



Targeting Life Skills Model by Patricia A. Hendricks, Ph.D.
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Examples of Life Skills definitions and age-appropriate tasks from each of the 4-H categories **HEAD, HEART, HANDS, and HEALTH.**

4-H Pledge: “I pledge my HEAD to clearer thinking,”

Thinking Skills Example, Page 26

Critical thinking—strategies for analyzing, comparing, reasoning, and reflecting focused on deciding what to believe or do; discovering meaning; building connections with past learning

Critical thinking can be thought of as talking things over with oneself in one’s mind, deciding what to think or do, improving the quality of decision making. The critical thinking process can be stated as a set of questions one asks and answers oneself.

Steps may include:

- Observe the situation carefully—Do I agree with what is being said or done?
- Examine your reaction—How do I really feel about what is being said or done?
- Consider alternative responses and opposing viewpoints—Based on what I know, is the statement true?
- Decide among the alternatives—What implications does this decision have for me and my future? Am I willing to use this information in making decisions?

4-H Pledge: “My HEART to greater loyalty,”

Relating Skills Example, Page 27

Communication—exchange of thoughts, information, or messages between individuals; sending and receiving information using speech, writing, gestures, and artistic expression

Messages must be sent and received for communication to have taken place.

Some examples:

- Reading—considering ideas, thoughts, information, or messages that have been written
- Speaking—talking or verbal communication; conversation; planning, organizing, and presenting a speech
- Listening—hearing and interpreting verbal (spoken) communications
- Giving feedback—responding to communications from others
- Observing—being attentive to and interpreting nonverbal communications, such as body language and gestures
- Sensitive to thoughts and feeling of others

4-H Pledge: “My HANDS to larger service,”

Giving Skills Example, Page 30

Community service/Volunteering – to donate one’s time and/or effort of one’s own free will for the benefit of the groups without guarantee of reward

May include:

- Contributing to the common good, something bigger than self
- Participating in community affairs
- Gaining internal, not external, reward
- Making a difference in one’s own life of the lives of others
- Realizing personal growth and understanding
- Making use of personal talents and skills
- Creating a caring environment
- Enjoying relationships with others

4-H Pledge: “My HEALTH to better living.”

Living Skills Example, page 32

Healthy lifestyle choices—selecting a way of living that is in accord with sound condition of body and mind, prevention of disease and injury

May include:

- Nutritional diet
- Weight control
- Regular exercise
- Resisting harmful activity (alcohol, drugs, smoking)
- Reduction of mental and emotional stress
- Adequate rest
- Practicing safety

Life Skill Category	Ages 5 – 8 Grades K-3	Ages 9-11 Grades 4-6	Ages 12-14 Grades 7-8	Ages 15-19 Grades 9-12
HEAD— Thinking Critical thinking	Asks questions before, during, and after acquiring information.	Develops wider comprehension. Has capacity to consider more information.	Discovers deeper meanings. Examines varying points of view. Reasons, compares, and analyzes information.	Discovers a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects and applies it. Reflects on what to believe or do.
HEART— Relating Communication	Is outgoing, talkative, carries on conversation. Engages in group discussion. Has selective listening.	Verbalizes freely, especially in small and familiar groups.	Is able to communicate effectively. Gains experience in presentations to groups.	Expresses opinions. Communicates ideas. Persuades, convinces. Challenges existing procedures and policies. Asks clear questions.
HANDS— Giving Community service/ Volunteering	Is usually willing to help with appropriate tasks.	Enjoys participating in short-term group effort.	Is willing to put forth much effort and time for a cause. Sees broader picture beyond self-interest. Participates in community service. Wants to explore possibilities.	Makes significant contributions to projects of interest. Values contributions to a common good. Leads community service.
HEALTH— Living Healthy lifestyle choices	Is able to make healthy diet choices. Reflects family and personal tastes. Is mastering physical skills, including coordination, balance, and strength.	Learns basis for improved choices. Is actively involved in physical exercise.	Compares labels and product quality. Spends appropriate amount of time in physical activity. Doesn't participate in risky behaviors.	Applies science information to food choices. Is involved in individual and team athletic events. Chooses to make healthy choices.