



Aiming high (proactivity)

Age range: 11-19

 **BARCLAYS** | LifeSkills



Session overview

Time	Key learning outcomes	Resources
35-50 mins	By the end of the activity students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities to aim high in their everyday lives Understand the difference between being proactive and reactive Recognise how being proactive can help them aim high and achieve their goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aiming high (proactivity) presentation slides

Remember that you can refer to the guiding principles for establishing a safe learning environment in the Appendix section of the LifeSkills content guide. This includes suggestions for signposting students to further support. The content guide can be downloaded [here](#).

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Introduction to transferable skills

Economic, societal and technological forces are changing the world of work, and skills like staying positive (resilience), problem solving, creativity and leadership are becoming increasingly valuable to employers. Your students may already possess some of these core transferable skills but by improving them and developing others, they can be better prepared for the future workplace. By delivering each of the skill-based lessons in this suite you can encourage growth in all these areas or focus in on the ones your students need most.

- If this is the first LifeSkills lesson you have delivered with this group start by showing students **slide 2** which features each of the core transferable skills at the heart of the programme. Go through each skill and ask students if they can offer definitions (provided below), examples of these skills in action or explain how they might work together, for example being proactive to solve a problem
- If you have already introduced all these skills to the group and why they are all important, move on to the next step to explore the specific skill for this lesson in more detail. Use **slide 3** to focus in on the skill of Aiming high (proactivity) and explain how the activities in this lesson help them work towards specific steps of the Skills Builder Framework

Core transferable skills



Problem solving skills are about the ability to find a solution to a complex situation or challenge, often using analytical thinking to come up with a methodical approach or break a problem down into parts



Creativity is the use of imagination and the generation of new ideas, and building the confidence to improve these ideas on your own and by collaborating with others



Listening and speaking (communication) is about receiving and retaining information, persuading and influencing others, and using critical thinking skills to evaluate different perspectives



Leadership is about recognising your own strengths in order to best support, encourage and motivate others to achieve a shared goal



Aiming high (being proactive) is the ability to set clear goals and prioritise tasks to achieve them, as well identifying when to take the initiative instead of reacting to external event



Staying positive (resilience) is about the ability to use tactics and strategies to overcome setbacks and achieve goals



Adaptability is having the skills to cope and thrive in response to changes and challenges



Teamwork is an important skills used when working with another person, or people in a group

Introduction to transferable skills (cont'd)

- The Skills Builder Framework, developed by the Skills Builder Partnership, provides a shared language and common expectations for eight essential skills: Listening; Speaking; Problem Solving; Creativity; Staying Positive; Aiming High; Leadership; Teamwork. LifeSkills content on transferable skills can be used to support a young person's progression through each of the essential skills, providing a relatable, real-world employability context and this relationship is indicated in brackets above
- LifeSkills lessons always include the opportunity for young people to work in groups and share ideas, as well as providing context for the importance of effective teamwork in the workplace. Look out for the teamwork icon in this lesson and throughout the core transferable skills content



Optional

The Skills Builder Framework provides measurable steps for eight essential skills and can be used in combination with this lesson to support your students' progress.

Skills Builder also offer a student Self-Assessment Tool, which helps learners to reflect on their own skill strengths and areas for development. This and other resources can be accessed on the Skills Builder Hub (skillsbuilder.org/hub).

Activity one

How proactivity helps you aim high (11-19)

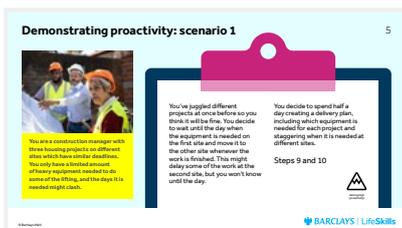
1. Think about next steps

- Explain to students that when they are setting goals or thinking about their next steps, it is good to aim high. To give them the best opportunity to achieving these goals, being proactive and listening to feedback will help them on their journey
- To help them understand these concepts further, ask the class what they think 'proactive' and 'reactive' mean
- When they have offered some responses, give the following explanations:
 - **Proactive** = A proactive approach focuses on eliminating problems before they have a chance to appear
 - **Reactive** = A reactive approach is based on responding to events after they have happened
- Explain that being proactive is a way of thinking ahead and being prepared. This session explores examples of opportunities to be proactive

2. Explore proactive and reactive responses



- Split the class into small groups and show the scenarios on **slide 4**
- Ask half of the groups to respond to each of the scenarios in a proactive way, and half of the groups to respond in a reactive way. Allow a few minutes for groups to come up with a response
- Share responses with the rest of the class and generate a discussion by asking which approaches have more benefits and positive outcomes. Use **slides 5-7** and talk through the example responses
- This activity aligns with step 5 and 9 of the Skills Builder Framework for aiming high



3. Reflect on these questions

How can we set goals in our stretch zone?

Can you give examples of when you've done this?

Why is it important to be willing to take on new challenges?

When do we need to involve other people to achieve our plans?

- Conclude by explaining that being proactive does not mean that your plans will work perfectly, but it can help to minimise potential issues. By aiming high and looking toward the best possible outcome, you're more likely to be successful

Activity two

A proactive approach to achieving goals (11-16)

1. Explore short-term goals

- Ask students to think about short-term goals they have for the year ahead
- If they require a prompt, give them examples such as; achieving targets in a particular subject, joining a sports team, passing a grade in a musical instrument, starting a volunteering project. For older or more able students, encourage them to consider career goals such as; gaining part-time work, securing summer work experience in fields of interest
- Divide the class into small groups. Each group should either form a circle with their chairs or breakout to separate areas in the class
- Designate one seat as a 'hot seat' and ask whoever is sitting here to explain their goals to their team. Each person in the group must suggest one proactive action that person can take to achieve their goal
- Rotate who occupies the hot seat until each member of each group has presented their goal to their team and received feedback
- If time allows, ask some students to share their goal and the proactive suggestions they received with the wider class

2. Explore steps needed to achieve a goal

- When this is completed, show **slide 9**, which features an example goal broken down into steps
- Return to the definitions of aiming high and proactivity at the beginning of the lesson and ask students individually to plot out the steps they need to take to achieve the goal they outlined earlier, using the proactive ideas from the rest of their group
- Ask them whether they used any other skills during this activity. Explain that to come up with their action plans they used teamwork and communication by getting an outside perspective and clearly communicating what they want to achieve
- This activity aligns with step 11 and 12 in the Skills Builder Framework for aiming high

3. Reflect on these questions

What are the steps to creating a plan?

Why is it important to include external views as we develop our plans?

What is constructive criticism, and how can it be helpful?

Activity three

Taking a proactive approach (16-19)

1. Practise being proactive



- Ask students to give examples of when they have been proactive and reactive
- If they need prompting, reiterate that being proactive or reactive is about how they respond to events and ways they work towards goals
 - When being proactive, they think about broader goals and plan in advance of events
 - When being reactive, they respond after events or problems and have not planned ahead
- Read through Alfred's case study, which can be accessed on **slide 10**

2. Reflect on these questions

How was Alfred being proactive?

Did Alfred show any other skills or use resources to help him achieve his goal?

How could Alfred have obtained feedback?

Could his goal have been more specific?

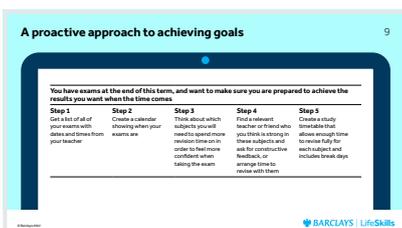
How could he have incorporated milestones to keep him on track with achieving a long-term goal? What would these have looked like?

Encourage students to think about where they show these skills in their own lives or if there are opportunities to implement them. When do we need to involve other people to achieve our plans?

How can you convince people to support you in achieving your plans?

Why is it important to think about skills when making plans?

3. Think about long-term goals



- Students should then plot two short-term goals and one long-term goal they wish to achieve and steps they will take to achieve these goals as presented in **slide 9**, each of which demonstrate that they are aiming high
- If they need a prompt, encourage them to consider goals relating to sixth form or college, going to university, or gaining employment or an apprenticeship
- This activity aligns with steps 9 and 10 in the Skills Builder Framework for aiming high

Summary

- Finish the lesson by encouraging students to set clear, tangible goals and develop a plan broken down into steps to achieve them whenever they have the opportunity
- Explain that being proactive in their actions and responses to events will help them in achieving the goals they set. There are many ways to be proactive about planning for the future, including volunteering, work experience, or joining organised clubs

Try next

The [Creativity skills](#) lesson follows this session well, as part of being proactive is about finding creative solutions to problems. Students could explore aiming higher further on their own by checking out this LifeSkills article on [achieving goals](#).

You could also try the [Setting goals](#) lesson, which provides more opportunities to explore techniques for aiming high and achieving goals.

