

**Essential Skills and Work Habits
Reference Sheets with Tasks**www.ontario.ca/skillspassport

- ✓ These reference sheets contain sample Essential Skills tasks in work, learning and life. Additional sample tasks can be found on the OSP website.
- ✓ Skill levels are provided for each Essential Skill.
- ✓ Level 1 tasks are the least complex and level 4 tasks are more complex.

**Reading Text**

Reading materials in the form of sentences or paragraphs such as notes, letters, memos, manuals, specifications, books, reports and journals.

- Read cooking instructions on food packages to prepare foods. (1)
- Read a short e-mail to locate the time and place to meet a friend for lunch. (1)
- Read short memos, notices and bulletins to learn of upcoming changes or events in the workplace. (2)
- Read a movie review to decide if you want to go and see it. (2)
- Read newspapers, business magazines and trade publications to stay abreast of business, world events and industry trends. (3)
- Read a short story to learn about daily life in another country.(3)
- Proofread and edit a friend's résumé and cover letter for correct grammar and content. (4)
- Read a home insurance policy to determine if you have enough coverage.(4)

**Writing**

The preparation of written materials for a variety of purposes. Completing such tasks as filling in forms, writing text and using computers to write.

- Write brief comments on forms and reminders in daybooks. (1)
- Write a short e-mail to a friend suggesting plans for the weekend. (1)
- Draft a short letter to a local business asking for a donation for a school fundraiser. (2)
- Write an e-mail to a company to request additional specific information about a product. (2)
- Write a 500-word book report. (3)
- Write a cover letter to apply for a job. Address the requirements in the job ad and describe why you are a good candidate for the position. (3)
- Write a lengthy research paper. (4)
- Write a proposal to obtain funding for a community project, such as a new playground.(4)

**Document Use**

Reading different types of labels, signs, lists, tables, graphs, forms, diagrams, blueprints and other similar materials.

- Refer to your to-do list to identify tasks you need to carry out. (1)
- Read a label on a medicine bottle to find the number of pills to take. (1)
- Check the sports scores in the newspaper to identify which teams won last night. (2)
- Use a map to locate the route to a store. (2)
- Interpret assembly diagrams and follow instructions to set up electronic equipment. (3)
- Complete a multi-page job application form. (3)
- Complete income tax forms by referring to income statements and other supporting documents such as receipts.(4)
- Read complex schematic drawings in equipment manuals to troubleshoot electrical problems in auto class. (4)

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Computer Use

The use of any type of computerized technology.

- Enter destination information into GPS equipment to obtain directions. (1)
- Make deposits and withdrawals, and pay bills using an automated teller machine (ATM). (1)
- Send and receive e-mail messages.(2)
- Use the standard features of word processing software. For example, to prepare a cover letter when applying for a job. (2)
- Produce brochures using graphics software. (3)
- Sort and view billing data and generate financial reports using accounting software. (3)
- Install and troubleshoot networked computer systems.(4)



Oral Communication

Using verbal skills to exchange ideas and information with others.

- Listen to or leave a short voicemail message. (1)
- Order food in a restaurant. (1)
- Communicate with co-workers to coordinate schedules and tasks. (2)
- Teach a friend how to snowboard or how to use new computer software application. (2)
- Make presentations to small groups, such as representatives of a potential new client. (3)
- Respond to questions in a job interview. Use persuasive language to present yourself in a positive manner. (3)
- Participate in public debate. For example, a politician may participate in a live debate with candidates from other political parties. The outcome of the debate influences the outcome of elections.(4)

Numeracy



Money Math

The use of mathematical skills in making financial transactions, such as handling cash, preparing bills and making payments.

- Receive payment for products and provide change. (1)
- Calculate the difference between a “sale price” item and a “regular price” item to figure out savings. (1)
- Calculate the cost of supplies, multiplying the quantities needed with costs per item. (2)
- Calculate the total cost of a purchase, including applicable taxes. (2)
- Prepare an invoice by multiplying hourly rates by number of hours worked, summing costs of materials, calculating taxes and calculating discounts for large volume orders. (3)
- Calculate the total cost of a purchase, including discounts and taxes. (3)
- Prepare complex invoices by calculating labour rates for multiple workers at different rates, charges for travel using a per kilometre rate, adding equipment and materials fees, subtracting credits, then calculating applicable taxes and discounts.(4)



Scheduling or Budgeting and Accounting

Planning for the best use of time and money, as well as monitoring of the use of time and money.

- Monitor assignment deadlines, scheduling tasks so work is submitted on time. (1)
- Compare gas prices to determine the lowest price in your area. (1)
- Reconcile cash at the end of the workday. (2)
- Budget weekly expenses to ensure they don't exceed income. (2)
- Create weekly schedules for departments and work units.(3)
- Compare cell phone packages offered through different providers to select a package with the best value. (3)
- Monitor and manage the budget for a department or division.(4)

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Measurement and Calculation

The measurement and calculation of quantities, areas, volumes, and/or distances.

- Measure the amount of laundry detergent for a load of laundry. (1)
- Weigh yourself to make sure you are within a healthy range for your height. (1)
- Double a recipe by multiplying the quantities of ingredients. (2)
- Calculate the square footage of a room to figure out how much carpet to buy. (2)
- Calculate paint quantities required, using wall surface area and paint coverage rates.(3)
- Calculate the number of bundles of shingles required to re-shingle your roof.(3)
- Use equations found in handbooks and tools to calculate angles, air flows, volumes and the areas of spiral staircases. For example, supervisors of fabricating metal workers calculate the area for runs on spiral staircases.(4)



Data Analysis

The collection and analysis of data in numerical form.

- Compare two food products to determine which has the lower fat or sodium content. (1)
- Monitor a child's temperature to determine if the fever is getting worse or improving. (1)
- Calculate the average monthly sales for the year and compare them to the previous year. (2)
- Calculate course grades by averaging marks received on assignments.(2)
- Predict which sports team will win using game statistics over a period of time. (3)
- Examine performance trends of companies over time to decide which companies to invest in. (3)
- Collect, analyze and interpret statistical data from research studies to evaluate the effectiveness and risks of pharmaceuticals and other medical treatments.(4)



Numerical Estimation

The production of estimates in numerical terms.

- Estimate the volume of cleaning fluid to add to water.(1)
- Estimate the amount of groceries that will fit into one bag.(1)
- Estimate the cost of your groceries for a week. (2)
- Estimate the time it will take to get to an appointment. (2)
- Estimate rehearsal time requirements to mount a new school play.(3)
- Estimate the material and labour costs associated with renovating a room in your house.(3)

Thinking Skills



Job Task Planning and Organizing

Planning and organizing your own work.

- You work on the same tasks from day to day in the same order. These tasks do not require you to coordinate your work with others. Interruptions are rare so you can concentrate on the tasks you are doing without getting distracted.(1)
- You work on similar tasks from one day to the next. You can use your experience and guidance from others to decide which tasks should be completed before others. If you are interrupted, you can return to your task easily. When you have to share materials or equipment with others, you can work with them to figure out who will get to use the equipment first.(2)
- You work mostly on tasks that are similar from one day to the next. You take the time to plan and organize your days so things get done on time. Some days you have many activities to do at the same time but you use the help of others, such as teachers or family members, to help you decide what should be done first. You can coordinate and integrate your work with others to complete tasks such as group projects and planning events.(3)
- You plan each day on your own with complete autonomy. You can decide which tasks are most important and then sequence the tasks to make sure that everything runs as smoothly as possible.
- You can deal with many interruptions, and figure out how to change your plan to accommodate the interruptions. You can also deal with competing demands from others and take full responsibility for managing these competing demands.(4)

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Making a choice among options using appropriate information.

- You choose the tools and procedures to use when completing routine tasks.(1)
- You choose the ingredients, cookware and utensils to use when preparing daily meals.(1)
- You select the assignment you will work on first using due dates and the relative difficulty of each assignment.(2)
- You choose an apartment to rent. You consider whether its location, cost and size meet your needs.(2)
- You decide to hire or fire a staff member. Although company procedures exist, each situation is different. You must consider many factors unique to the case in order to make a responsible decision.(3)
- Decide which post-secondary institution to attend giving consideration to your goals and to family and financial obligations.(3)
- Decide to buy a house. You must consider many factors such as whether the house meets enough of your needs and whether owning a house meets your current lifestyle and long-term plans. You take into account ongoing costs associated with owning a house, the investment opportunity and the risks associated with any liability.(4)

**Problem Solving**

The identification and solving of problems.

- You wake up too late to get to work on time. Call your supervisor immediately as stated in your work policy.(1)
- You've lost your wallet. Follow the usual steps to inform your bank and credit card companies then apply for replacement identification cards.(1)
- A customer or client is dissatisfied. You try to find out why the customer is dissatisfied. You choose from amongst several options in order to offer a solution.(2)
- You've locked your keys in your car. You need to choose what you should do, call a locksmith, someone who has an extra set of keys or leave the car and return with help.(2)
- There is a conflict between group members working on a project worth 30% of your final mark. Identify options that will appease each member so you can effectively complete the assignment. (3)
- Your children are spending time with friends you disapprove of. You assess the situation to determine whether your child is at risk, and if so, what the nature of the risk is. You determine an appropriate plan of action, taking into consideration the age and personality of the child(ren) involved.(3)
- You find that there is a serious problem in the way the company makes a product or in the way it manages accounting, for example. It is your responsibility to figure out what is causing the problem in order to figure out how to improve the system.(4)

**Finding Information**

The use of variety of sources, including written text, people, computerized databases, and information systems.

- Look up names and addresses in phone books and on websites such as Canada 411 to verify address information.(1)
- Find out when your next report is due by asking the teacher or another student.(1)
- Find product information by reading product brochures and referring to web sites.(2)
- Find information about community agencies or organizations that can help you with your job search by doing Internet research and talking to friends.(2)
- Conduct research, using a variety of sources, prior to making decisions about the purchase of new equipment.(3)
- Find out which careers have good growth potential. Conduct internet searches to find appropriate labour market information, speak with guidance counselors and conduct information interviews.(3)
- Find the cause of an accident by interviewing witnesses, reading reports and speaking with other professionals. Information must be evaluated and synthesized to reach an accurate conclusion.(4)



Critical Thinking

Making judgments by using criteria to evaluate ideas and information and the related consequences.

- You evaluate the completeness of assignments before submitting them. You use the assignment guidelines or rubrics provided by the teacher. (1)
- You judge the suitability of school activities such as sports teams, drama, and social clubs to decide whether to join. You consider your own abilities, availability and interests. (1)
- You judge the appropriateness of images and text for your social media profile. You consider how friends, family and employers may perceive any publicly accessible content. (2)
- You judge the suitability of courses when making course selections. You consider learning, employment and graduation goals together with your interests. (2)
- Coaches and volunteers assess the safety and suitability of recreational and sports facilities. They consider organizational regulations and legal requirements to establish whether facilities meet accepted standards. (3)
- Parents evaluate the risks posed by social and recreational activities. They consider the potential for physical injury or psychological harm. Their assessments take into consideration children's ages, abilities and interests, as well as the quality and reputation of coaches, instructors, programs and facilities. They may seek input from other parents and from licensing and professional standards organizations. (3)
- Scientists assess the impact of disasters caused by natural or human forces on ecosystems including plant, animal and human life. They identify and evaluate immediate, short-term and long-term impact of disasters. (4)

Work Habits

- ✓ Sample tasks in work, learning and life are provided for each work habit.
- ✓ There are no skill levels for work habits.

**Working Safely**

- I know the WHMIS symbols and what they stand for.
- I leave a building in a safe and timely manner when I hear a fire alarm.
- I wear safety equipment for sports and activities as appropriate.

**Teamwork**

- I listen attentively to the ideas of others.
- In a group assignment, I do my fair share of the work.
- I always help co-workers but especially when they are overloaded with work.

**Reliability**

- I come to work or school on time.
- I return items I borrow.
- I complete reports or assignments on time.

**Organization**

- I use "to do" lists.
- I come to class with the appropriate books and materials so I am prepared to learn.
- I record all my appointments on a calendar.

**Working Independently**

- I complete my job tasks with little or no direction.
- I can independently select the materials and tools I need to complete a task.
- I complete daily chores around the house without being reminded.

**Initiative**

- If I finish a task, I look for other work to do.
- I help a classmate or friend who needs assistance.
- I call my friends and invite them to go to social activities.

**Self-advocacy**

- I read contracts before I sign them so I am aware of my rights and responsibilities.
- I know my legal rights as an employee or an employer.
- I ask questions so I can gather the information I need to make decisions about things like my education and health.

**Customer Service**

- I ask questions to make sure I understand what someone is saying.
- I assist my classmates whenever possible to help them reach their learning goals.
- I try to be friendly with people, even if I'm having a bad day.

**Entrepreneurship**

- I like to brainstorm ideas for new projects and make them happen.
- I make suggestions for new extracurricular activities in my school and offer to lead these activities.
- I create and run a fundraising event in the community.