

Activity 2: Understanding my skills

When thinking about your career options, it's important to be aware of the key skills that employers look for and to identify which you are good at and which you could improve.

These are often referred to as core, transferable, employability or life skills. They aren't something specific, such as being able to draw well, but skills that you will use throughout your life and can apply to different situations and jobs.

Take a look at the key skills.

Adaptability

This is about being able to:

- learn new skills to complete a task
- accept new situations or ways of working effectively
- adapt to changing circumstances.

Analytical

This is about being able to:

- research and collect information and data
- understand and use information and data to come to conclusions.

Communication

This is about being able to:

- explain clearly what you mean, when writing or talking to people
- listen, ask questions and get on well with people
- give and follow instructions and advice.

Creative Thinking

This is about being able to:

- look at problems or situations in a different way
- come up with solutions that haven't previously been thought of.

Decision Making

This is about being able to:

- evaluate the costs and benefits of different options
- select the best option and act on it.

Innovative

This is about being able to:

- come up with fresh ideas on how to plan, do and improve things
- understand how businesses become successful
- spot opportunities and take calculated risks
- anticipate business trends and customers' needs.

Leadership

This is about being able to:

- motivate and inspire others
- guide others in working together to achieve a goal.

Numeracy

This is about being able to:

- make simple calculations without a calculator
- apply maths to practical tasks – like measuring, weighing and estimating amounts and managing money
- gather and use statistical information.

Organisation

This is about being able to:

- work out what you need to do to get a job done
- work out how you'll do it and how long it will take
- see a project or task through to the end
- prioritise tasks and meet deadlines
- pay attention to detail.

Presenting

This is about being able to:

- present information clearly to a group
- keep a group interested and engaged in what you are talking about
- listen to and answers questions.

Proactivity

This is about being able to:

- get on with your work without someone checking on you
- use your own initiative, and ask for help when needed
- think ahead about what is required and act on it.

Problem Solving

This is about being able to:

- understand a problem by breaking it down into smaller parts
- research and think about the different ways to solve a problem
- come up with new ideas and ways of doing things.

Resilience

This is about being able to:

- stay positive and calm when things change or go wrong
- take constructive criticism well
- work under pressure without becoming stressed.

Teamwork

This is about being able to:

- work well with other people to get a job done, including people you don't know
- contribute to discussions
- understand and respect others people's ideas and opinions
- negotiate with others to reach agreement.

With these skills in mind, have a think about your own experiences and see if you can think of a time when you have used each of these skills.

This could be from:

- **part time work** (this could be paid or voluntary)
- **work experience** (placements you've had)
- **training** (from one-day first aid sessions to employability skills)
- **volunteering** or community work
- **youth awards** – awards such as Duke of Edinburgh
- **enterprise** and **employability** events and awards
- **home life** (maybe you've had to look after others or learn practical skills)
- **leisure time** (playing a sport, taking part in competitions, being in a team or organising things).

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Thinking about your answers, how confident were you in using each skill? Were there some that you couldn't think of an example for?

What do you think your three strongest skills are?

Which three skills do you think that you most need to work on?

Can you think of ways you might be able to work on those skills?