

Building Your Work Skills

Work-Based Learning Benchmark:

Practice and improve workplace competencies in competitive integrated settings.

Note to those providing service:

These activities are developed in a way that allows the learner to gradually build upon their skills. Each student has different foundational skills so some students may need more support or instruction than others. With that being said, you can choose what activity you start with based on your learner's strengths and needs.



Extend Pathways

Students who are interested or enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) or post-secondary, regardless of disability (remember to presume competence!), may or may not need some of the information that seems introductory in nature. Take as much or little time as needed based on student knowledge. More specific activities related to CTE and post-secondary are identified as extended activities and pathways.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Know the student's knowledge or awareness regarding work skills (this helps with knowing how much time you may need to spend on an activity)
- Prepare needed assistive technologies and/or accommodations (ex: communication supports (visual, objects, pictures, voice output devices, etc.), physical supports/space access needs, vision supports, hearing supports, sensory needs/supports).
- Computer to access videos. Print materials in advance if necessary.
- Be sure to review and / or print PowerPoint slides in advance. Discussion prompts are included in the slide notes for the Work Skills PowerPoint.



Print

- [Self-Reflection Worksheet](#)
- [Work Skills \(PowerPoint\)](#)
- [Career Path Planning](#)

Activities to Meet Benchmarks:

Activity 1: Reflection for Work-Based Learning Experiences

This activity aims to reflect on the informational interview, worksite tour, and/or job shadow.



Discuss: Let's take some time to reflect on what we learned. Think about your informational interview and your worksite tour and/or job shadow. What stood out to you?

- What did you learn about the type of work?
- What are the employers' expectations?
- What new things did you learn about their job or career path?
- Were there any moments that surprised you or made you think differently about your career goals?
- Did the interview give you ideas about what you might want to do in the future or things you want to learn more about?



Resource: Here is a [Self-Reflection Worksheet](#) to take some notes on what you thought. It is important to be honest. This helps me know your thoughts on the experience and it helps you know if you are still interested in this work or career.

Activity 2: Saying Thank You

This activity aims to send a thank you to professionals or businesses.



Discuss: Writing a thank-you note is an important step after an informational interview, worksite tour, and job shadow. It's a simple way to show your appreciation and leave a positive impression. You can draw, write, or use a digital tool to make your thank you. Here's steps to help you:

- Start with a greeting
- Express your gratitude. Thank them for taking the time to talk with you. Be specific if there was something that you really appreciated
- Close with again thanking them for their time and advice. You can add that you will keep in touch.
- End with a closing and signing your name.

Activity 3: Work Skills

This activity aims to identify and explain key workplace competencies.




Discuss: Every job or career has a required set of skills. These are skills you might already know but often it is skills you learn. Learning these skills make you a good employee as you begin your working journey. Understanding what an employer expects and practicing these skills will help you succeed at any job.



Resource: [Work Skills PowerPoint](#). Feel free to modify the vocabulary list to meet the student's needs.

[Note to Instructors: There are discussion prompts in the notes section of the Work Skills PowerPoint.]

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- **Reliability** – how dependable or consistent you are. This means if you do what you say you will, you are reliable.
 - **Active Listening** – listening and concentrating to whoever is speaking. This includes asking questions if needing more information or not understanding. When you do this, the person feels heard.
 - **Communication** - sharing information, ideas or feelings with others, this can include asking questions when needed.
 - **Responsibility** – being in charge of your actions, making good choices, and taking care of obligations or tasks (like homework, chores, or job tasks). When you are responsible, this builds trust.
 - **Time Management** – organizing and using your time effectively to meet deadlines. This means being focused on your work to do what you are responsible for.
 - **Adaptability** – Adjusting to new tasks, roles, or environments.
 - **Collaboration** - working together with others on a common goal. This usually involves teamwork and sharing responsibility.
 - **Self-Advocacy** – speaking up for yourself and your own needs. Asking for what you want or need and explaining why you need it.
 - **Decision-Making** – choosing the best choice or action when there are several options. This involves thinking about your options and picking the one that seems best.
 - **Professionalism** – acting responsibly and respectfully in the workplace even if you disagree with someone.



Watch: [What are the MOST Essential Skills for Job Seekers?](#) (Video – 7 min).

- What skills do you have?
- What skills would you like to work on?



Interactive Opportunity: Thinking back to your informational interview, job shadow, and worksite tour, you were able to experience many work skills in action.

- What work skills did you see?
- What work were people doing? How was that work a work skill?
- What are some examples of teamwork or collaboration you noticed?
- What did you think about the work environment? Was it quiet, loud, fast-paced, slow, etc.?
- Can you imagine yourself working in a job like this? Why or why not?



Extended Pathways

Activity: Career Path Map



Discuss: Using the worksite tour and/or job shadowing, what did you learn that will help you in your own career journey? It can be a next step in the same career path, or it might be a sidestep while you reevaluate your career goals or potential employers. Either way, this information is useful to helping you make decisions of what you want to do next.



Resource: Here is a worksheet for [Career Path Planning](#), showing the steps needed to get from where you are now to the career you observed or another direction entirely. Include things like education requirements, skills to develop, certifications to earn, and potential job opportunities along the way.



Reflect: Take the opportunity to share this information with others. Consider sharing with your guardian(s), academic advisors, guidance counselor, IEP team, etc.



Wrap-Up

Throughout Work-Based Learning, you have been building work competencies. These are the skills and behaviors that help you do a job well. They include things like communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and being dependable. Employers look for these competencies because they show you can work effectively with others and get tasks done. See if there are ways to practice and improve these skills. Doing this will help you succeed in any workplace.