



# CAREER SERVICES / TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

## WHAT ARE TRANSFERABLE SKILLS?

Transferable skills are those abilities that can be acquired through informal life experiences, formal education and training or jobs, and they can be transferred from one setting to another. Most transferable skills desired by employers can be broken down into five basic categories listed below. Within each category are various examples of those skills for you to consider. This is not an inclusive list. Which of these skills do you use regularly (feel free to circle them)? What others can you think of?

**Work Survival Skills:** the day-to-day skills that assist in promoting effective production and work satisfaction.

Implementing decisions	Enlisting help
Enforcing policies	Setting and meeting deadlines
Being punctual	Organizing
Managing time	Meeting goals
Attending to detail	Making decisions
Cooperating	Accepting responsibility

**Communication Skills:** the skillful expression, transmission and interpretation of knowledge and ideas.

Speaking effectively	Perceiving nonverbal messages
Writing concisely	Persuading
Listening attentively	Reporting information
Expressing ideas	Negotiating
Facilitating group discussion	Interviewing
Providing appropriate feedback	Editing

**Research and Planning Skills:** the search for specific knowledge and the ability to conceptualize future needs and solutions for meeting those needs.

Forecasting, predicting	Solving problems
Creating ideas	Setting goals
Identifying problems	Extracting important information
Imagining alternatives	Defining needs
Identifying resources	Analyzing
Gathering information	Developing evaluation strategies

**Human Relations Skills:** the use of interpersonal skills for resolving conflict, relating to and helping people.

Developing rapport	Counseling
Being Sensitive	Cooperating
Listening	Delegating with respect
Conveying feelings	Representing others
Providing support for others	Perceiving feelings, situations
Motivating	Asserting
Sharing credit	Collaborating

**Organization, Management and Leadership Skills:** the ability to supervise, direct and guide individuals and groups in the completion of tasks and fulfillment of goals.

Initiating new ideas	Coaching
Handling details	Managing conflict
Coordinating tasks	Promoting change
Managing groups	Selling ideas or products
Delegating responsibility	Decision making with others
Teaching	

## THE TOP SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT

The *National Association of Colleges and Employers* conducts regular surveys of employers to learn what's most important to them in their hiring. The following are the top skills deemed most important to this group of employers in the 2018 Job Outlook Survey:

**FIGURE 37**  
**Attributes Employers Seek**  
**On a Candidate's Resume**

Attribute	% of Respondents
Problem-solving skills	82.9%
Ability to work in a team	82.9%
Communication skills (written)	80.3%
Leadership	72.6%
Strong work ethic	68.4%
Analytical/quantitative skills	67.5%
Communication skills (verbal)	67.5%
Initiative	67.5%
Detail-oriented	64.1%
Flexibility/adaptability	60.7%
Technical skills	59.8%
Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)	54.7%
Computer skills	48.7%
Organizational ability	48.7%
Strategic planning skills	39.3%
Creativity	29.1%
Friendly/outgoing personality	27.4%
Tactfulness	22.2%
Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker	19.7%
Fluency in a foreign language	4.3%

### EXERCISE 1: SKILLS WITH A STORY

**Review the list above and write a brief but specific example (or story) of how you have demonstrated each skill while in a job, class, internship or extracurricular activity.** These examples could come in handy if an employer asks you about your skills in an interview. It's okay if you don't have an example or story for each one! The point is just for you to proactively assess your experiences from the standpoint of skills. It also helps you to see where you could expand your skills.

Example: Let's say you participated on the volleyball team in high school. You may not think of your time on the volleyball team as anything more than just participation in a sport. However, this might be an example of where *you learned to work in a team structure* –what does it mean to be a part of a team? Some possibilities might include: you had to show respect for one another's ability and effort; you had to communicate well on the court; you had a responsibility to fulfill your role; you may have had to sacrifice your own goals for the good of the team's success. What else can you come up with? The example - or story - of your participation on the volleyball team takes on a whole new meaning! Now, do this same exercise for each one and see what you come up with.

## EXERCISE 2: CREATE A CHRONOLOGY OF YOUR SKILLS

Sometimes it's helpful to break it down and think about each role you've held over time. **Use this tool to translate the experiences you've had (including volunteer, travel, interning and other life experiences) and positions that you have held into what you know and can do.** In the last column, the specific examples should again be "stories" from your experience that you can tell to demonstrate your knowledge and skills. The first few examples below are designed to get you started. Keep in mind *all* the skills mentioned in this guide, in case you can talk about them in your chronology.

When (year/s)	Where (Place/ Site)	What I Did (Position/Role/ Responsibilities )	Knowledge & Skills Gained (Think about what you might want to teach your replacement?)	Demonstrated Examples (stories, data or specific examples of how you showed your skills)
2010-2011	Jalapenos Mexican Grill	Crew Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintained proper food handling, safety, and sanitation standards</li> <li>Followed recipes and food preparation processes accurately</li> <li>Spoke clearly and listened attentively to guests and other employees</li> <li>Developed positive working relationships with all restaurant employees and worked as part of a team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received Crew Member of the Month award two times.</li> <li>Was able to turn an upset customer into a regular because of how I handled their issue the first time in the restaurant</li> </ul>
Summer 2013	Barcelona, Spain	<p>Studied the Spanish language and culture</p> <p>Lived with host family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traveled on my own through a foreign country using maps, guides, etc.</li> <li>Improved Spanish speaking ability over three months</li> <li>Learned about a culture different from my own</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host family stopped speaking English with me by 2<sup>nd</sup> month because of my language improvement</li> <li>Wrote a blog about my travel adventures showing the challenges I overcame during the experience of studying overseas</li> </ul>
2014	Helping Hand Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen	Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stocked and organized the shelves and helped clients get groceries</li> <li>Was counted on as a reliable volunteer</li> <li>served the clients hot meals</li> <li>demonstrated respect and kindness towards clients</li> <li>used Spanish skills to help Spanish-speaking clients get the help they need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Served 200 volunteer hours in one year without missing one shift.</li> <li>When on shift, was asked to be the organizer of new food deliveries because of my strength in organization and details</li> </ul>
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### SUMMARY

Hopefully this guide has given you a start on identifying your skills and helped you come up with ways to talk about your experiences in meaningful ways. Skills matter, but so do the stories that go with them.