

# Improving your Employability Skills



So you're at the end of Year 11 and you no longer have to come to school and you have a big decision to make. Do you return to school, go to College, get a job or an apprenticeship?

When it's time to go to college or take a job, in addition to academic knowledge and vocational skills, students also need those "soft skills," otherwise known as job readiness skills.

Soft skills are those characteristics that help you function as an individual (motivation, self-confidence, and flexibility) as well as within a group (teamwork, negotiation, and respect). When it comes to workplace success, these skills are key. After all, if you can't show up on time, speak up for yourself, or get along with your peers, chances are you're not going to have a very smooth go of it.

**Task 1 Watch this short video. Access it through the following link**

<https://youtu.be/-xDazY5s-6M>



While there will always be job-specific skills that an employer is looking for, most employers will also want you to have some general skills. These general job skills are sometimes called "employability skills".

Having employability skills can help you get a job. They can also help you stay in a job and work your way to the top. If you score a job interview, chances are you'll be asked questions about your job-specific skills and your employability skills.

## What are Soft Skills?

Soft skills are the personal character traits and interpersonal skills that you have that help you work with other people



Generally speaking, these can be condensed into eight core skills that employers want you to have, no matter what industry you're working in. These are:

Communication, Teamwork, Problem solving, Initiative and enterprise. Planning and organisation, Self management, Learning and Technology.

### Task 2 Get your brain working:

Look at the list of 20 soft skills and try to sort them into the eight core employability skills shown in the table below:

Core Employability Skill	Includes Soft Skills
Communication	
Teamwork	
Problem Solving	
Initiative and enterprise	
Planning and Organisation	
Self management	
Learning	
Technology	

### Task 3 How good are you?

On the following table the skills have been broken down again. Look at each of the categories and give yourself a score (be honest) between 0 (Worst) and 5 (Best) to identify your strengths and weaknesses. Don't worry if there are some you can't do yet. It's something you may get to learn next year. Remember: You keep learning throughout life – not just in school

Skill	Component	0	1	2	3	4	5
Communication ... that contributes to productive and harmonious relations across employees and customers	Listening and understanding						
	Speaking clearly and directly						
	Writing to the needs of the audience						
	Negotiating responsively						
	Reading independently						
	Empathising – understanding how others feel						
	Speaking and writing in languages other than English						
	Using numeracy						
	Understanding the needs of others						
	Persuading effectively						
	Establishing and using networks						
	Being assertive						
Sharing information							

Skill	Component	0	1	2	3	4	5
Team work ... that contributes to productive working relationships and outcomes	Working with people of different ages, gender, race, religion or political beliefs						
	Working as an individual and as a member of a team						
	Knowing how to define a role as part of the team						
	Applying team work to a range of situations e.g. futures planning, crisis problem solving						
	Identifying the strengths of the team members						
	Coaching and mentoring skills including giving feedback						

Skill	Component	0	1	2	3	4	5
Problem solving ... that contributes to productive outcomes	Developing creative, innovative solutions						
	Developing practical solutions						
	Showing independence and initiative in identifying problems and solving them						
	Solving problems in teams						
	Use a range of strategies to problem solving						
	Using mathematics to solve problems						
	Apply problem solving strategies						
	Use data and circumstances to test assumptions						
Resolving customer concerns							

Skill	Component	0	1	2	3	4	5
Initiative and enterprise ... that contribute to innovative outcomes	Adapt to new situations						
	Developing a vision						
	Being creative						
	Identifying opportunities not obvious to others						
	Putting ideas into action						
	Creating a range of options						
	Starting innovative solutions						

Skill	Component	0	1	2	3	4	5
Planning and organising ... that contributes to long and short term strategic planning	Managing your time and work for yourself & others						
	Being resourceful						
	Taking initiative and making decisions						
	Adapting resource allocations to cope with change						
	Establishing clear project goals and outcomes						
	Allocating people and resources to tasks						
	Planning how to use resources and managing time						
	Look at how to improve work and planning						
	Developing a vision and a proactive plan						
	Predicting - weighing up risk, Look for alternatives and measure success						
	Collecting, analysing and organising information						
	Understand basic business systems and their links						

Skill	Component	0	1	2	3	4	5
Self management ... that contributes to employee satisfaction and growth	Having a personal vision and goals						
	Measure and monitor your own performance						
	Be confident in your own knowledge ideas and visions						
	Describe your own ideas and visions						
	Take responsibility						

Skill	Component	0	1	2	3	4	5
Learning ... that contributes to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes	Manage your own learning						
	Contributing to the learning community at the workplace						
	Use different ways of learning						
	Applying learning to different situations						
	Being enthusiastic about ongoing learning						
	Being willing to learn on and off the job						
	Being open to new ideas and techniques						
	Being prepared to invest time and effort in learning new skills						
Acknowledging the need to learn in order to accommodate change							

Skill	Component	0	1	2	3	4	5
Technology ... that contributes to effective execution of tasks	Have a range of basic IT skills						
	Able to apply IT						
	Using IT to organise data						
	Being willing to learn new IT skills						
	Having the physical capacity to apply technology e.g. manual dexterity						

From Employability Skills for the Future, 2002

Task 4 On the table above highlight the areas you have scored below 2 in Red (areas to be developed) and those scoring 5 and 6 in Green (areas of strength)

What are you

Strengths  (Scored 5 and 6)	
Areas that need improving  (Scored 0, 1 or 2)	

## Personal Characteristics

As well as these employability skills are your personal characteristics. These include things like those listed below:

Task 5. For each of the personal characteristics, describe what it means and then describe an example of when you have demonstrated that characteristic. Finally, score yourself from 0 (Worst) to 5 (Best) Be honest

Personal Characteristic	Meaning	Example when you have shown this characteristic in your work.	Score
loyalty			
commitment			
honesty and integrity			
enthusiasm			
reliability			
personal presentation			
Common sense			
positive self-esteem			



sense of humour			
balanced attitude to work and home life			
ability to deal with pressure			
motivation			
adaptability			

Task 6 Which areas do you think you need to work on to improve your personal skills. What will you do to try and improve these??

Task 7 Given what you have done in this booklet write yourself an action plan describing what you are going to do to make yourself “more employable”

What will you do?	When will you do it?	How will you know you've achieved it?



*Key achievement/projects*

- If possible, try to add some impressive achievements you’ve made that have had a big impact on the employer or a customer/client

<b>Mmm yyyy – mmm yyyy</b>	<b>Company Name, Location</b>
	<b>Role Title</b>

Awards and recognition

---

- **Award and awarding body** – Date achieved
- **Award and awarding body** – Date achieved

Interests

---

**Interests:** List any interests that could be relevant to the roles you are applying for, or could generally be deemed as impressive, such as competing in contests, fundraising, volunteering, travelling or playing sports.

References

---

**Referees:** Give the name and contact details of two people who would act as a referee for you. They should be someone who would support your application. It’s probably better to have your HoL or a teacher as one of them.

Referee 1 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Role \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact details:  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Referee 2 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Role: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact details:  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Don’t forget to read it through and delete things that are unnecessary. Good Luck.**