Are you ready for the Workplace?

It’s a JUNGLE Out There!

Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth: An Introduction for Students
Is the workplace really like a jungle? Let’s take a look.

To thrive in a competitive environment, wild animals must learn to adapt to their world in many ways:

- Develop personal qualities and social skills
- Develop specialized knowledge and skills
- Become proficient with available technology

Let’s examine each way.
What personal qualities and skills do wild animals need?

To survive in their environment they must

- live within the rules of their culture
- cooperate with others in a common cause
- choose their battles carefully
- be creative and resourceful
- bathe and groom regularly
- learn survival skills early and well
- profit from lifelong learning skills
What specialized knowledge and skills must wild animals develop?

As they mature, wild animals must learn more complex survival skills, such as how to

- communicate clearly with their peers
- solve problems quickly and effectively
- understand the big picture
- grasp their role in the world and play it well
- use time and other resources wisely
- keep their body and mind healthy and alert for a lifetime
- outperform their competitors
How do wild animals demonstrate proficiency with technology?

Some wild animals survive by developing skills, such as the ability to

- use the tools of nature to perform daily tasks
- telecommunicate messages
- protect themselves and their habitat from invaders
Now, let’s look at life in the workplace

How do we know about survival skills in the Virginia workplace?

- University of Virginia researchers asked employers across the state to list the skills, behavior, and knowledge they expect from their beginning workers like you.
- Those employers’ responses were compiled by the university and the Virginia Department of Education to help CTE students in Virginia schools better prepare for the workplace.
- The resulting document is called *Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth*.
- In the following slides, you will have the chance to briefly explore these skills that can help you survive and succeed in the human workplace.
What personal qualities and social skills are essential in the workplace?

Among the many personal qualities needed to survive in the workplace are the following:

- Positive work ethic
- Integrity
- Self-representation
- Creativity and resourcefulness

Questions to consider

- What do employers mean by work ethic?
- How does integrity lead to business success?
- What are some ways that employees can represent themselves well in the workplace?
- Why are creativity and resourcefulness valued in the workplace? How can they be developed?
What other personal and social skills are essential in the workplace?

Among the many people skills needed to survive in the workplace are the following:

- Teamwork
- Diversity awareness
- Conflict resolution

Questions to consider

- What is teamwork? What are some different ways that teamwork brings success to a business?
- What is meant by diversity awareness? How can a diverse workforce lead to business success?
- Why is conflict resolution an important workplace skill? How can it be learned?
What professional knowledge and skills are needed in the workplace?

For professional success, workers must demonstrate

- effective speaking and listening skills
- effective reading and writing skills
- job-specific mathematics skills
- lifelong-learning skills.

Questions to consider

- How can effective speaking and listening skills contribute to high-quality customer service?
- What are lifelong-learning skills? How are they important in the workplace? In career building?
- How can mathematics be a job-specific skill? How can reading be a job-specific skill?
What other professional knowledge and skills lead to workplace survival?

Additional professional requirements include

- healthy behaviors and safety skills
- job acquisition and advancement skills
- understanding of workplace organizations, systems, and climates.

**Questions to consider**

- Why are healthy behaviors considered to be professional skills?
- What is meant by workplace organizations, systems, and climates?
- Why should entry-level employee be concerned with workplace climate?
- How can an employee learn and demonstrate advancement skills?
What further professional skills are essential in the workplace?

Professional workers must excel at

- time-management, task-management, and resource-management skills
- critical-thinking and problem-solving skills
- customer-service skills.

Questions to consider

- What time-management skills used in school will also be useful in the workplace?
- How can entry-level employees manage their time? Their resources?
- What is critical thinking? Why is it an essential skill in your chosen career?
- What customer-service skills are important in your chosen career? Why?
What technological knowledge and skills are critical for workplace survival?

To succeed, workers must be proficient and responsible with

- technologies common to a specific occupation
- information technology
- telecommunication technology.

Questions to consider

- What technologies are common to your chosen occupation? How is each critical to business success?
- Why must all workers continuously update their information technology skills? How can employees keep their IT skills current?
- How might telecommunication skills relate to customer-service skills?
Successful employees must demonstrate

- an understanding of Internet use
- an understanding of data security issues.

Questions to consider

- What basic skills are needed to conduct research on the Internet?
- What precautions can an employee take to protect personal data on the Internet?
- What are some ways to protect electronic business data?
- What negative consequences could a business face if its electronic data is not kept secure?
So, is success in the human workplace really like survival in the wild?

Consider these questions:

- What personal qualities that we have seen in wild animals are important for a human employee in the field of agriculture?
- What practices in the jungle may be similar to lifelong-learning skills in today’s financial workplace?
- How are creativity and resources important to wild animals? To sports marketers? To robotics technicians?
- What kinds of safety and privacy issues can arise for wild animals? For employees in an internet-based business? How does each group meet these challenges?
- Why is cooperation important for wild animals? For members of a hospital staff? For early childhood educators? How can cooperative be achieved for each group?
How can you gain the skills for workplace survival?

- Read and learn about the [Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth](#).
- Practice the skills while you’re in school.
- Perfect the skills in school, at home, in part-time jobs, and in the community.

Then, when you enter the workplace, the survival skills will come naturally.