

Work It Back

Relevance, future thinking, skills, opportunities, and choices.



FOUNDATIONAL MESSAGE

What you do here can matter to your future.



NOTICE



CONNECT



STRENGTHEN



DISCOVER THE WHY



ENVISION



DAY 4 — DISCOVER THE WHY

Work It Back

Focus: Relevance, future thinking, skills, opportunities, and choices

Activity Summary

Students start with a broad future choice they would probably like to have someday and physically move through a series of stations to work backward. They identify an opportunity that could support that choice, a skill that could help them access that opportunity, and finally a way school helps them practice that skill. By holding the four pieces together, students can literally see the connection between what happens in school today and the choices they may have tomorrow.

Why it matters

Students do not need a perfectly clear picture of their future. But thinking about the future can help them understand why some of the things they are doing today matter.

School is not just about assignments or grades. It is also a place where students build skills. Skills can create opportunities, and opportunities can provide more choices later in life.

The connection:



Preparation

Create four stations around the room:

- 1 CHOICES
- 2 OPPORTUNITIES
- 3 SKILLS
- 4 SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

► Place multiple copies of a few simple cards at each station.

The cards do not need to represent every possible future. They simply help students understand the pattern.

Choice Cards

- Have work I enjoy
- Be able to support myself
- Have options and flexibility in my life
- Be able to help or contribute to others

Opportunity Cards

- More job or career options
- College, training, or certifications
- Chances to meet and learn from people
- Opportunities to lead or take responsibility
- Chances to try new things

Skill Cards

- Communication
- Problem-solving
- Teamwork
- Persistence
- Creativity
- Time management
- Learning new things

School Connection Cards

- Working with others
- Writing and communicating
- Solving problems
- Meeting deadlines
- Trying difficult things
- Learning new information
- Asking questions

Teacher Framing

“You don’t have to know exactly what you want to do with your life. You don’t need a perfectly clear picture of your future.”

THEN

“But it is important to think about your future sometimes, because it can help you understand why some of what you’re doing today matters.”

“Today we’re going to start with one choice you might like your future self to have, and then we’re going to work it back.”

1

STEP 1

Pick a Choice

“Everybody stand up and move to the CHOICES station.”

THEN

“These aren’t supposed to describe your perfect future. Just pick one that sounds like something you’d probably like to have.”

► Students select one.

2

STEP 2

Find an Opportunity

“Take your Choice card with you and move to OPPORTUNITIES.”

THEN

“Pick one opportunity that you think could help make your choice more possible.”

REMIND STUDENTS

“There isn’t one perfect answer. Just find a connection that makes sense.”

3

STEP 3

Find a Skill

“Take both cards and move to SKILLS.”

THEN

“What skill could help you take advantage of that opportunity?”

► Students choose one.

4

STEP 4

Connect It to School

“Bring your three cards to the final station: SCHOOL.”

THEN

“Find one place where you already practice that skill in school.”

► Students choose their final card.

Each student now has a four-part chain.

Make the Connection

“Take a look at what you’re holding.”

THEN

“You started with a choice you might like to have someday.”

“That choice may depend on having opportunities.”

“Taking advantage of opportunities often takes skills.”

“And school is one of the places where you get to practice and build those skills.”

THEN

- “Your chain doesn’t have to be perfect. That’s not the point. The point is seeing the connection.”

Close

- “You don’t have to know exactly what your future looks like.”

THEN

- “But when you start thinking about the kinds of choices you’d like to have someday, it becomes easier to see why what you do today can matter.”

FINISH WITH

- “School helps you build skills. Skills can create opportunities. Opportunities can give you more choices.”

What you do here can matter to your future.

SLIDE VISUAL

SCHOOL > SKILLS > OPPORTUNITIES > CHOICES



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