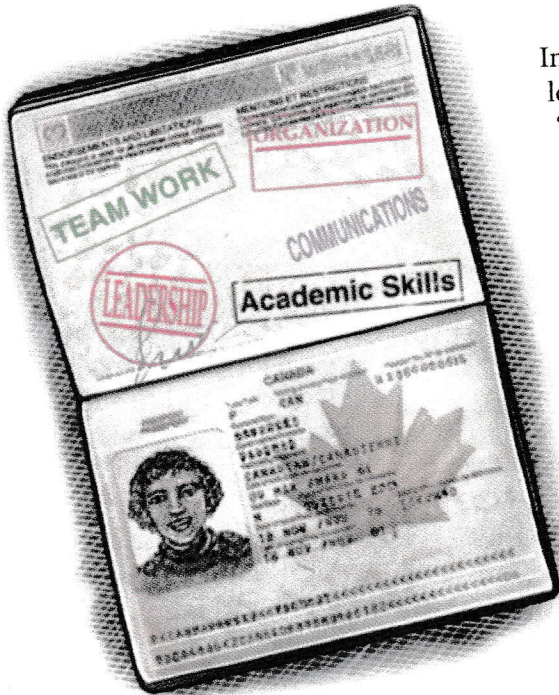


What Skills Will Help Me Become That Person?



In Section 1 you looked at who you are. In Section 2 you looked at who you think you will become. If the future “you” fixes cars, then you’re going to have to develop car-fixing skills. If the future “you” opens a store, you’ll need accounting and other business skills.


But your dream of who you will become is broader than just the work you will be doing. There are important general skills that will help you become more successful, no matter who you become. These include communication and time management skills. They are called **transferable skills** because they will be useful in all aspects of your life.


In this section, you will:

- look closely at some transferable skills
- decide which transferable skills you will need
- learn how to develop those transferable skills

DISCOVERY

Transferable skills

1. Brainstorm what skills you think would be transferable to any life or work situation (e.g., using a school planner, organizing your clothes, being adaptable to new people or situations, managing stress). Then create a class list of transferable skills. 

2. Create a chart (like the one below) on which to list your own transferable skills. Copy the class list of skills into the first column, then complete the chart. Rate your skill level from 1 (low) to 5 (high). Leave space in each category (or use a computer), because you will be adding to your list. 

Skills	Do I Have This Skill?	How Much Do I Want to Improve This Skill?	What Can I Do to Develop This Skill?
e.g., using a planner keeping my clothes organized being adaptable			

Transferable Skills

Profile: Andrea Peters

Andrea Peters has been hired as an administrative assistant for a large government project. The only specialized knowledge she has is of several common software programs.



Within weeks, everyone on the project—including the director—knows who she is. Her area of responsibility keeps growing. This is summed up in a funny way when someone puts a sign over her work area. It says, “Andrea Peters, President.”

Andrea’s an actress, doing this job to pay the rent. She has a university degree in French and music, and a three-year musical theatre diploma from Sheridan College. “It’s a tough job,” she says, “but I like the atmosphere and the flexibility. I can take time off for auditions and performances.”

The job involves the usual administrative duties: word processing, photocopying and faxing, taking minutes at meetings, scheduling events, meetings and teleconferences, and general troubleshooting of all kinds. Andrea has to draw on her strong organizational skills to keep all the details together.

But it’s her interpersonal skills that really shine, and this is where her training in drama becomes useful. “I don’t have a problem talking to people, or with public speaking. I’m confident—that comes

from acting and going to auditions. I’m not afraid of new situations. I’m a social person to begin with, but my drama training gives me an awareness of character and personality types.”

The company picnic is an example of how Andrea’s responsibilities have grown. Andrea had to plan a full afternoon of activities for 200 people on the last warm day of summer. Her employers wanted the picnic to be a “team building” event.

“I tried to keep the atmosphere as light as possible. I organized entertaining games that would get people involved. I brought my own personality and sense of humour to the job, and that’s what made it work. The picnic was a huge success.”

Andrea auditions whenever she can, but she has also discovered a new interest in the business world. “I like dealing with people and organizing things. I could be interested in an administrative or management career. I haven’t changed my direction—I’m still going for acting—but I’m considering a career shift.”

Spotting transferable skills

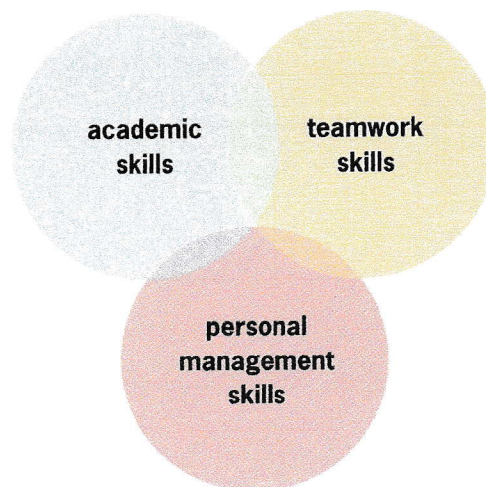
1. Why is Andrea so valued in her job? What qualities have enabled her to make such a positive impact so quickly?
2. List all the skills that Andrea brought to her new work. Where might she have acquired such skills? (Family, school, work, community activities.)
3. Compare this list to your own list of transferable skills (page 63). Add any of these skills that you feel you have to your list. You should review your list frequently.

Employability Skills

Transferable skills are like a “tool kit” for life and work. From every experience in your life, you will be constantly adding to this tool kit.

Take Meredith, for example. Her homework is always incredibly neat. Sometimes people call her a “neat freak,” but she doesn’t care. She likes to be organized about her clothes and jewelry, too. In fact, her room is the tidiest in the house! Her ability to keep things orderly was a skill that helped her build up a summer lawn-mowing business. Her clients liked how neat she left their yards. Meredith’s organizing skills are part of her tool kit.

Do you have a skill like that? Something that helps you at school, and also gives you an “edge” somewhere else? The Conference Board of Canada calls these skills **employability skills**, and has organized them into these three categories:



The chart on page 66 lists these skills in detail.

Links

The Conference Board of Canada is a nationally respected “think tank” that helps its members anticipate and respond to the global economy. Its members are Canadian business, government and public sector organizations.

You can find out more about the Conference Board of Canada by writing to them at 255 Smyth Road, Ottawa, ON K1H 8M7, calling them, or visiting their website. Go to <www.careers.nelson.com> for a direct link to up-to-date information.

Employability Skills

Academic Skills

Canadian employers need a person who can:

Communicate

- understand and speak the languages in which business is conducted
- listen, understand and learn
- read, comprehend and use graphs, charts and displays
- write effectively in the languages in which business is conducted

Think

- think critically and act logically to solve problems and make decisions
- understand and solve problems involving mathematics, and use the results
- use technology, instruments, tools and information systems effectively
- access and apply specialized knowledge from various fields (skilled trades, technology, physical sciences, arts and social sciences)

Learn

- continue to learn throughout life

Personal Management Skills

Canadian employers need a person who can demonstrate:

Positive Attitudes and Behaviours

- self-esteem and confidence
- honesty, integrity and personal ethics
- a positive attitude toward learning, growth and personal health
- initiative, energy and persistence to get the job done

Responsibility

- the ability to set goals and priorities in work and personal life
- the ability to plan and manage time, money and other resources
- accountability for actions

Adaptability

- a positive attitude toward change
- respect for diversity and individual differences
- the ability to identify and suggest new ideas—creativity

Teamwork Skills

Canadian employers need a person who can:

Work with Others

- understand and contribute to an organization's goals
- understand and work within the culture of a group
- plan and make decisions with others, and support the outcomes
- respect the thoughts and opinions of others in a group
- exercise "give and take" to achieve group results
- lead when appropriate, mobilizing the group for high performance

Reflection

Go back to the balanced decision-making model on page 9. Choose three employability skills that are most useful for making decisions, and explain your choice.

ACTIVITY

List your skills

Does the list of employability skills feel overwhelming?

Go back to your own transferable skills list (page 63). How many employability skills do you already have on your list? Add any that are not already there. Complete columns two, three and four on the chart for these skills also.

Remember the credentials we talked about in Unit 1? Your transferable skills are also important credentials!