

## БӨЛІМ: ЖАЛПЫ РУБРИКА

## Soft Skills Through English Learning: Building Communication, Teamwork, Creativity, Responsibility, and Leadership

ЖАРИЯЛАНДЫ  
24.12.2025СІЛТЕМЕ  
<https://bilimger.kz/186119/>**Нуралыева Айгерим Кайратқызы**

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In the middle grades, students begin to form stronger identities, wider social circles, and new expectations about independence. For 5–6th graders, learning English can become far more than mastering vocabulary and grammar—it can be a meaningful space where learners practice real-life communication, collaborate with peers, make decisions, and grow into confident, responsible young leaders. A soft-skills-centered approach helps students use English as a tool for interaction, not just an academic subject, and supports their personal development alongside language progress.

Soft skills—communication, collaboration, creative and critical thinking, responsibility, leadership, empathy, and digital literacy—are essential for learners who are entering a more complex social and academic environment. At this age, students are highly influenced by peer feedback, group dynamics, and the need to be heard. English lessons can provide a safe and structured setting where students learn to speak politely, listen actively, negotiate meaning, and express opinions respectfully. When these skills are embedded into daily language tasks, learners develop confidence and a stronger willingness to participate.

A key advantage of soft-skills integration is that it transforms English learning into life-based practice. The focus shifts from “knowing rules” to “using English in meaningful situations,” which improves motivation and long-term retention. The program emphasizes learning English through real-life contexts and building personal qualities through connected speaking, listening, reading, and writing tasks.

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## A learning model that integrates language and life skills

An effective soft-skills approach is built on three principles:

### 1) Real-life communication tasks

Students learn language through situations they can relate to—greetings, polite phrases, feelings, asking questions, and gradually moving toward debates, presentations, negotiations, and project work. This spiral design supports steady growth from simple interaction patterns to more complex communication demands.

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### 2) Active collaboration and shared responsibility

Pair and group work becomes a core routine. Students learn how to divide roles, contribute fairly, and make decisions together—skills that are essential for responsibility and leadership development.

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### 3) Balanced theory and practice

Short language input (useful phrases, sentence frames, functional vocabulary) is followed by practice through games, role plays, debates, and projects, creating consistent opportunities for meaningful output and reflection.

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A well-structured soft-skills English course can be organized into six units that develop students step-by-step:

- **Unit 1: Communication and Confidence**

Students build a safe speaking environment by practicing polite language, advice-giving, expressing feelings, active listening, and short dialogues. This stage reduces fear of speaking and supports classroom communication culture.

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- **Unit 2: Communication and Critical Thinking**

Learners introduce themselves and others, ask and answer questions, express opinions, solve everyday problems, create short presentations, and practice agreeing/disagreeing respectfully—key habits for teamwork and respectful dialogue.

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- **Unit 3: Leadership and Empathy**

Students explore responsibility, empathy, conflict resolution, and time management through language tasks. Role distribution and decision-making scenarios strengthen leadership and accountability in a supportive way.

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- **Unit 4: Digital and Real-World Communication**

Students learn online safety, polite messaging/email writing, phone etiquette, feedback language, and intercultural communication. This builds digital literacy and respectful behavior in both real and online environments.

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- **Unit 5: Project Work—Applying Soft Skills**

Teams create real products (poster, presentation, audio/video, portfolio) and practice public speaking, interviews, negotiation, and problem solving through collaborative projects. This unit makes soft skills visible through student outcomes.

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- **Unit 6: Review and Evaluation**

Students present final group work, use self- and peer-assessment, celebrate progress, and set new learning goals—supporting reflection and ownership of learning.

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### **Classroom strategies that make the approach work**

To ensure soft skills grow naturally inside language learning, teachers can apply the following practices:

- **Task-Based Learning (TBLT):** “one lesson—one meaningful task” such as advice circles, mini-talks, interviews, negotiation role plays, and problem-solving activities.
- **Communication routines:** sentence starters and functional phrases to support polite disagreement, giving feedback, asking for clarification, and building arguments.
- **Cooperative structures:** team puzzles, “bridge tasks,” group planning templates, rotating roles (leader, timekeeper, reporter, supporter).
- **Creativity tools:** story cubes, story chains, poster/badge design, short storytelling challenges.
- **Digital citizenship habits:** safe online behavior, short audio/video tasks, and ethical use of AI (checking information, avoiding plagiarism, using tools responsibly).

These methods help students practice English as a social skill: they learn to listen, respond, negotiate, and support one another—while improving fluency and confidence.

### **Assessment that supports growth (not fear)**

Soft skills develop best in a supportive assessment culture. Formative assessment tools—observation checklists (teamwork language, politeness, listening behavior), peer feedback circles, self-reflection prompts, and rubrics for presentations/projects—make progress

measurable without discouraging students. The program emphasizes collecting evidence through student products (dialogue texts/audio, messages/emails, posters, presentations, portfolios) and using reflection to strengthen motivation.

### Conclusion

For 5–6th graders, English learning becomes more powerful when it grows the whole learner. Integrating soft skills into English lessons helps students communicate with confidence, work effectively in teams, think creatively and critically, take responsibility, and practice leadership with empathy. By moving from simple interaction patterns to debates, presentations, negotiations, and project work, students learn to use English as a real communication tool—and they gain life skills they will carry into every subject and social setting.

**ҚМ АА** Күәлік нөмірі: **KZ45VPY00102718** — ҚР Мәдениет және Ақпарат министрлігі

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