4S Skills for Secondary School Success
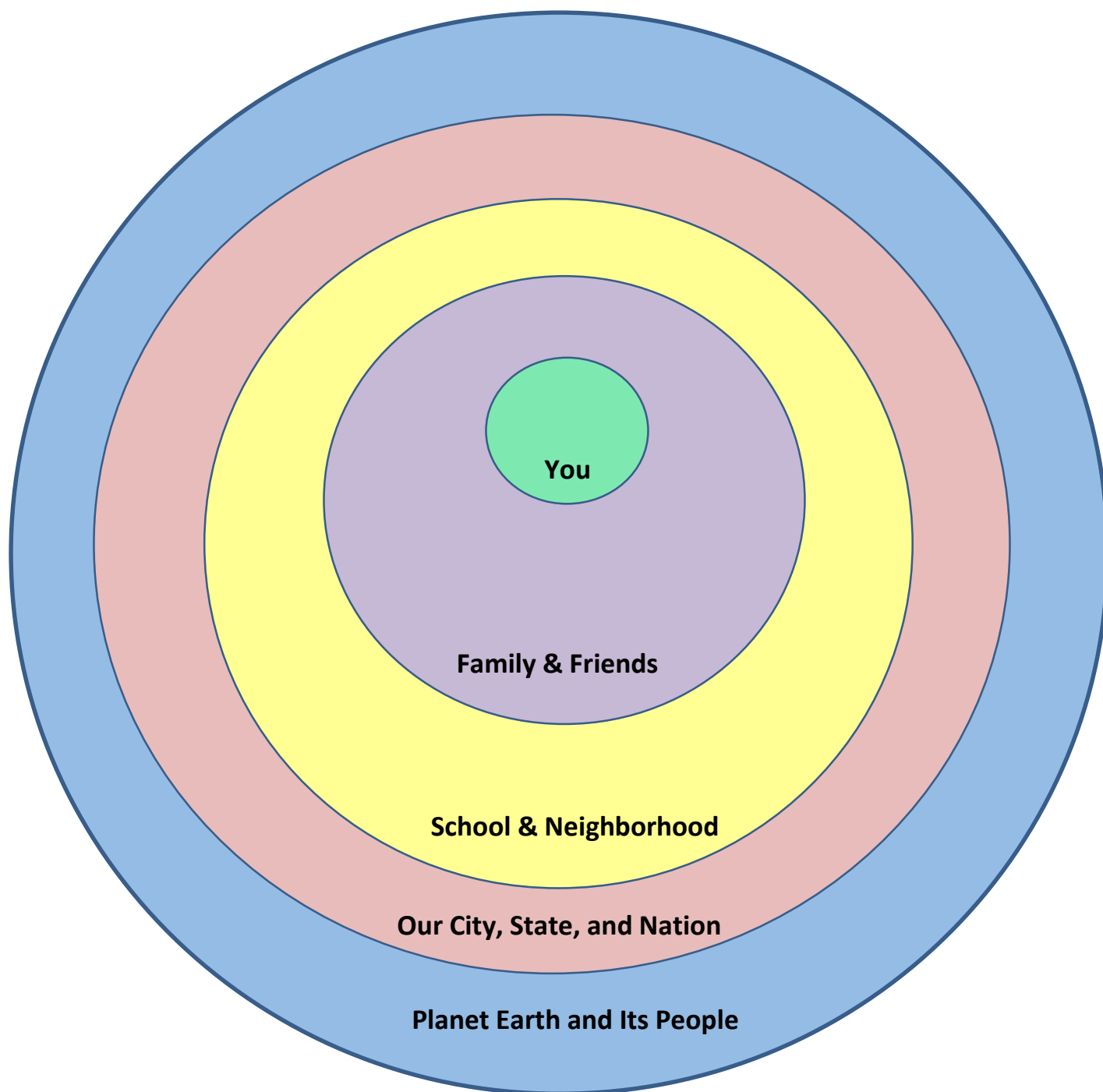
Student Manual

2025 Edition

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Circles of Concern

You

Family & Friends

School & Neighborhood

Our City, State, and Nation

Planet Earth and Its People
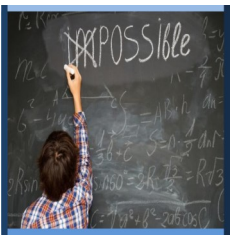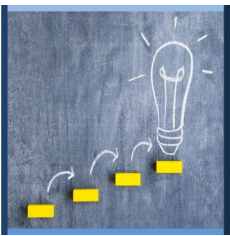
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Community Observation Report

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Did you decide to focus on the school community or a neighborhood? _____

What did you do to gather information about your community (take photos or video, interview community member(s), write about your observations after a walk, other)?

_____

_____

_____

What need(s) did you observe?   _____

_____

_____

How are people being affected by the needs you observed?

_____ _____

_____

_____

What ideas (if any) do you have about what might be done to address these needs?

_____

_____

_____

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What are my school community's needs?				
COLUMN A	COLUMN B	COLUMN C	COLUMN D	COLUMN E
Needs I have identified in my school community.	How big (or small) is this issue? Who does it affect?	What can I do to help make a difference on this issue now?	What can I do to help make a difference on this issue in the future?	What skills will I need to address this issue?*

*Note: Skills might include any of the following: stress management, mindfulness, growth mindset, time management, note-taking, active listening, working together and building consensus, and empathy

Name _____

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What are the needs of my neighborhood community?

COLUMN A	COLUMN B	COLUMN C	COLUMN D	COLUMN E
Needs I have identified in my neighborhood (or town/city) community.	How big (or small) is this issue? Who does it affect?	What can I do to help make a difference on this issue now?	What can I do to help make a difference on this issue in the future?	What skills will I need to address this issue?*

*Note: Skills might include any of the following: stress management, mindfulness, growth mindset, time management, note-taking, active listening, working together and building consensus, and empathy.

Name _____

Connection Circle Handout

Cole, a young science achiever from Chicago, describes his experience volunteering and serving on community projects as experiences that have stayed with him throughout his life. He remarks about his team's learning experience:

"We become more open people, who are willing to work hard to change situations around us that might not be ideal. And they really affect the quality of life of those who you are working with. And in a world, that's becoming increasingly transactional in nature, it's really refreshing to see people especially young people, take time out of their days to help others without the promise of compensation. It really awakens the humanitarian within us all."

Reflect on Cole's message.

How does Cole's experience resonate with you, especially as you are solidifying plans for a community project?

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My Team's Volunteer Project Plan

Student Names: _____

Project Name: _____

What is the need we plan to address? _____

_____

What will we do, and how does this address the need?_____ _____

_____

_____

Preparation needed for the project: _____

_____

_____

Why is our team project important or valuable? _____

_____

_____

What skills will be needed for this project?_____

_____

_____

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My Volunteer Project Plan

Student Name: _____

Project Name: _____

What is the need I plan to address? _____

_____

What will I do, and how does this address the need?_____ _____

_____

_____

Preparation needed for the project: _____

_____

_____

Why is my project important or valuable? _____

_____

_____

What skills will be needed for this project?_____

_____

_____

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Solutions to Community Problems: Possible Personal Contributions

Issue I have Identified in My School or Community	Possible Way I Could Help with This Issue	Possible Lifeline I Could Access

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Example Planning Sheet for a Neighborhood Cleanup Event

What is the need?
Our neighborhood park looks terrible because of all the trash strewn all around.

What are our proposed activities, and how will they address the need?
We are planning a park clean-up event that will (at least temporarily) get rid of all the trash that is currently creating such an eyesore. We will also post signs encouraging people to put their trash in the provided cans and keep their park clean.

Subtasks required for project completion:

Make decisions about the following issues:
- Location for the activity (describe):
- Date and time frame:
- Which adult(s) will you ask to be present for supervision?
- Will you recruit any others to join besides your team?
    o If so, how will you recruit them?
- Will you have any refreshments? If so, add to supplies list below
- What tools and supplies are needed (see Resources needed below)

Make signs/posters to be placed in park.

Gather at park at designated time, with all the resources, and get all the trash into bags to be carried away.
Take photos/videos of before, during, and after.

Post the signs.

If desired, publicize what you have done on social media.

Resources Required for Project Completion
What tools and supplies do you need and who will bring them?

Tools/Supplies	Who will bring

How will you know how well your project was accomplished?
We will consider this to be a success if we can show a significant improvement in how the park looks (through before and after pictures). Another measure of success will be that all team members participated, got along well, and no one got injured.

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Project Definition

Name(s) _____

Date _____

Project Title _____

Statement of the need and how the proposed project addresses the need

---

Evaluation Criteria (how will you know how well you accomplished your goals?)

Adapted from McCain, *Teaching for Tomorrow*, p. 56

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Project Design

Name _____

Date _____

Project Title _____

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Subtasks                                                 │
│                                                           │
│                                                           │
│                                                           │
│                                                           │
│                                                           │
│                                                           │
│                                                           │
│                                                           │
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Subtasks

Resources Needed

Learning Needed

Adapted from McCain, *Teaching for Tomorrow*, p. 60

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Project Timeline (To Monitor the "DO" Phase)

Project Steps	Dates																				

Adapted from McCain, *Teaching for Tomorrow*, p. 62

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DO NOW

What is one thing you liked best about this Skills for Secondary School Success course? (Feel free to add more if you want.)

What is one thing you would recommend changing about this Skills for Secondary School Success course? (Feel free to add more if you want.)

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Looking Forward: Where Do I Go From Here?

Complete as many of these as you can during class time. You can choose to start with whichever unit you want and work in whatever order you prefer.

Think about what you learned from Unit 1: Learning with a Purpose (exploring careers, thinking through my purpose, building a vision board).

What did you learn from this unit?

How will what you learned help you succeed in high school?

How will what you learned help you succeed in life beyond high school?

Think about what you learned from Unit 2: Confronting Challenges and Having a Growth Mindset (managing stress, mindfulness, problem solving, growth mindset).

What did you learn from this unit?

How will what you learned help you succeed in high school?

How will what you learned help you succeed in life beyond high school?

Think about what you learned from Unit 3: Managing my Own Learning (staying organized, time management, active reading, note taking, SMART goals)

What did you learn from this unit?

How will what you learned help you succeed in high school?

How will what you learned help you succeed in life beyond high school?

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Think about what you learned from Unit 4: Interaction with Others as We Learn Together (connection circles, classroom community, healthy relationships, active listening, team building)

What did you learn from this unit?

How will what you learned help you succeed in high school?

How will what you learned help you succeed in life beyond high school?

Think about what you learned from Unit 5: Making a Difference in My Community and World (exploring school and community issues, volunteer project)

What did you learn from this unit?

How will what you learned help you succeed in high school?

How will what you learned help you succeed in life beyond high school?

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