

High School Activity

Employability Skills and Me

This activity guides you and your teen through a process of looking at personal attributes and employability skills. Very often our careers reflect our unique qualities and strengths. Many of these personal characteristics are related to skills that employers want. Build self-confidence and understanding of the world of work by looking at how personal qualities relate to what employers want.

1. Read the following list of personal characteristics.
2. Choose 5 qualities that best describe your son or daughter and write them on a piece of paper.
3. Without telling your son or daughter the qualities you have chosen, ask your teen to read through the list and choose 5 qualities that he or she feels are the most self-descriptive.
4. After both of you have made your choices, use the questions below as talking points.
 - Why did each of you select these five characteristics? Did you have examples in mind of how and when your teen has demonstrated that quality?
 - Was it easy or difficult to choose just 5 qualities?
 - How do these qualities relate to your teen's career preferences or educational paths? Get specific about those goals and plans he or she has already made or has expressed in the past.
5. You can also do the same for you. Ask your teen to select 5 qualities that he or she feels is most descriptive of you and then select 5 for yourself. Share why each of you chose the qualities and how they fit your career path.

Personal Characteristics

social	fun	laid-back	dependable	organized	precise
active	serious	hard-working	shy	independent	mature
friendly	mathematical	bold	team player	sharing	punctual
responsible	cooperative	persistent	helpful	outgoing	patient
motivated	curious	studious	good listener	supportive	creative
kind	open-minded	talkative	understanding	flexible	honest
conscientious	trustworthy	deliberate	enthusiastic	energetic	competent

*Most people aren't fired because they lack specific job skills, but because they do not possess strength in general employability skills –such as getting along well with co-workers. Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) produced a national report that identified the skills employers need in today's workplace. The Five COMPETENCIES and three FOUNDATION areas are listed below; these are skills that employers and colleges **expect** from applicants. The qualities your teen has identified are directly related to these employability skills. For example, being patient, outgoing, and curious all relate to having strengths in interpersonal skills.*

1. Review the skill areas in the table below. Have your teen write his or her personal characteristics that relate to each defined skill area.
2. Talk about how those strengths relate to success in school now and how they might impact future success in the workplace.
3. How do you use SCAN skills at home? Help your teen identify ways they use these skills.
 - Talk about how your family is a system. This is usually one of the more difficult SCAN skills for young teens to understand.
 - Which SCAN skills are critical in your own work? Talk about which ones might be critical for the career goal your teen is thinking about now.

SCANS Skills

COMPETENCIES. Effective workers can productively use:	My Personal Characteristics
• Resources - allocating time, money, materials, space, staff.	
• Interpersonal Skills - working on teams, teaching others, serving customers, leading, negotiating, and working well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds.	
• Information - acquiring and evaluating data, organizing and maintaining files, interpreting and communicating, and using computers to process information.	
• Systems - understanding social, organizational, and technological systems, monitoring and correcting performance, and designing or improving systems.	
• Technology - selecting equipment and tools, applying technology to specific tasks, and maintaining, and troubleshooting technologies.	
THE FOUNDATION. Competence requires:	
• Basic Skills - reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematics, speaking, and listening.	
• Thinking Skills - thinking creatively, making decisions, solving problems, seeing things in the mind's eye, knowing how to learn, and reasoning.	
• Personal Qualities - individual responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity.	

Activity adapted from
It's the 11th Hour in Your Teen's High School Career
 (Ohio Department of Education)