

# How to Improve your Employability: Facilitator Guide

## Overview and Purpose

This lesson is designed as an introduction to help students understand the key skills that employers look for, in a language that they understand.

It aims to get students thinking about how they use these skills in both their academic lives and extracurricular interests. There's also a section on personal brand to help students to establish the right networks and promote themselves appropriately.

## Objectives

Students will be able to:

- ❑ Gain awareness of the essential eight employability skills
- ❑ Reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses in relation to these skills
- ❑ Apply their experience, from in school and in extra-curricular activities, to some core important qualities that employers look for
- ❑ Explore their personal brand

## Preparation / Materials Needed

- ❑ Class Handouts - print 1 copy per student
- ❑ Download the session PowerPoint

## Agenda

### Introduction (5 min)

- Can you name some important skills that employers may look for?

### Essential employability skills (15 min)

- Introduction to the skillsbuilder framework
- How are these skills used in day-to-day life?
- Reflection on students strengths and weaknesses in these areas

### 10 Ways to promote your employability (20 min)

- 10 key ways to improve employability - 5 minute discussion
- 10 minute individual reflection on how students fulfil these areas

### Personal brand (5 min)

- Personal brand strategies: (3 minute discussion)
  - Networking
  - Writing skills
  - Social media professionalism
  - First impressions
- 2 minutes practicing a 30 second elevator pitch with a partner

# Teaching Guide

## Section 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Read through the agenda and the essential skills, as well as the question on slide 3 for the students to think about. Each table will have a big piece of paper. Ask each group to spend **1 minute** doing a very quick brainstorm of what they think the important skills are that employers expect them to have.

Debrief the whole class back together for **3 minutes** asking each table in turn their thoughts. This is simply an introduction to the topic - the session will go into each of them in more detail later.

## Section 2: Essential employability skills (15 minutes)

Here are some examples of key skills that will help you to develop your employability: listening, speaking, problem solving, creativity, staying positive, aiming high, leadership and teamwork.

This is the Skills Builder framework. It breaks down eight essential employability skills into simple building blocks, making it easy to understand, develop and measure your progress in these areas. Talk through the skills displayed on slides 4 and 5, reading through the definitions. Ask the class to come up with an example of how they use the skills in their day to life, getting at least one volunteer to share their answer for each skill.

Ask the students to reflect on their own relationships with these eight skills, using the reflective questions on slide 6 as prompts. Students should discuss in pairs or small groups, before filling out sheet one in their activities pack.

## Section 3: 10 ways to improve your employability (15 minutes)

Talk through the tips to improve your employability on slide 7, and provide examples of when they might be used: ask students to raise their hand if they have done any of these things or something similar. Ask the room to provide examples and why they're important/ how it could help them in the workplace.

- **Coach and develop yourself and others:** you work hard to improve yourself and others, responding to constructive feedback and giving it to others. For example: mentoring a younger student at school.
- **Communicate with impact and empathy:** you present your points clearly and can bring others round to your way of thinking. You are also a good listener, and can empathise with others. For example: presenting to a class, or being a form or team representative.
- **Be curious: Learn, share and innovate:** you are constantly prepared to learn new things, innovate and share your ideas. For example: taking time to learn a new skill outside of your studies, or finding a way to make an old process more efficient.
- **Lead and contribute to team success:** you support, lead and get on well with others, and can work together to achieve a common goal. For example: being part of a sports team or extracurricular club, or working on a group project.
- **Build and sustain relationships:** you quickly establish good rapport with people, and can inspire loyalty from others. For example: making an effort to maintain relationships with people you don't see often, from lots of different groups.
- **Show you have courage and integrity:** you consistently do the right thing, maintaining standards of confidentiality and professionalism. For example: being able to calm a difficult situation, or speaking up when you know that something isn't right.
- **Manage projects and budgets:** you can manage your own workload independently, consistently meeting deadlines or sticking to a budget. For example: staying on top of schoolwork, or organising an event for a club.
- **Be open minded, practical and quick to adapt:** you are able to think on your feet and can adjust to new situations, without compromising your standard of work. For example: helping a classmate at short notice, or covering someone's shift at a part time job
- **Build knowledge of the world of work:** you look for opportunities to develop your knowledge through research and training courses, aiming to build your commercial and technical skills. For example: taking an interest in the current affairs of your field.
- **Be passionate about making a difference:** you genuinely care about what you do, and go out of your way to come up with the right solutions. For example: going above and beyond in some voluntary work, or making a big personal contribution to an extracurricular activity.

Give the students **10 minutes** to fill out the second activity on their pack, coming up with examples of when they have performed each of these activities.

## Section 4: Personal brand (10 minutes)

Spend about **8 minutes** discussing the 5 areas of personal brand on slide 9, such as networking, communication skills, presenting yourself professionally on social media and making good first impressions. This can be quite high level, as we will go into more detail on personal brand in a later session in this curriculum.

Get the students to spend **2 minutes** with a partner, practicing an elevator pitch about themselves, their areas of interest, and what they're good at. They should write some brief notes for this pitch on the 'Activity 3' page of their pack.

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