



Introduction

Research shows that there is a range of skills that have a far greater impact upon career-life success than IQ and academic performance. Communication, initiative and persistence are among a group of 'foundation skills' that have a significant influence on personal and career-life success at any age.

Foundation skills underpin success in education, employment, relationships and personal development. They are the underlying learned abilities that play an important role in allowing a wider range of knowledge and skills to be used effectively in a variety of settings.

Foundation skills include:

- self-concept building (recognising self-talk, building confidence, facing personal fear)
- communication (intrapersonal and interpersonal communication)
- teamwork and leadership (working and interacting with others effectively)
- problem-solving (developing solutions using a range of strategies in different situations)
- initiative (adapting to change, developing ideas, harnessing opportunities, taking action)
- learning (habits of mind, attitudes, perceptions, strategies)
- planning and organising (managing time, prioritising, managing information)
- self-management (goal focus, persisting, doing what is important).

These skills are at the core of a student's ability to:

- persist when the answer is not readily apparent
- plan to get homework completed even though a favourite TV show is on
- deal appropriately with negative peer relationship experiences
- solve problems before they escalate
- succeed when working in groups
- deal effectively with new and unfamiliar situations
- communicate self-worth, needs, ideas and suggestions.

The Big Question series of books and the associated magazine *TBQ – The Big Question* aim to provide a structured approach to assist young people to develop these important career-life skills. Additionally, when used as part of an integrated life-education program, these resources will assist you to help your child or student develop healthy self-belief, a love for learning and an open-mindedness to fully explore and develop their many natural gifts and talents.

Visit our website www.careersfasttrack.com to ask questions, provide welcome feedback or for further ideas on nurturing the career-life development of your child or student.

Suggestions for using this career-life resource

To the Teacher

This resource is designed to integrate into regular classroom teaching programs and is relevant across all state curricula.

Using a team and disassociated learning model, readers undertake a range of activities designed to enhance their understanding and integration of foundation skills.

This book has been designed as a complete education unit with all worksheets and templates enclosed. As students work through this resource, they complete activities and worksheets that can be used as assessable tasks. They also complete a personal development plan in the form of an Employability Action Plan at the back of the book.

Research suggests that implementation of this personal development plan will be assisted when cross-curricular approaches are used and parents are involved in reinforcing learning at home. This can be implemented based upon the existing structures within your school.

The following suggestions may be useful to fully utilise this book:

- Have students choose teams of three to four students as they respond to the questions within the book.
- Within their teams, and using the templates at the back, have students undertake their own Term Challenge: What makes me unique?
- Inform students that completing this workbook and Term Challenge is an assessable task.
- Encourage parents to become involved in identifying and implementing development strategies in the Employability Action Plan.
- Always encourage and praise students as they work on the 'hard stuff' required to face the challenge of developing the foundation skills in which they don't already naturally excel.
- Contact <www.careersfasttrack.com.au> for additional templates and teaching strategies.

To the Parent/Caregiver

- Establish a regular home-learning pattern for your child. This regular home-learning pattern is important in setting up positive learning habits now and in later education.

- Discuss the characters' experiences in the book, the pictures and whatever takes your child's interest.
- Ask open-ended questions such as: 'What would you do if you were in Max's/Mia's situation?'
- Encourage, praise and support your child's ideas and opinions as much as possible. Try to treat mistakes or setbacks as positive learning experiences.
- Help your child identify strategies to develop the foundation skills they wish to focus upon. Always encourage and praise even small progress.
- Write lots of encouraging notes and feedback in the Employability Action Plan at the back of this book.

To the Student

Welcome to *The Big Question Book 2*.

If you've read *The Big Question Book 1*, you will be familiar with the format and style of this book, in addition to having already met Max and Mia. Remember, in Book 1, Max and Mia tackled the Big Question: What are you going to do when you grow up?

In Book 2, they tackle the Big Question: What makes me unique?

As you read this book and complete the activities and Skill Checks, keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers! Your answer is right for you! You may be confident in one situation but lack confidence in another. By answering honestly, you will identify the areas you need to work on to reach your personal best.

Under the direction of your teacher, select a team to complete the activities and worksheets in this book. This will be an important part of your learning and will support you to complete your work.

At the end of the book, you will be asked to review your answers in the Employability Action Plan. Your teachers and parents/caregivers will assist you to complete your plan.

If you have questions, comments or would like to provide feedback on this resource, please contact us via our website:

www.careersfasttrack.com.au

1. The pool party

‘Why is it that the times you like the most seem to go the quickest?’ Max wondered, kicking a stone. It whizzed down the footpath before hitting a fence with a loud crack.

The summer holidays had also whizzed by and in two weeks Max would start secondary school.

‘Hey, who was that?’ an irritated voice shouted. An old, balding man with piercing blue eyes stood up from behind the fence to stare angrily at Max.

Max froze. ‘Oh, sorry, it just happened by accident. I didn’t mean ...’

‘Damaging property doesn’t just happen by accident!’ snapped the man.

There was an awkward silence as Max struggled to think of something to say. He noticed the large watermelon patch the man was weeding.

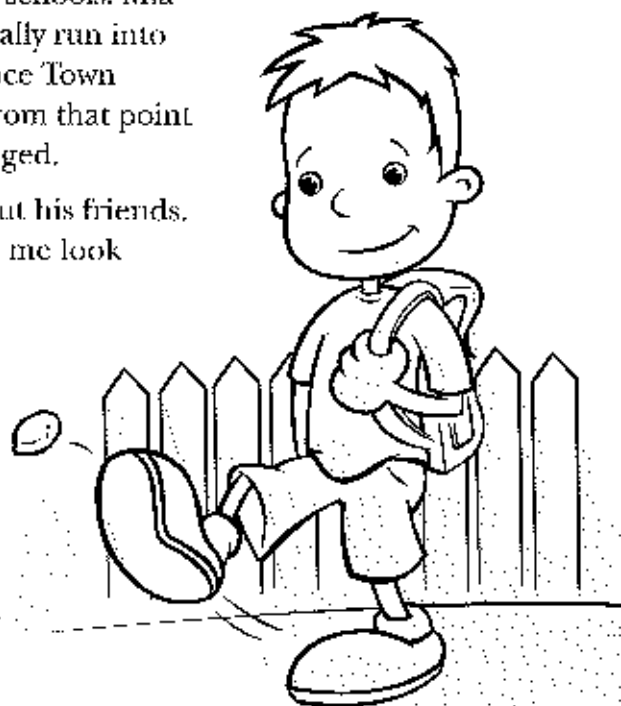
Max pointed to the largest melon. ‘Wow, that one’s massive.’

‘It’s a show winner, that one,’ said the man proudly. ‘And don’t you go getting any ideas,’ he added sharply before going back to his weeding.

‘Umm, have a nice day,’ Max mumbled, as he continued on his way to his friend Mia’s pool party.

Max’s family had moved around a lot and he’d found it difficult to make friends at his old schools. Mia had been his friend since she’d literally run into him on his first day of school at Prince Town Primary School the previous year. From that point onwards, Max’s school life had changed.

‘Mia, Kat, Mo ...’ Max thought about his friends. ‘Having good friends almost makes me look forward to going back to school!’





'Jump in!' called Chloe. 'Yeeeeeee-haaa!' yelled Ali, as he did a bomb that nearly drowned Katerina and splashed half the water out of the pool.

Max dived into the pool and surfaced at the other end. He turned and smiled at his friends, feeling proud of his ability to swim the length of the pool underwater.

'Hey,' said Andy. 'Where's your bike?'

'Got a flat tyre, had to walk,' replied Max, still catching his breath.

'You should have called me,' said Mohammed. 'My mum would have picked you up – it's heaps too far to walk!'

Mohammed was at least 15 centimetres taller than Max and much heavier too. However, it was as if he never noticed or worried about how much bigger he was than everyone else. He was just like a gentle giant.

Max looked up at him. 'It's not that far. I like walking anyway.'

Max was always a little self-conscious about asking for help, even from his friends.

'Hi, GI,' called Mia, as she entered from the back door.

Everyone in the group had nicknames. Max was GI, which stood for Great Ideas, Mia was M, Mohammed was Mo, Chloe was Lo, Cynthia was Thee, Katerina was Kat and Ali, well, Ali was just Ali.

Max looked up at Mia. Over the last year, she had changed a lot. Mostly she just seemed more grown up than a lot of the other girls he knew.

Max had changed too and so had his feelings for Mia.

Skill Check

Tick the following sentence that best describes you:

I never feel awkward asking for help when I need it.

or

To like to be better at asking for help when I need it.