINUTES

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**OBJECTIVE:** Students will learn about the consequences of their decisions.

Read this quote by Frank Crane to your students, “Most of the things we decide are not what we know to be the best. We say yes, merely because we are driven into a corner and must say something.” Have volunteers relate situations in which students might say “yes” when they want to say “no.” Discuss the consequences of these decisions.

## TAKE ACTION

10 MINUTES

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**OBJECTIVE:** Students will discuss as a group the consequences of not taking action when faced with a decision to be made.

Read this quote by Gary Collins to your students, “We can try to avoid making choices by doing nothing, but even that is a decision.” Have students give examples of choices that were made because they took no action.

## A FIVE-STEP PROCESS

10 MINUTES

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**OBJECTIVE:** Students will learn the steps of decision making.

Read this quote by Alfred Montapert to your students, “Nobody ever did, or ever will, escape the consequences of his choices.” Have students create an acronym that will help them remember the five steps of responsible decision making (*for example, “CROWD” for “Consequences, Research, Options, Weigh choices, Decide”*).

# Snapshots | **GOAL SETTING**

## GOALS FROM THE PAST

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15 MINUTES

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will consider a goal they had and if the goal is still worth pursuing.

Have students write about a goal they had when they were young. Did they achieve it? Why or why not? Have students share their writing with a partner. To conclude, ask them if they didn't achieve their goal, is it still worth pursuing. How could they redefine the goal to make it achievable?

## STEPPING-STONE GOALS

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15 MINUTES

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will learn about stepping-stone goals.

Have students write letters to themselves about where they want to be 10 years from now and what they would like to be doing. Direct students to write in the letters their long-term goal and then the stepping-stone goals they need to accomplish to reach their long-term goal. Ask volunteers to share their letters with the class. To conclude, suggest to students that they each place their letter somewhere safe and periodically look at it to see where they are in their goal attainment.

## TO-DO LIST

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10 MINUTES

**OBJECTIVE:** Students learn how to set priorities.

Have students list things they must accomplish tomorrow in the order in which they should be done. Discuss the various ways that people determine priorities (*for example, time, ease, importance*). Have students revisit this page the following evening, when they make another to-do list for the next day.

## DISCIPLINE

10 MINUTES

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**OBJECTIVE:** Students will consider the importance of staying on top of their goals.

Read this quote by David Campbell to your students, “Discipline is remembering what you want.” Have students offer examples of how remembering their goals might prompt them to avoid procrastination.

## GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

10 MINUTES

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**OBJECTIVE:** Students will identify and discuss with a partner recent goals they have achieved.

Have students make a list of the goals they achieved in the past week and how it felt to accomplish them. Have students share their writing with a partner.