

ALEC GETS A JOB

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK of KANSAS CITY

TEACHER INTRODUCTION:

This lesson will help students identify skills that can make someone more employable and how certain skills and education can affect future career opportunities. As students read the book *Alexander Hamilton: Young Statesman*, they will learn about Alexander (Alec) Hamilton's childhood and the skills that made him more employable and successful in school and business. This lesson promotes the standards of reading comprehension, writing, and oral presentation.

GRADE LEVEL: 3 - 5

CONCEPTS:

Employability, human capital, job interview

OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

1. Define employability and human capital.
 2. Identify their own skills that make them more employable.
 3. Compare their employability skills to others.
 4. Apply their understanding of the text and employability in writing.
 5. Describe their skills in a mock interview activity.
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TIME REQUIRED:

60 minutes, plus time before the lesson to read the book as a class or individually

MATERIALS:

- *Alexander Hamilton: Young Statesman* by Helen Boyd Higgins, ISBN: 978-1-882859-62-7
 - Visual 1: Employability Skills Examples
 - Visual 1: Employability Skills Examples Answer Key
 - Handout 1: My Employability Skills, one for each student
 - Handout 2: Alec's Skills, one for each student
 - Handout 2: Alec's Skills Answer Key
 - Handout 3: Mock Interview #1, one for half of the class
 - Handout 4: Mock Interview #2, one for half of the class
 - Visual 2: Assessment
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PREPARATION:

- Read *Alexander Hamilton: Young Statesman* to the class or have students read the book on their own.
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PROCEDURE:

1. Write **employability** on the board and share a definition. Define employability as qualities that increase a person's chance of getting and keeping a job.
2. Ask students the following:

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- What skills did Alexander Hamilton or Alec have in the story that made him successful at school and his job? (*Answer: Alec was confident, goal-oriented, educated, a good listener, responsible, a strong leader, managed his time, and solved problems*).
 - How did Alec use those skills at school and work? (*Answer: When Alec was at school he was a good listener to his teacher. He managed his time between school, work, and home. He took responsibility for his behavior and apologized when he became mad. Alec problem-solved when his calculations were not correct and was confident in his ability to be a good leader at work*).
 - What other skills did Alec have that we haven't talked about? What other skills do you have that Alec didn't have? (*Answers will vary*).
3. Share with students that they are going to identify their own employability skills and then compare them with others.
 4. Display Visual 1: Employability Skills Examples and review each term with the class.
 5. After defining each term, ask students to provide examples of that term from the story. Use Visual 1: Employability Skills Examples Answer Key to share additional examples students haven't mentioned.
 6. Explain that employability skills can improve someone's **human capital**, which is a person's health, education, experience, training, skills, and values.
 7. Share that Alec's human capital was improved because of his skills, such as leadership, time management, and problem solving.
 8. Distribute Handout 1: My Employability Skills to all students and ask them to take out a pencil.
 9. Read the instructions for part 1 to the class and give students 5 - 7 minutes to complete.
 10. Then, ask students to find a partner to complete parts 2 and 3 of the handout.
 11. Review the instructions for parts 2 and 3 before students begin. Give them another 5 - 7 minutes to complete parts 2 and 3.
 12. Ask a few students to share their responses to parts 2 and 3 of their handout.
 13. Tell students they are going to focus on employability skills that Alec had for the next activity.
 14. Give students a copy of Handout 2: Alec's Skills and give them 10 minutes to complete.
 15. Use Handout 2: Alec's Skills Answer Key to review the answers as a class. Ask students why they chose certain skills.
 16. Explain that the next activity will give them an opportunity to demonstrate some of their own employability skills in a pretend **job interview**.
 17. Explain that a job interview is when an employer meets with someone who wants a job. The employer will ask questions of the person seeking a job to see if they have the necessary skills for that job. Those questions are meant to help the employer and person looking for a job get to know each other to find out if they would work well together. In the story, Mr. Cruger asked Alec questions before he was given the job; however, interviews today can be done in person, by phone or even through a video chat. Interviews are usually thirty minutes to an hour long.
 18. Divide students into pairs.
 19. Give one student in each pair a copy of Handout 3: Interview Questions #1 and give the other student in the pair a copy of Handout 4: Interview Questions #2.
 20. Tell students that they will take turns interviewing each other using the questions provided on their handout.
 21. Let students know that they should use the bottom portion of their handout to evaluate the person they are interviewing. They should select the appropriate choice for each item based on their partner's responses.

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22. Ask students to use the employability skills they selected for handout 1 in their responses to the questions they are asked.
 23. Give each student about 10-12 minutes to interview their partner.
 24. Pick questions from handouts 3 and 4 and ask students to share their answers with the class. Allow other students to share their responses to that same question as time allows. Use this as a review to close the lesson.
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ASSESSMENT:

1. Share Visual 2 with the class and ask students to write three to five sentences for each of the prompts below.

Question: Why did Mr. Cruger think Alec should be in charge of the business while Mr. Cruger was out of town? Use examples from the book.

(Answers may vary but may include: Mr. Cruger thought Alec should be in charge of the business because Alec was a responsible person even though he was only 14. Additionally, Alec always had his work done on time and done correctly).

Question: What is a job interview and what is its purpose?

(Answers may vary but may include: an interview is when an employer meets with someone who wants a job. The employer will ask questions of the person seeking a job to see if they have the necessary skills for that job. Those questions are meant to help the employer and person looking for a job get to know each other to find out if they would work well together).

Question: What kind of job would you like to have? What three employability skills that we discussed would be the most important for that job?

(Answers will vary).

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CONTENT STANDARDS:

Common Core Standards

Key Ideas and Details

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1 - Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3 - Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1 - Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3 - Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1 - Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.4 - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

Writing

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2 - Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2 - Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2 - Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

Speaking & Listening

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 3 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 5 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

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VISUAL 1: EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS EXAMPLES

Responsibility: Being responsible means you do the things you are asked to do and that you can be counted on to follow through on what you say you'll do.

Leadership: Leadership means that you take charge of a group or project and you see that everyone is doing what they need to in order to get the job done.

Education: Being educated means that you have studied in order to further your abilities and knowledge.

Time Management: Time management is understanding how much time it will take to complete one or many tasks and how to divide time between them so that you can work efficiently.

Problem Solving: Problem solving is finding a solution to something that is difficult.

Goal Oriented: Being goal oriented means that you will work hard to complete a task that you would like to achieve.

Confidence: Being confident means that you believe you have the skills and ability to do what you want and need to do.

Listener: Being a good listener means that you pay attention to what those around you are saying.

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VISUAL 1: EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS EXAMPLES ANSWER KEY

Responsibility: Being responsible means you do the things you are asked to do and that you can be counted on to follow through on what you say you will do.

Examples:

- Alec took responsibility by learning to write, ride a horse, and apologize for getting mad.
- Mr. Cruger thought Alec was a responsible person because he finished his work on time, helped even when he was not asked to and used his time wisely.

Leadership: Leadership means that you take charge of a group or project and you see that everyone is doing what they should be in order to get the job done.

Examples:

- Alec was a good leader of his uncle's slaves and gained their respect.
- When Mr. Cruger's cart became stuck in the mud, Alec took leadership of the situation. "I'll help you," he shouted. "If you will do as I say, then I will soon have you on your way. But it will take a lot of you to help" (73).
- Even though Alec was young, Mr. Cruger put him in charge of the store when he had to leave town because he was a good leader.

Time Management: Time-management is understanding how much time it will take to complete one or many tasks and how to divide time between them so that you can work efficiently.

Examples:

- Alec rode the cane in the morning, went to school in the afternoon and then studied at night.
- Once he had a job, he would get all of his work done first, and then read or work on other projects like cleaning out the closet.

Problem Solving: Problem solving is finding a solution to a difficult problem.

Examples:

- Alec was problem solving when he made a plan to help Mr. Cruger get his cart out of mud. "When you are older," the merchant said with a chuckle, "come see me about a job. I like boys who think for themselves" (74).
- When Mr. Cruger was told that Alec's figures were incorrect, Alec asked if he could show his work directly to Mr. Cruger to prove that his math was, in fact, correct.

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Goal Oriented: Being goal-oriented means that you will work hard to complete a task that you would like to achieve/complete.

Examples:

- A few of Alec's goals were to get a book about America, go to school, and get a job. These smaller goals were to help him achieve his biggest goal of going to America to attend college.

Confidence: Being confident means that you believe you have the ability to do what you need and want to do.

Examples:

- Alec was very confident in his abilities to learn new skills, like riding a horse or writing, and to use those skills at a job. Some people thought Alec was too confident, but his confidence helped him to take risks and achieve his goals.

Listener: Being a good listener means that you pay attention to what those around you are saying.

Examples:

- Alec was a good listener when he took advice from his uncle on how to ride and how to work with the slaves.

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HANDOUT 1: MY EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

PART 1: *Instructions:* Choose three of the employability skills listed below that describe you and circle them. Write an example of how you have used each of these skills in the space provided.

Confident	Good Communicator	Leader
Considerate	Good Listener	Creative
Enthusiastic	Good Writer	Organized
Friendly	Honest	Problem Solver
Goal Oriented	Intelligent	Responsible

Example of 1st Skill:

Example of 2nd Skill:

Example of 3rd Skill:

PART 2: *Instructions:* Find a partner and compare your employability skills from Part 1 with theirs. Write a sentence that describes how your skills compare to your partner's skills. Are any of your skills similar or different?

PART 3: *Instructions:* Work with your partner to identify other skills not listed at the top. Write three additional skills below that you would like to have some day. (Examples include jumping rope, juggling, learning to speak another language, etc.)

Three skills I would like to have are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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HANDOUT 2: ALEC'S SKILLS

Instructions: Examples of Alec's employability skills from the story are numbered below. Read each example and match it to the skill that best fits. Write the letter of the skill in the box to the right of each example. More than one skill may apply.

A. Time Management
E. Education

B. Leadership
F. Listener

C. Confidence
G. Goal Oriented

D. Problem Solving
H. Responsibility

1. Alec learned French from his mother so he could earn a book on the American Colonies.	
2. Mr. Cruger would only hire Alec if he could do math correctly, a skill which he had learned in school.	
3. When Alec was learning to ride a horse, he took advice from his uncle.	
4. When Alec got mad, he apologized to his uncle, to his teacher, and to his employer.	
5. Mr. Cruger said, "I like a man who is sure of himself."	
6. "I'll help you," he (Alec) shouted. "If you will do as I say, then I will soon have you on your way."	
7. Alec could have gotten distracted by the parrot but he stayed focused on finding a piece of pink coral.	
8. "When you are older," the merchant said with a chuckle, "come see me about a job. I like boys who think for themselves."	
9. Alec learned to "ride the cane" and conquer his fear of horses so that he could achieve his goal of attending school.	
10. Alec gained the respect of the slaves that worked at the plantation.	
11. Alec's wrote an excellent article about the hurricane that came to Nevis and earned a ticket to America.	
12. Alec rode the cane in the morning, went to school in the afternoon and then studied at night.	
13. Even though Alec was young, Mr. Cruger put him in charge of the store when he had to leave town.	
14. When Mr. Cruger told Alec that his figures were not correct, Alec asked if he could take his finished work directly to Mr. Cruger.	
15. Alec took advice from his uncle on how to work with the slaves.	

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HANDOUT 2: ALEC'S SKILLS ANSWER KEY

Instructions: Examples of Alec's employability skills from the story are numbered below. Read each example and match it to the skill that best fits. Write the letter of the skill in the box to the right of each example. More than one skill may apply.

A. Time Management
E. Education

B. Leadership
F. Listener

C. Confidence
G. Goal Oriented

D. Problem Solving
H. Responsibility

1. Alec learned French from his mother so he could earn a book on the American Colonies.	G, E
2. Mr. Cruger would only hire Alec if he could do math correctly, a skill which he had learned in school.	E, H
3. When Alec was learning to ride a horse, he took advice from his uncle.	F
4. When Alec got mad, he apologized to his uncle, to his teacher, and to his employer.	H
5. Mr. Cruger said, "I like a man who is sure of himself."	C
6. "I'll help you," he (Alec) shouted. "If you will do as I say, then I will soon have you on your way."	B, C, D
7. Alec could have gotten distracted by the parrot but he stayed focused on finding a piece of pink coral.	A
8. "When you are older," the merchant said with a chuckle, "come see me about a job. I like boys who think for themselves."	C, D
9. Alec learned to "ride the cane" and conquer his fear of horses so that he could achieve his goal of attending school.	G
10. Alec gained the respect of the slaves that worked at the plantation.	B
11. Alec's wrote an excellent article about the hurricane that came to Nevis and earned a ticket to America.	E
12. Alec rode the cane in the morning, went to school in the afternoon and then studied at night.	A
13. Even though Alec was young, Mr. Cruger put him in charge of the store when he had to leave town.	B, H
14. When Mr. Cruger told Alec that his figures were not correct, Alec asked if he could take his finished work directly to Mr. Cruger.	D
15. Alec took advice from his uncle on how to work with the slaves.	F

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HANDOUT 3: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS #1

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What skills do you already have?
3. What do you do well?
4. What skills would you like to learn some day?
5. This job requires leadership. Tell me about a time that you had to be a good leader.
6. What are your hobbies?
7. Tell me about a time you had to use something you learned in school to complete a task outside of school.
8. What would you like to be when you grow up?
9. Can you give an example of a time when you achieved one of your goals?

Interview Feedback: Check the box on the right that best fits each statement below.

	Not very often	Sometimes	Most of the time
My partner's responses were easy to understand			
My partner looked me in the eye during the interview			
My partner gave an example of a skill that they have			
My partner's answers made sense			
My partner had a positive attitude			
My partner was comfortable answering questions			

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HANDOUT 4: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS #2

1. How would you describe yourself?
2. If you have several jobs to complete, how will you get them all done in the time given to you?
3. Tell me about a time you had to be a leader.
4. If you disagreed with someone you work with, what would you do about it?
5. What do you like to do in your free time?
6. Where would you like to work in the future?
7. Tell me about a time when you used good listening skills.
8. Share a time when you didn't get along with someone and how you resolved it.
9. Can you give an example of a time when you showed responsibility?

Interview Feedback: Check the box on the right that best fits each statement below.

	Not very often	Sometimes	Most of the time
My partner's responses were easy to understand			
My partner looked me in the eye during the interview			
My partner gave an example of a skill that they have			
My partner's answers made sense			
My partner had a positive attitude			
My partner was comfortable answering the questions			

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VISUAL 2: ASSESSMENT

Question 1: Why did Mr. Cruger think Alec should be in charge of the business while he was out of town?

Question 2: What is a job interview and what is its purpose?

Question 3: What kind of job would you like to have? What three employability skills that we discussed would be the most important for that job?