

Skills checklist

PROBLEM SOLVING

Analysing information		Thinking laterally	
Finding solutions		Making or constructing	
Diagnosing technical faults		Defining	
Testing and proving		Questioning	
Troubleshooting		Intuiting	
Interpreting		Conceptualising	

ORGANISING

Arranging events		Working to deadlines	
Setting priorities		Managing meetings	
Scheduling activities		Administering	
Reviewing		Selecting	
Delegating		Inventorying	
Purchasing		Project management	

SOCIAL AND INTERPERSONAL

Listening		Responding assertively	
Showing understanding		Working co-operatively	
Coaching others		Advising	
Counselling		Initiating	
Co-operative		Politically aware	
Approachable		Empathising	

INFLUENCING

Negotiating agreement		Selling a product/service	
Leading others		Maintaining personal contacts	
Motivating other people		Sharing	
Persuading		Setting an example	
Confident		Team building	
Co-ordinating		Expressing ideas	



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VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Explaining facts or instructions		Requesting information	
Expressing thoughts and opinions		Contributing to discussions	
Offering advice		Empathetic	
Sense of humour		Awareness of audience	
Influencing		Self confidence	
Sharing		Projection	

SKILL SCORES

Under the following headings, fill in the total score for each of the skills. When you have entered all the scores, you can rank order your skills from the highest to lowest scores and then assess the implications of your skills for your career decisions.

SKILL	TOTAL	RANK SCORE ORDER
Creative		
Numerical		
Written communication		
Practical		
Problem solving		
Organising		
Social and interpersonal		
Influencing		
Verbal communication		



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INTERPRETING YOUR SKILLS

In reviewing your skill scores, you will probably find that one or two of the skills will have particular relevance to your choice of career and the kind of work you will do in future. You will also be able to identify your skill gaps, areas you might want to develop or some that are not important to you in your future career.

Note that you will have skills that don't appear on this checklist as no such list can ever be exhaustive. It is a good idea to keep a record of the additional skills that you have.

You will need to bear in mind the following points in particular:

- Most jobs will involve a range of skills all important to a greater or less extent. A Maths teacher, for example, will need to communicate effectively, handle numerical data, be able to relate to pupils and write reports on their progress (amongst other things!)
- Skills are capable of development. You may be good at activities you haven't yet tried and will just need some additional training or experience to improve your performance
- You may have skills which you may not need in your job, but you will develop in your out of work activities. The airline pilot involved in amateur theatricals, the physiotherapist who also does antique restoration are examples of individuals using skills and developing interests in non-work settings
- It will be important to look at all of the experiences you've had and to ask yourself 'what have I learned?' In all likelihood you'll have developed skills that can be transferred from one context into another. Many employers are more interested in how you can transfer your skills into the new role than in where you have developed the skills concerned thus far.

Creative - Designers of graphics, furniture and textiles will naturally use this range of skills, as will architects and interior designers. It will provide the main focus of their work and vocational training. It's interesting also to see how relevant this skill can be to a range of other career areas open to graduates of other subjects e.g. advertising copywriter, landscape architect, arts administrator, web designer as well as engineering specialisms concerned with design.

Numerical - Engineers and scientific researchers of all kinds require this skill along with other professionals - statisticians, actuaries, maths teachers, transport planners, people in logistics and operational researchers. Also buyers, people in supply and purchasing. Perhaps surprisingly, this is only a secondary skill for accountants - communicating comes first! It's an important skill, but by no means the only skill required for many jobs in the financial sector.

Written communication - Editorial staff, print journalists, researchers, indexers and proof readers, script-writers and advertising copywriters all have work which revolves around the printed word. Anyone who has experience of putting together a journal or magazine will recognise the range of text processing skills required. Many jobs involve skills in written communication. Managers, administrators and civil servants all need these skills to some degree. They are also a central feature of many 'Communications Officer' and public relations jobs in both public and private sectors.



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Practical - Jobs which are centred on the use of equipment and hardware necessarily require these skills. Traditionally associated with physical work, this skill is also required at higher technical and scientific levels and some aspects of information technology. The medical laboratory technician, the sound engineer in a recording studio, the archaeologist, the museum curator, the wildlife conservationist all need practical skills in their work.

Problem solving - Engineers of all kinds, computer programmers, management consultants and systems analysts all need problem solving skills, finding solutions to technical problems. However, many occupations concerned with transport, planning, distribution and logistics will require this particular skill.

Organising - All administrators and managers need to organise events and meetings. They make things happen. Indeed these are the skills associated with management activities, common to a wide variety of different careers. In addition, there are occupations which rely heavily on these skills. Arts administrators, conference organisers, sales managers offer some examples.

Social and interpersonal - Counsellors, social workers, guidance and advice centre workers will all need these skills to varying degrees, as well as all professional psychologists who are involved in diagnosis, assessment and therapy. A wide range of training courses exists to develop these skills further, something which can also be achieved by volunteer experience and related part-time work.

Influencing - Many managers will have skills in this area, so it's a skill area common to a wide range of jobs of this kind. Marketing and sales staff will also exhibit this skill par excellence, as might estate agents, surveyors, advertising account executives, secondary school teachers, solicitors and, above all, barristers. Police officers and production managers in particular rely on their powers of persuasion in carrying out their work!

Verbal communication - It's difficult to be precise about the range of jobs grouped under this heading as there are so many. Teachers communicate, but then so do journalists, especially broadcast journalists, who communicate to an audience. Housing managers and marketing executives do it. So do TV researchers, interpreters, conference organisers, sales staff, agricultural advisers and advertising staff and all manner of consultants, trainers and managers require an abundance of these skills.