

*Developing Young People's*

# SKILLS

*for*

# WORK

reading  
thinking creatively  
reasoning  
being honest  
managing people

writing  
making decisions  
being responsible  
managing time  
working in a team

working with numbers  
solving problems  
having self-esteem  
managing money  
serving customers

listening  
visualising  
being sociable  
negotiating  
teaching

speaking  
knowing how to learn  
managing yourself  
using computers  
leading

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We have been careful to provide accurate information throughout this book, but it is possible that errors and omissions have been introduced. Please consider this in making any career plans or other important decisions. Trust your own judgment above all else and in all things.

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## INTRODUCTION FOR TEACHERS AND TUTORS



This pack contains materials designed to help students understand what work skills are. It covers 35 work skills. By working through this information your students should develop a much better understanding of each skill as it relates to the world of work.

Each skill is described as follows:

- what it means, in general terms
- why employers want it
- which careers use that skill a lot
- the words sometimes used in work when talking about that skill
- an example of that skill in use in the workplace
- suggested ways for students to begin to practice and use each skill
- suggested ways for students to develop each skill from this point forward.

Each skill is described over 4 sheets. We envisaged that these sheets would be photocopied back to back, resulting in the student getting one double sided sheet which explains the skill in some detail and one double sided sheet which contains activities to do to firstly practice the skill and secondly to develop the skill from this point forward.

### **Ideas for how the worksheets might be used:**

We think these worksheets can be used across the curriculum to help students make the connection between what they learn in school and the skills needed in the workplace. These materials do not have to be confined to careers lessons. Below are some ideas on how to use them:

#### **Name that skill:**

Towards the end of any lesson, a teacher might point out 1 skill that the class has used in that lesson - let's say reading. Then they give the students the skill sheet on reading and ask them to look at how that skill is used in the workplace. They then ask the class to work in pairs and come up with 3 other skills they have used in the lesson that might be useful in work. They ask them then to think of what would be on a skills leaflet for the new skills they have identified.

#### **Fill in the gaps:**

The teacher could show the class the skill description and the Careers that use this skill and then ask the class to work in small groups and come up with as many reasons as possible why an employer might want that skill in his/her employees. Take feedback and discuss.

Alternatively, the teacher could show the class the description, why employers want this skill and

the 'Words used at work' and then ask the groups to come up with as many job titles as they can where that skill would be really useful.

Another way to do this would be to read out the list of careers and the words used at work and then ask the class to guess the skill. There are several permutations of this that would work.

#### **Try it yourself:**

After a brief discussion of the skill and why it is important in work, the class could be given the Try it yourself worksheet to complete. This might be done in class or as homework. Some of these activities involve group work and role plays so these will need to be checked beforehand and done in the classroom.

#### **Build your skills:**

This worksheet could be turned into a checklist and students asked to tick off as many as they can over the coming week and write a brief summary of what they have done to build their ..... skill.

#### **Do you do this?**

Students could be given a copy of the skill description (the first 2 sheets) and then asked to take it away and find 3 people who are in work and ask them if they use this skill and how. They then report back in a future lesson.

A variation on this would be to ask the students to take the skill sheets away and find another example from someone who is working, of this skill at work, to replace the one on the worksheet under [Reading, writing, etc] skills at work.

#### **Picture that skill:**

Students could be asked to produce a collage of images of people in work using that skill. They could use magazines or newspaper pictures, or Google Images or take photographs of people using that skill.

Clearly there are lots of ways these materials could be used. These are just a few suggestions, we hope you find many more uses.

## DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLS FOR WORK

Skills are actions or behaviours that produce certain results. They are also sometimes called talents or aptitudes. When someone is thought to be skilled at something it usually means they are quite good at doing something. Everyone - including you - has many skills! Your skills affect your whole life, including how well you do in school, what interests you, how you spend your free time, and what career you choose. Skills are the building blocks for a happy and successful life and the more skills you can develop and the more skilled you become at things the more happiness and success you will have.

Work skills are the abilities that employers want from their employees whilst they are at work. Did you know that many of the skills you are learning in school will someday help you in your career? For example, in class you may be asked to work in groups and discuss things. In work, teamwork and communication are some of the skills employers rate very highly. What you learn and the way you learn can all help to develop your skills for work. Also, work skills develop and improve over time so understanding, learning and practicing them now will help you get off to a flying start once

you move into the world of work.

In work this process of being more ready to get to grips with the tasks presented to you is sometimes described as 'hitting the ground running'. The 'Developing Skills for Work' materials are designed to introduce you to the work skills that will help you succeed in almost any job. They include examples, stories, checklists, things to try, and other features which we hope will help you to explore and begin to develop the skills that will help you to succeed in the world of work.

### How do we know what skills employers want?

We know because, every year employers are contacted and asked what skills they want in their workforce. Lots of different organisations and bodies carry out such surveys. Below are the results from one such survey carried out by Dr Valmai Bowden on behalf of the University of Manchester and UMIST Careers Service. So, time spent developing work skills is time well spent.

We hope this makes things clearer for you and helps you get started on building your own skills with the future in mind. Good luck.

RESEARCH INTO SKILLS NEEDED BY EMPLOYERS	
Skill Area	% of employers who rated the skill as vital or very important
Oral Communication	92
Listening	89
Reasoning Skills	91
Written communication	75
Presentation skills	75
Willingness to learn	85
Problem solving	73
Decision making	70
Planning	67
Teamworking	86
Independence & initiative	80
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# Reading

People often share information through written words. Today, you may read those words on a computer screen, on a cell phone display, in a book, on a set of printed instructions, or in a printed or handwritten note. But, beyond reading and understanding what you read, you often have to make choices about which information is most useful or accurate. Employers consider the ability to identify relevant and accurate information to be important in almost any job.

The skill of reading includes the ability to:

- identify relevant facts
- find information
- find meanings of words
- judge accuracy of information
- use a computer to find information



## Why employers want this skill

Many jobs involve gathering information and reading about your customers and competitors. You can then use that information to make decisions about your business. Other jobs require that you read manuals or online instructions to perform a task.

When employers hire a person for a job, they often test that person's ability to read and understand what is read. There's a lot of information out there these days, on the internet, on television - everywhere! Employees who can use all these sources and come up with the best information are usually more successful.

Workers on the shop floor reading instructions for operating a machine, cooks reading recipes and computer technicians reading how to install software, all rely on information to do their work. Good reading skills are what help you find and understand that information.

## Careers that use this skill

Anyone at work will do better by having this skill, but these careers are strongly focussed on being able to read:

- Librarians
- Researchers
- Writers
- Teachers and Trainers
- Journalists
- Editors
- Proofreaders
- Solicitors
- Clerks and Administrative Assistants
- Secretaries

## Reading skills at work

Maria Downes

Helper in a Community Centre

"I work at the centre on Saturdays helping with filing in the office, some cleaning and, at times, signing people up for different courses run at the centre.

You might not think this type of work require a lot of reading but when I do the filing I have to skim read each item to find out what it is about so that I can work out which folder it needs to be filed into. I have to read the directions and safety warnings written on cleaning products to make sure I am using them correctly when I clean the kitchen. When I sign people up for different courses I have to look up things like fees and times. Sometimes I help people to fill out a registration form by reading the form and explaining what they need to write. So I do actually have to do quite a bit of reading."

## How good are you at reading?

What rating would an employer give you on your reading skills?

- Needs improvement
- Average
- Above Average
- Outstanding

Want to get better at reading?  
**Use the Reading Checklist.**

## Words used at work

These words sometimes get used in work in relation to reading. Can you work out why?

- Relevant
- Detailed
- Analyse
- Instructions
- Data
- Records
- Accurate
- Interpret
- Make sense of
- Specifications
- Information
- Message

## Reading Checklist

- Use computers, books and other sources to find information.
- Increase your vocabulary by reading a range of materials.
- Look up words you don't understand in the dictionary.
- When you read a news story, a short story or a magazine article, try to identify the most important information.
- Evaluate the information you read. Is it accurate and true?

