

EDUCATION & LEARNING / STUDYING

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Future skills, adapting to career changes, and continuous self-improvement

Activity 1: Learning doesn't stop at school

Discuss these questions with a partner:

1. What is a skill or hobby you have taught yourself outside of school or university?
2. What skills do you think will be most valuable in the job market 10 years from now?
3. How often do you actively try to learn something new (e.g., reading books, listening to podcasts)?
4. Do you agree with the phrase "You can't teach an old dog new tricks"? Why or why not?
5. If you could instantly master any language, professional skill, or talent, what would it be?
6. What makes someone a successful "lifelong learner"?

Activity 2: Future skills vocabulary

Complete the sentences using the words and phrases in the box. Use each item once:

up-skill • adaptable • critical thinking • mindset
lifelong learning • self-directed • soft skills • keep up with

1. In a rapidly changing job market, having a flexible _____ is crucial.
2. Many professionals need to _____ regularly to avoid their technical skills becoming outdated.
3. While technical knowledge is important, employers increasingly value _____ like teamwork and communication.
4. _____ education allows learners to choose what, when, and how they want to study.
5. Being _____ means you can easily adjust to new technology and working environments.
6. The concept of _____ encourages people to gain knowledge throughout their entire lives.
7. It can be challenging to _____ the fast pace of technological advancement.
8. Developing strong _____ helps students evaluate information and solve complex problems.

Activity 3: Career advice role-play

Work with a partner.

- **Student A:** You have been working in the same administrative job for 5 years. You feel your role might become automated soon, and you want to switch to a new field, but you feel nervous about going back to learning.
- **Student B:** You are a career counselor. Listen to Student A's concerns. Ask helpful questions, offer encouraging advice, and suggest 2 practical ways they can start learning new skills today.

Try to use at least three expressions from the REAL ENGLISH BOX during your conversation.

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Activity 4: Prioritising future skills

Work in small groups. Below is a list of skills for the future workforce. Rank them from 1 (*most important*) to 6 (*least important*) for career success over the next decade.

- [__] Artificial intelligence & data literacy
- [__] Emotional intelligence (EQ) & empathy
- [__] Creative problem-solving
- [__] Multilingual communication
- [__] Financial literacy & management
- [__] Adaptability & stress management

Compare rankings with another group and defend your top choice using these expressions:

- In my view, priority number one has to be... because...
- While I see why you chose that, I'd argue that... is more essential.
- Without strong soft skills, technical abilities aren't as effective.
- We ranked... higher because the workforce is changing so quickly.

Activity 5: My future learning goal

Take a few minutes to think about your own personal or professional growth over the next 12 to 24 months. Complete the planning template below:

1. A skill I want to master or improve:
2. Why this skill will be valuable to my life or career:
3. Two concrete actions I will take to learn it:
    - Action 1: _____
    - Action 2: _____
4. How I will measure my progress:

Share your learning plan with a partner. Give each other constructive feedback or suggestions on how to achieve these goals!

REAL ENGLISH BOX

Useful expressions for talking about future goals & learning:

- To broaden your horizons — Traveling and learning new languages really broadens your horizons.
- To stay ahead of the curve — He takes evening coding courses to stay ahead of the curve.
- To step out of your comfort zone — Learning public speaking forced me to step out of my comfort zone.
- To hit a wall — I was making fast progress with French, but then I hit a wall with grammar.
- A steep learning curve — Learning to manage a project team was a steep learning curve.
- To future-proof your career — Developing adaptability is key to future-proofing your career.

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Teacher's Key

Activity 2:

1. mindset
2. up-skill
3. soft skills
4. Self-directed
5. adaptable
6. lifelong learning
7. keep up with
8. critical thinking

Activities 1, 3, 4 and 5:

Answers will vary.
Encourage students to use future-focused vocabulary, express commitment to personal growth, and practice giving structured career advice.

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