

Unit 4 - Workplace skills

Soft Skills Background:

- **Definition**- the transferable skills needed by an individual to make them “employable”
- Employers are not only looking for good technical understanding and subject knowledge, they are often looking for the development of an expertise, knowledge base or mindset that makes you more attractive as an employee. They often improve your performance, minimize errors and promote collaboration with your coworkers, enabling you to perform your role more effectively.
- Other names: employment skills, work-readiness skills or foundational skills
- Why are they useful- another job candidate may have the same qualifications and experience as you but your advantage may come from a broader set of employability skills that are conveyed concisely and are particularly useful for that role

Workplace Skills Background: This unit focuses on four topics that are regularly seen in the workplace. Throughout this unit, students will be engaged through a variety of lessons and reflect on what they have learned. While this unit is geared towards the workplace, many things can be applicable to other life situations!

These lessons can take anywhere from 10-30 minutes. Use these outlines to fit your classroom style!

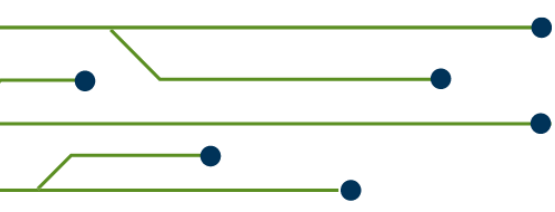
- If you have a student that prefers individual work over group work check out the individual work section after our categories that involve group work!

Journal or Self-Reflection Entry: Take a few minutes to write down your dream work environment. Is it an office setting or outdoors? What kind of boss do you have? Write down specific qualities you would want your leader to possess. What kind of co-workers do you want to be surrounded by? Write down the important qualities you believe they should possess. If you have a job or have had a job, what were some of the good and bad qualities of your boss and co-workers?

Have students share their answers and instruct them to remember these specific qualities as they work through this unit.

Teaching Guide

- **Definitions** – Have students fold a piece of paper down the middle to create two columns (hotdog style). On the left hand side have students write: professionalism, time management, customer, service, organization, planning. Students should leave 5-7 spaces between each vocabulary word. After students have written the vocabulary words ask them to take 3-5 minutes to brainstorm and write on the right hand side of their paper their own definition and/or example for each word. Afterwards, use the PowerPoint to go through each definition. Before sharing the definition that is on the PowerPoint have 1-3 students share what they wrote. These vocabulary words can be used throughout the lesson as a guide and extra resource.



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Professionalism



Materials

- [Guide to Professionalism in the Workplace](#) article (Indeed.com)
- Whiteboard/ what you have available
 - Writing utensil for this object
- Writing utensil
- Paper/poster board
- Tape if you wish to hang the posters

Procedure

1. Write the word “professionalism” on the board/what you have available. Give students one minute to write down any words or characteristics that correlate with professionalism on their own piece of paper. Once the minute is up ask a few students to share.
2. Have students pick one of their words to create a poster. Their poster should include how it relates to professionalism, a definition, a picture/graphic, and tips/tricks. The indeed article can be used for students to refer to under the section “How to be professional in the workplace”
3. Once the posters are completed they can be shared with the class then hung up.
 - You can also use the article by having students fold a piece of paper into have three sections. Use the section “Tips for being professional in different workplace situations” Have students label the sections “interview”, “customers”, colleagues”. Students can write down the tips and tricks on the article and add a minimum of three of their own.

Graphic



Additional resources

- [How To Develop a Professional Attitude](#) (Indeed.com)
- [Professionalism – Virginia Tech](#) (VT.edu)

Time Management



Option 1

Materials

- Time Management Techniques PowerPoint
- Writing Utensil
- Paper

Procedure

1. Go through the Knowledge Center “Time Management Techniques” PowerPoint and have students take notes. While taking notes, students should also write one pro and one con for each technique.
2. Once students complete the PowerPoint they should decide which time management technique would work best for them. After they choose their technique, they should create a plan for tasks they have in the next week.

Option 2

Materials

- [Time Management Skills: Definition and Examples](#) article (Indeed.com)
- Time management chart
- Writing utensil

Procedure

1. Have students popcorn read through [Time Management Skills: Definition and Examples](#). (students could also be broken into groups then share what they read to the class)
2. Have students fill out chart below

Individual work

- Have the student read through the article on their own then fill out the related chart.

Additional resources

- [The University of Arizona Health Sciences, Diversity & Inclusion Time Management Workshop](#) (University of Arizona)



Time Management Chart

<p>Short term goals</p>	<p>Long term goals</p>
<p>Time management techniques</p>	<p>Write down five things you need to do right now. Organize them from most important to least important</p>

Customer Service



Materials

- [11 Ways to Deliver Excellent Customer Service](#) (Indeed.com)
- Paper
- Writing utensil
- Coloring utensils

Procedure

1. Begin by having students reflect on two customer service experiences they have previously had. These experiences can be when they were a customer or when they were providing a service. However, one experience should be bad and one should be good. They should write these experiences down, then ask some people to share.
2. Break students into pairs, or groups whatever fits your classroom best. Afterwards assign each group one of the eleven ways to provide great customer service from the indeed article (Be friendly, respond promptly, know your product or service, listen to your customer, say thank you, get to know your customers, ask for feedback, use the feedback you receive, focus on relationships, keep your promises, follow up with customers at a later date)
3. After each group has been assigned a way to provide great customer service instruct the students to create a poster on their topic. Their poster should include a description, example and picture. Once completed students should share their posters with the rest of the class.
4. After students have shared their posters students should be put into groups of four. Each group should be given a pack of scenario cards. Customers will be told how to act via a scenario card. Employees will be given limited information and should use their newly discovered customer service skills to reply and interact with customers and bystanders. Bystanders should respond how they would if they were actually in the situation.
 - ★ There are three scenarios and three sets of cards. Multiple groups can have the same scenario. Groups can also switch scenarios and people they are portraying to get the full effect.
5. After completing the scenario have students complete reflection questions.

Additional Resources

- [FAQ: Ideas for Improving Customer Service](#) (Indeed.com)

Scenario 1 – Customer 1

You are shopping for supplies for your chicken coop. You have to have the supplies today as you have encountered a raccoon problem. Use verbal and non-verbal communication to display that you are impatient and rude at times.

Scenario 1 – Customer 2

You ask the retail associate to help you find something that will keep the deer away from your garden. Use verbal and nonverbal communication to display that you are kind but extremely confused.

Scenario 1 – Employee

For this scenario you will be an employee at a local farm store. You will be walking around assisting customers as needed. By the way... chicken coop supplies is on back order until next week.



Scenario 2 – Customer 1

Hand the employee a coupon, you know it is expired, but want to bargain with the employee and try to use it anyway. Use nonverbal and verbal communication to display this.

Scenario 2 – Customer 2

While checking out your phone starts ringing, you can't find your card, and you accidentally break an item. Use verbal and nonverbal communication to display your frustration and accompanying emotions.

Scenario 2 – Employee

You are a cashier at your local grocery store.
By the way... Coupon dates are important.

Scenario 3 – Customer 1

You are checking out at your local co-op and continuously ask questions. You are a very chatty and nosey individual. Use verbal and non-verbal communication to display this.

Be sure you go first

Scenario 3 – Customer 2

You are checking out at our local co-op. You are having an awful day and the person in front of you won't stop talking to the cashier. You just want to get home. Use verbal and nonverbal communication to show you anger and impatience.

Scenario 3 – Employee

You are a cashier at your local co-op.



Customer 1	Employee
Customer 2	Bystander

Customer 1	Employee
Customer 2	Bystander

Customer 1	Employee
Customer 2	Bystander



Reflection



1. Explain the scenario you were a part of, how you contributed and your overall interpretation of the activity.
2. How did the employee in your scenario(s) handle the customers? Which of the 11 skills did they utilize?
3. How did the bystander in your scenario act? How would you personally respond if any of this happened in an actual store and you were a bystander?
4. When you get frustrated or in a hurry when you are a customer how do you handle your emotions and communication?
5. What went well?
6. What could have gone better?

Organization and Planning



Materials

- [Top Organizational Skills: Examples and How To Develop Them](#) (Indeed.com)
- [How To Plan an Event in 6 Steps \(With Tips\)](#) (Indeed.com)
- Knowledge Center Organization and Planning Skills PowerPoint
- Planning and Organizing an event Worksheet
- Writing utensil
- Paper

Procedure

1. Begin by going through the Knowledge Center Organization and Planning Skills PowerPoint. The information on the PowerPoint was pulled from the Indeed articles. It gives an overview on different types of organization, ways to use organization, and planning tips.
2. Once students have gone through the PowerPoint they can be split into groups, or work individually on the Planning and Organization worksheet.
 - ★ To add a presentation or competition aspect to this lesson have students turn their plans into a PowerPoint and present their ideas.

Additional Resources

- [25 Effective Tips for Note-Taking](#) (Indeed.com)
- [Organizational Skills: 10 Types and How To Improve Them](#) (Indeed.com)
- [10 Examples of Organization in the Workplace](#) (Indeed.com)
- [Assessing Organizational & Planning Skills](#) (Iowa State Extension)



Planning and Organization Worksheet

Scenario: You and have been asked to plan the end-of-the-year banquet. Use the articles, PowerPoint and worksheet to plan this event. You should fully answer all prompts and seriously think through this. Find actual venues and caterers with prices.

Objective

Guest Demographics:

Event Occasion

Attire:


Objective statement (put it all together):

Budget

Venue:

Food:

Entertainment:



Choose a date

Consider possible weather and other events

Select and book a venue

Maximum capacity:

Parking available:

Technology available:

Final cost:

Vendors (cost and who is doing it)

Food:

Decorations:

Sponsors:

Other:



Promotional Plan

Include dates, what kind of promotion, and what the promotion would say. You can also create an advertisement

Unforeseen Circumstance plans

Additional Comments: