



## Analysis of the 9th Grade English Coursebook in terms of 21st Century Skills

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### Abstract

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In our changing and evolving world, technology offers us new opportunities, new perspectives, new solutions and problems. To raise our educational standards, it is vital to know how to understand, adapt to, and develop this new world. In order to educate the students of this age with 21st century skills, the materials used in the classroom must comply with these skills. This study investigates the compatibility of the coursebook used in English classes with 9th grade under the Ministry of National Education with 21st century skills, and the sections in the data were collected from the Teenwise Student's Book. In this study, 21st century skills are determined by P21 Classification. Qualitative research method was used in the study. The data collected from the 9th grade English Coursebook were analyzed through descriptive analysis. It was found out that more than half of the activities in the coursebook were related to 21st century skills and productive skills were utilized more than receptive activities in developing 21st century skills. The least effective activities in developing 21st century activities were listening activities while the most effective activities were speaking activities. Most contributed 21st century skill was communication and collaboration while the least contributed skill was leadership and responsibility.

### Keywords:

English coursebook, 21st century skills, coursebook evaluation, ELT

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## Introduction

Unfortunately, we are not very successful in teaching English in Turkey. According to the EPI report published in 2019, Turkey ranked 79 of 85 European countries, and it ranks 79 among 100 countries in the world ranking (EPI, 4 2019). This points out that there is something wrong with our system of teaching English.

In today's era, it is essential for students to possess the ability to navigate and keep up with the advancements in Information and Communications Technology. It is the responsibility of educational institutions to equip students with contemporary skills. To thrive in professional life and adapt to the ever-changing political, sociological, and global landscape, individuals must acquire what are commonly known as "21st Century Skills" (Silva, 2009). These skills encompass the competencies necessary for success in the information age (Dede, 2009). Consequently, the adequacy of educational materials in meeting these needs holds paramount importance. This study aims to come up with solutions to the following questions:

1. Is the 9th Grade English Coursebook in line with 21st century skills?
2. How do listening scripts provide students with acquiring 21st century skills?
3. How do listening skill activities provide students with acquiring 21st century skills?
4. How do speaking skill activities provide students with acquiring 21st century skills?
5. How do reading passages provide students with acquiring 21st century skills?
6. How do reading skill activities provide students with acquiring 21st century skills?
7. How do writing skill activities provide students with acquiring 21st century skills?

The objective of this study is to examine the compatibility of 9th Grade English Coursebook with 21st century skills. It is searched whether the activities in English Coursebook, Teenwise are related to 21st century skills. The prime concern of this study is to understand whether we are able to adapt 21st century skills to our lessons through English Coursebook.

Many scientists have made many different descriptions of education. Some say that education is a preparation for life while some say that it is life itself. Either way the skills our students acquire in schools should be coherent with the necessities of our time. In the present century, countries that are able to educate students with 21st century skills will lead to science and technology. Today it is meaningless to fill the brains of students with the information they can already find from search engines on the Internet. It is of great importance to teach them how to shape the information using 21st century skills.

The rapid advancement of technology has brought about significant changes in various aspects of our lives. One notable impact is the increasing use of robots and machines to perform a wide range of jobs. This trend has raised concerns that approximately 800 million workers worldwide may face the risk of job loss by the year 2030 (McKinsey Global Institute Report, 2017). Consequently, the skills that distinguish humans from robots have become a prominent topic of discussion in both the field of education and the business world. Recently, there has been a growing focus on the concept of "21st Century Skills" among educators and researchers. This attention has extended to the realm of English language teaching, with discussions emerging on the integration of these skills (Bouزيد, 2016). The importance of 21st century skills is undeniable. It is essential to integrate these skills to our classes as a compulsory consequence of the developments in technology lately.

Today, the world has almost turned into a single country due to communication facilities, changes in information processing and the establishment of multinational companies. In order to adequately prepare students to succeed in a global economy, schools will need to take

a different approach. Recognizing the significance of academic comparisons and the diverse range of tasks students will encounter, schools must reassess their approaches to address the evolving demands of our dynamic world (Hillman, 2012). If the goal of a country is to be at the level of contemporary civilizations and to keep up with the changing world, then it should constantly update its education system. Students should be equipped with the necessary skills. This is the only way to survive and exist in this changing world.

The skills that students require to thrive in the society they will work and live in should not be considered as an additional subject to teach, but rather as integrated training across all curricula (Larson, L. C., & Miller, T. N., 2011). Explaining 21st century skills under a separate topic may be considered boring, unnecessary and meaningless for students. However, if these skills are integrated into our lessons and materials, students will acquire these skills implicitly.

### Methodology

In this study, the method used was document analysis. The reading texts, listening scripts and activities of Teenwise Student’s book are samples of this study. It is used as English coursebook in 9th grade of public schools. The book has 10 chapters. It is an integrated book. It has speaking, listening, reading and writing skills parts.

In this study, document analysis that is one of the qualitative research data collection techniques was used. The data were analyzed by descriptive analysis method. How effective and sufficient reading texts, listening scripts and exercises are in helping students gain 21st century skills has been examined. The data was collected from the printed version and interactive version of the book. The chart showing the themes of the Coursebook "Teenwise" is presented below.

**Table 1.** Themes of Teenwise Student’s Book

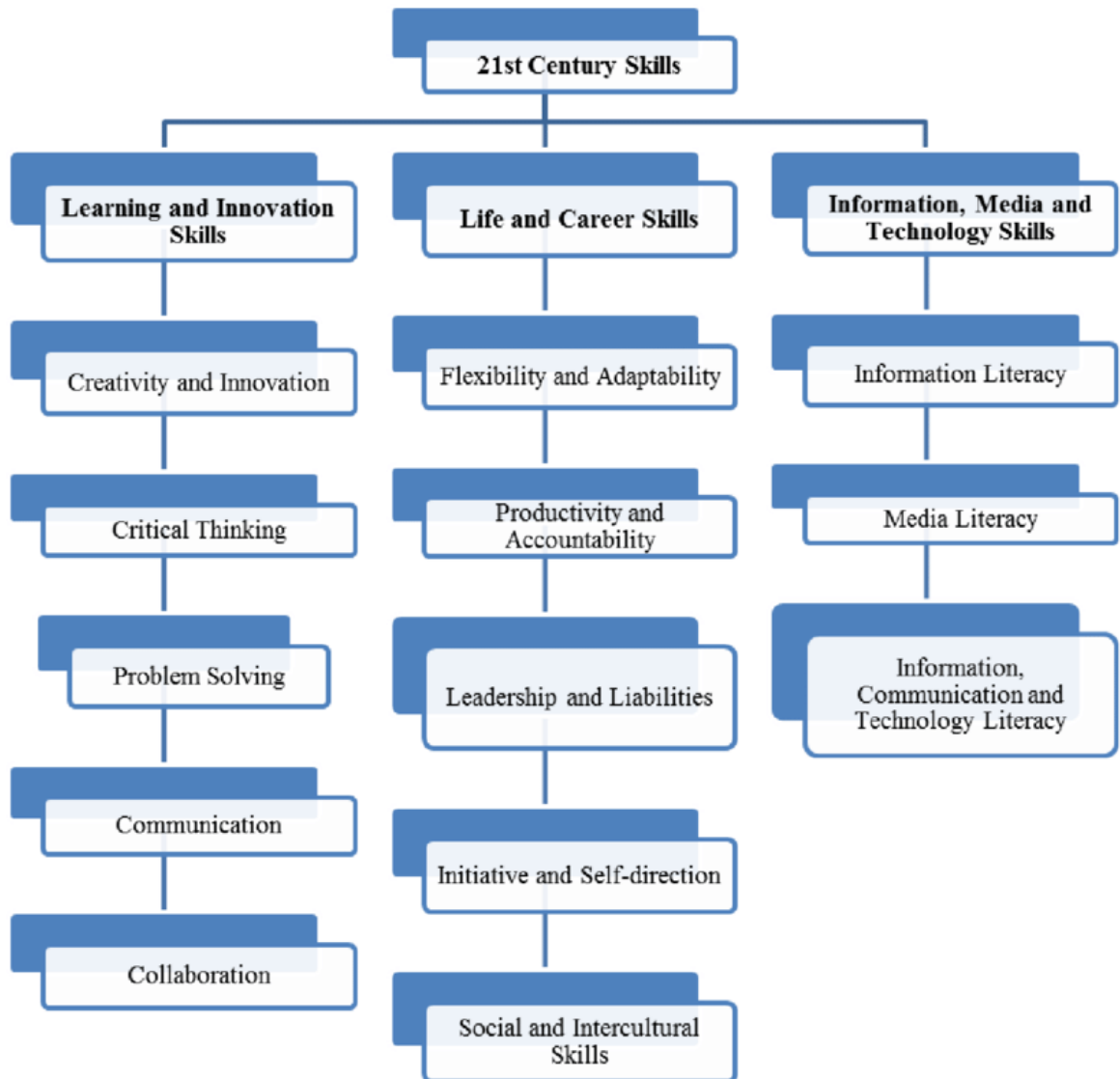
Number of the theme	Name of the theme
1	Studying Abroad
2	My Environment
3	Movies
4	Human in Nature
5	Inspirational People
6	Bridging Cultures
7	World Heritage
8	Emergency and Health Problems
9	Invitations and Celebrities
10	Television and Social Media

The checklist below was used for reading texts, listening scripts, listening skill activities, speaking skill activities, reading skill activities and writing skill activities.

**Table 2.** Checklist

<b>21st century skills</b>	<b>Number of activities</b>
Creativity & Innovation	
Critical Thinking & ProblemSolving	
Communication & Collaboration	
Information Literacy	
Media Literacy	
ICT	
Flexibility & Adaptability	
Initiative & Self - direction	
Social & Cross cultural Skills	
Productivity & Accountability	
Leadership & Responsibility	

The English Coursebook Teenwise Student’s Book was obtained from the Ministry of National Education. It is one of the books distributed free of charge to students in public schools. 21st century skills are determined by P21 Classification represented in the Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1.** 21st Century Skills

### Findings

In this section, the findings obtained as a result of the analysis of the data collected from the 9th Grade English Coursebook Teenwise for the research problem are included. The 9th Grade English Coursebook Teenwise has got 20 reading texts. The number of reading texts related to 21st century skills are presented in Table 3 in order to present the relevance between reading texts and 21st century skills.

**Table 3.** Frequencies of Reading Texts in terms of 21st Century Skills

21st Century Skills	Reading Texts	
Creativity & Innovation	-	-
Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	Eddie the Eagle, Teen World Adele's Blog	3
Communication & Collaboration	The Creme De la Creme Adele's Blog	2
Information Literacy	-	-
Media Literacy	The Creme De la Creme, Norah Jones, Camilla's and Huang's Blog	5
Teen World, Adele's Blog		
ICT	Digital Diet	1
Flexibility & Adaptability	Journey to Dreams	1
Initiative & Self - direction	-	-
Social & Cross cultural Skills	Road to Success, Different Shelters Different Cultures, Eddie the Eagle, Journey to Dreams, Norah Jones, Camilla's Blog, Birthday Treats, Travel Far Enough, Basant Panchami Festival	9
Productivity & Accountability	-	-
Leadership & Responsibility	-	-

According to Table 3 most of the reading texts are relevant to 21st century skills. There are 3 reading texts related to Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, 2 reading texts related to Communication and Collaboration, 5 reading texts related to Media Literacy, 1 reading text related to ICT, 1 reading texts related to Flexibility and Adaptability and 9 reading texts related to Social and Cross cultural Skills.

There are totally 232 activities in the Coursebook, Teenwise. 46 of them are listening activities, 56 of them are speaking activities, 75 of them are reading activities and 55 of them are writing activities. These activities were analyzed as to whether they were relevant to 21st century skills. When examined it is seen that some of the activities are not related to 21st century skills while some of them are related to one or more than one 21st century skill.

The number of listening activities related to 21st century skills are presented in Table 4 in order to present the relevance between listening activities and 21st century skills.

**Table 4.** Frequencies of Activities According to Listening Skill

<b>21st Century Skills</b>	<b>Number of activities (f)</b>
Creativity & Innovation	-
Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	2
Communication & Collaboration	6
Information Literacy	3
Media Literacy	-
ICT	2
Flexibility & Adaptability	1
Initiative & Self - direction	-
Social & Cross cultural Skills	13
Productivity & Accountability	-
Leadership & Responsibility	-

According to Table 4 less than half of the listening activities are relevant to 21st century skills. There are 2 listening activities related to Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, 6 listening activities related to Communication and Collaboration, 3 listening activities related to Information Literacy, 2 listening activities related to ICT, 1 listening activity related to Flexibility and Adaptability and 13 listening activities related to Social and Cross cultural Skills. None of the listening activities is related to Creativity and Innovation, Media Literacy Initiative and Self - direction, Productivity and Accountability or Leadership and Responsibility.

The number of Speaking Activities related to 21st century skills are presented in Table 5 in order to present the relevance between speaking activities and 21st century skills.

**Table 5.** Frequencies of Activities According to Speaking Skill

<b>21st Century Skills</b>	<b>Number of activities (f)</b>
Creativity & Innovation	13
Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	14
Communication & Collaboration	53
Information Literacy	4
Media Literacy	3
ICT	4
Flexibility & Adaptability	11
Initiative & Self - direction	32
Social & Cross cultural Skills	12
Productivity & Accountability	24
Leadership & Responsibility	3

According to Table 5 most of the speaking activities are relevant to 21st century skills. There are 13 speaking activities related to Creativity and Innovation, 14 speaking activities related to Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, 53 speaking activities related to Communication and Collaboration, 4 speaking activities related to Information Literacy, 3 speaking activities related to Media Literacy, 4 speaking activities related to ICT, 11 speaking activities related to Flexibility and Adaptability, 32 speaking activities related to Initiative and Self-Direction, 12 speaking activities related to Social and Cross cultural Skills, 24 speaking activities related to Productivity and Accountability and 3 speaking activities related to Leadership and Responsibility.

The number of reading activities related to 21st century skills are presented in Table 6 in order to present the relevance between reading activities and 21st century skills.



**Table 6.** Frequencies of Activities According to Reading Skill

<b>21st Century Skills</b>	<b>Number of activities (f)</b>
Creativity & Innovation	3
Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	16
Communication & Collaboration	5
Information Literacy	4
Media Literacy	2
ICT	3
Flexibility & Adaptability	2
Initiative & Self - direction	2
Social & Cross cultural Skills	11
Productivity & Accountability	2
Leadership & Responsibility	-

According to Table 6 nearly half of the reading activities are relevant to 21st century skills. There are 3 reading activities related to Creativity and Innovation, 16 reading activities related to Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, 5 reading activities related to Communication and Collaboration, 4 reading activities related to Information Literacy, 2 reading activities related to Media Literacy, 3 reading activities related to ICT, 2 reading activities related to Flexibility and Adaptability, 2 reading activities related to Initiative and Self- Direction, 11 reading activities related to Social and Cross cultural Skills and 2 reading activities related to Productivity and Accountability. None of the reading activities is related to Leadership and Responsibility.

The number of writing activities related to 21st century skills are presented in Table 7 in order to present the relevance between reading texts and 21st century skills.

**Table 7.** Frequencies of Activities According to Writing Skill

<b>21st Century Skills</b>	<b>Number of activities (f)</b>
Creativity & Innovation	13
Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	2
Communication & Collaboration	12
Information Literacy	5
Media Literacy	5
ICT	4
Flexibility & Adaptability	6
Initiative & Self - direction	15
Social & Cross cultural Skills	3
Productivity & Accountability	18
Leadership & Responsibility	1

According to Table 7 most of the writing activities are relevant to 21st century skills. There are 13 writing activities related to Creativity and Innovation, 2 writing activities related to Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, 12 writing activities related to Communication and Collaboration, 5 writing activities related to Information Literacy, 5 writing activities related to Media Literacy, 4 writing activities related to ICT, 6 writing activities related to Flexibility and Adaptability, 15 writing activities related to Initiative and Self- Direction, 3 writing activities related to Social and Cross cultural Skills, 18 writing activities related to Productivity and Accountability and 1 writing activity related to Leadership and Responsibility.

The number of All Skill Activities related to 21st century skills are presented in Table 8 in order to present the relevance between activities in the coursebook and 21st century skills.

**Table 8.** Frequencies of Activities According to Each Language Skill

21st Century Skills	Listening (f)	Speaking (f)	Reading (f)	Writing (f)	Total (f)
Creativity & Innovation	-	13	3	12	28
Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	2	14	16	2	34
Communication & Collaboration	6	53	5	12	76
Information Literacy	3	4	4	5	16
Media Literacy	-	3	2	5	10
ICT	2	4	3	4	13
Flexibility & Adaptability	1	11	2	6	20
Initiative & Self - direction	-	32	2	15	49
Social & Cross cultural Skills	13	12	11	3	39
Productivity & Accountability	-	24	2	18	44
Leadership & Responsibility	-	3	-	1	4

According to Table 8 more than half of the activities are relevant to 21st century skills. There are 28 activities related to Creativity and Innovation, 34 activities related to Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, 76 activities related to Communication and Collaboration, 16 activities related to Information Literacy, 10 activities related to Media Literacy, 13 activities related to ICT, 20 activities related to Flexibility and Adaptability, 49 activities related to Initiative and Self- Direction, 39 activities related to Social and Cross cultural Skills, 44 activities related to Productivity and Accountability and 4 activities related to Leadership and Responsibility.

### Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the reading texts and activities in the 9th grade English coursebook contribute to 21st century skills. The document analysis of the book revealed that 21 of the reading texts, 27 listening activities, 173 speaking activities, 50 reading activities and 83 writing activities were related to 21st century skills. Productive skills were utilized more than receptive activities in developing 21st century skills. The least effective activities in developing 21st century activities were listening activities while the most effective activities were speaking activities. Most contributed 21st century skill was Communication and Collaboration while the least contributed skill was Leadership and Responsibility. Besides, it was observed that some of them have no 21st century skills while some of them have one or more than one skill. It was concluded that more than half of the activities and nearly all of the reading texts were related to 21st century skills.

The 9th Grade Coursebook Teenwise itself has an online version on the website 'https://ogmmateryal.eba.gov.tr/etkilesimli-kitap/ingilizce?s=6&d=40&u=0&k=0'. It is an interactive book so students can do the exercises online and teachers can open the books on smart boards easily. This is a great convenience especially for listening activities. The most significant thing is that the book itself, which is the subject of our research, is able to utilize ICT, one of the 21st century skills. However; Leadership & Responsibility, ICT, Media Literacy, Information Literacy and Flexibility & Adaptability skills are not sufficiently contained in activities. Since it is vital for our students to gain 21st century skills in order to adapt to the new world, these skills should be contained more in the English Coursebook.

Since communicative learning is mostly carried out in English lessons, examination of the coursebook and the workbooks related to skill acquisition and communicative competences is considered to be important. Thus, researchers can study on how teachers can adapt 21st century skills to their lesson plans more. Additionally, with the development of technology, different types of lesson plans will find more place in English lessons. It is suggested that the relationship between using the technology and acquiring 21st century skills could be investigated by researchers.

Note: This study is from the author's MA non-thesis project.

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