



Part 2

The Stuff Dreams Are Made Of: Building Your Skills

Right now, you have a huge variety of skills. You will continue to learn and develop skills all through your life. Skills can range from knowing how to tie your shoes to building a house to designing a rocket! Skills are what make your dreams come true. Your career choices in the future will depend on the skills you are developing right now. Part 2 of *Dream Catchers* shows you how your skills can shape your future plans.



What Are Skills?

A skill is the ability to do something well. There are many kinds of skills. The skills that are most important both at school and at work include the following:

- * **Academic skills** are the skills you learn mostly in school. They are the school subjects you take, such as math, science, history, and reading. Academic skills are so important that our laws say children must be taught them.
- * **Self-management skills** are skills that help you control your behavior. For example, following directions, being friendly, being honest, and respecting authority are all self-management skills.
- * **Job-related skills** are skills that are needed for doing a certain job. Arranging flowers, driving a truck, using a computer, and performing surgery are all job-related skills.

Have you ever thought about how many skills you have? You have thousands already. You will keep learning skills all through your life. You probably take most of your skills for granted. To see if that's true, do the following activity.

Directions

Think about all the skills you used just coming to school today. List them on the following lines. Be specific! Compare your list to your classmates' lists.

Academic Skills Are Building Blocks

How many skills did you list on the preceding activity? Were you surprised by how many skills you have? Skills work like building blocks. When you learn a new skill, it helps you learn more skills. You start with one block and end up with a tower!