

Human Skills Are Essential Skills

They are called “transferable” because they are useful and necessary in all areas of our lives — personal, family, learning and education, community, and work. How we transfer and use the skills will look different in different situations, but the skills will remain “durable” because they will always be important no matter how much the job market changes over time. Employers in all industries are looking for employees with these skills. They are essentially human skills. Robots can’t easily do them. So if you have these skills, you have some job protection.

Jobs that can be automated — the ones that involve routine tasks, computation, and production — are more at risk of automation. Jobs that involve human skills like problem-solving, creativity, communication, and common sense will be done by humans.

We develop and use so many transferable skills in all aspects of our daily lives, not just in our jobs. We rely on transferable skills as learners, partners, parents, community members, and in our volunteer roles, to name just a few. Yet, so many of us say, “I don’t really have any skills,” which makes us lose confidence when it comes to searching for a new job, writing a resume, and interviewing. The job search can be especially



A man works on his car. List some of the transferable skills he might have. Photo from [Pixabay.com](https://www.pixabay.com/).



A woman speaks at a community meeting. List some of the transferable skills she might have. Photo from [Pixnio.com](https://www.pixnio.com/).











intimidating if we’ve been unemployed, raising families, caring for elders, or doing other unpaid volunteer work in our communities.

You Have Many of These Skills!

If you have searched for information to make decisions about school options for your children, you have **navigated and used information**. If you have searched the web for that information and completed the application online then you have used **digital skills**. You probably use **critical and creative thinking** every day for yourself and your family as you juggle work, school, appointment schedules and coordinate transportation and childcare. Have you ever sung in a choir or played on a sports team? If so, then consider how you practiced and demonstrated **communication, teamwork and collaboration, self-management** (self-awareness, self-control), and **adaptability and flexibility** in these activities. These are all valid examples of transferable personal and workplace skills that can be included in resumes and job interviews.

Most adults—including you!—have these skills and many more. The challenge is to learn how to name them. The activities at the end of this article and the resources on p. 30 will help you identify your transferable skills. Try them!

Identify Your Transferable Skills

Transferable Skill	A time in your life you have used this skill
 communication	
 teamwork and collaboration	
 flexibility and adaptability	
 emotional intelligence	
 critical and creative thinking	
 navigating and using information	
 respecting differences	
 self-management & self-awareness	
 leadership and initiative	
 digital skills	

Source: Personal and Workplace Success Skills Library <https://skills.worlded.org/>. See Issue #55 online for a [downloadable worksheet](#).

AFTER YOU READ:

1. In your own words, explain what transferable skills are.
2. Think about a task you've completed or a project you feel good about (for example, organizing an event or designing a flyer). Think about all the steps involved in completing that task and write them in a list. Review that list and notice all of the skills that you used to accomplish that task. You might even describe the task or share the list of steps with a trusted friend or teacher and ask them to describe the skills they see reflected there.

3. Read the list of transferable skills in the chart above. Learn the words you don't know. Share times in your work or personal life when you have used some of the skills. Type your answers in this downloadable [worksheet](#) (in Word) from Issue 55 "Extras" and fill it out.
4. Write a new resume (or revise your old one), and include some of the transferable skills you identified in the worksheet.

Sandy Goodman is the director of the National College Transition Network at World Education. She co-developed the [Personal & Workplace Success Skills Library](#).

Resources to Help You Explore Transferable Skills

For Teachers, Career Coaches, and Advisors

The Personal & Workplace Success Skills (PWSS) Library (<https://skills.worlded.org>) is a collection of online resources you can use to help students assess, improve, and learn new transferable skills. Read Voices from the Field (<https://skills.worlded.org/voices-from-the-field/>) to see how other practitioners are using the PWSS Library resources in their adult education and workforce development programs. Interested in how your program can participate in developing a “Voices From the Field” case study? Find out more here: <https://skills.worlded.org/participate-in-a-case-study/>



For Individual Learners to Explore on Their Own

Roadtrip Nation's online course supports career and self-exploration through five online lessons that integrate core digital literacy and social emotional skills. A favorite lesson is “Shed the Noise” about separating who you are from what others want you to be. Following that lesson, one student said, “This lesson has given me more confidence to strive for what I want.” <https://skills.worlded.org/resource/roadtrip-nation-experience-online-course-and-career-exploration/>



Skillbase is another collection of free resources organized along three learning pathways: finding a job, going digital, or learning English. You can take a very brief survey to determine which pathway and goal meets your needs or explore to find a topic that interests you. <https://skills.worlded.org/resource/skillbase/>



GCF Learn Free is a library of free lessons, tutorials, and resources to build personal and workplace success skills such as Digital Media Literacy, Critical Thinking & Decision-Making. <https://skills.worlded.org/resource/learn-free-lessons-and-tutorials/>



National Public Radio's Life Kit has put together a Spotify playlist: Your Career Guide on a variety of topics. Some are explicitly relevant for women, people of color, and other marginalized groups, such as Imposter Syndrome and How to Survive in a Mostly White Workplace: Tips for Marginalized Employees. <https://skills.worlded.org/resource/your-career-guide/>

