

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Describe basic skills needed on the job.

Objectives:

- A. Recognize that there are basic workplace skills that apply to almost every job.
- B. Understand that these basic workplace skills are first learned and developed in school – in the classroom and in extracurricular activities.
- C. Identify and describe the 5 SCANS Competencies.
- D. Identify and describe the 3 Foundation Skills.
- E. Evaluate personal workplace know-how utilizing SCANS Competencies and Foundations Skills.

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### MODULE 7B: INFORMATION SHEET

*TO THE STUDENT: Read and study this information sheet and complete the student activities.*

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#### Introduction

It is true that different jobs require different skills and knowledge. It is also true that different jobs require certain abilities in all workers; no matter what job they hold. These abilities relate to how a person works, not what a person knows. How well employees work is very important to employers. Companies try to hire workers who demonstrate the abilities needed for workplace success.

#### The Problem

In recent years, employers across the country have expressed concern over new employees not being able to do their work well. Technology advances and global competition is changing the workplace, and too many workers are struggling to keep pace.

To address this problem, the Secretary of the US Dept. of Labor organized the SCANS Project - Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills. It involved employers, educators, and labor leaders. The SCANS Commission studied the workplace by speaking with jobholders in both the public and private sectors. The Commission found that over half of our young people leave school without the knowledge or skills needed to find and hold good jobs.

### The Solution

The SCANS Commission identified 5 basic abilities that are needed for workers to perform well in the workplace. These are called SCANS Competencies. Effective workers are able to productively use:

1. Resources – They know how to allocate time, money, materials, space, and staff. Sample tasks include:
  - Develop cost estimates and write proposals to justify the expense of replacing kitchen equipment.
  - Read construction blueprints and manufacturers' installation requirements to place and install the equipment.
2. Interpersonal Skills – They can work on teams, teach others, serve customers, lead, negotiate, and work well with others from culturally diverse backgrounds. Sample tasks include:
  - Teach a co-worker the procedure for preparing and distributing the quarterly sales forecast.
  - Help customers select merchandise and resolve complaints.
3. Information – They can acquire and evaluate data, organize and maintain files, and to use computers to process information. Sample tasks include:
  - Record and maintain purchase requests, invoices, and cost information for materials.
  - Use a spreadsheet program to estimate the food costs of alternative menus and daily specials.
4. Systems – They understand social, organizational, and technological systems, monitor and correct performance, and design or improve systems. Sample tasks include:

- Analyze the average and maximum wait time from the time the customers sit down until they receive the appetizer and then the entrée; modify restaurant procedure to reduce time by 20%.
  - Analyze current expenditures against expected needs and revenue.
5. Technology – They can select equipment and tools, apply technology to specific tasks, maintain equipment, and troubleshoot equipment problems. Samples tasks include:
- Operate a forklift and ensure it's in proper operating condition.
  - Evaluate 3 new paint spray guns from the point of view of costs, health and safety, and speed.

The SCANS Commission also determined that developing the 5 SCANS Competencies depends on developing a solid base of the following 3 Foundation Skills:

1. Basic Skills – for expressing thoughts and communicating you must develop your skills in reading, writing, arithmetic, math, speaking, and listening. Sample tasks include:
  - Write a memo to justify additional resources.
  - Prepare instructions for operating simple machines.
  - Explain new schedules to a work team.
  - Estimate discounts on the spot while negotiating sales.
  - Complete monthly reports of your department's activities.
2. Thinking Skills – for developing ideas and solving problems you must develop the ability to learn, to reason, to think creatively, to make decisions, and to solve problems. Sample tasks include:
  - Resolve scheduling conflict by setting priorities for processing orders.
  - Collect payment from delinquent customers and use judgment about extending credit.
  - Compensate a customer who is dissatisfied with housekeeping services on a recent cruise.
  - Evaluate vendor bids and select supplier.
3. Personal Qualities – qualities that shape the kind of person you are such as responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity.

Although the 5 Competencies and 3 Foundation Skills are listed separately, you cannot develop them separately. Each one builds upon and supports another. As you

develop one, you automatically strengthen others. School and work are not the only places where these skills can be developed. Workplace know-how can also be developed through extracurricular activities, community involvement, volunteer projects, and even at home.

Once a person possesses the 3 Foundation Skills – Basic Skills, Thinking Skills, and positive Personal Qualities – a person can concentrate on developing the 5 SCANS Competencies. By developing the SCANS Competencies, a worker will be able to work competently and effectively in the workplace. Possessing the SCANS Competencies often makes the difference between a worker who “just gets by” on the job and one who excels.

Preparation for the world of work begins long before an employee actually gets a job. Workplace readiness involves the skills a person develops throughout school. For example, thinking logically, reading, and writing are skills a person strengthens through class participation and homework. They are the same skills used by a worker when communicating with coworkers. In the workplace, being able to write instructions for coworkers can mean the difference between getting the job done well or having it totally confused.

In the workplace, for example, the ability to budget time wisely is very important in determining how much work gets done. Some workers can complete big projects in short periods. They meet deadlines, volunteer for more work, and get it done as well. These individuals may not be smarter; they just “work smarter”. They know how to budget their time wisely, set deadlines, and meet them – a sign of competence with resources. This same competence can be developed through simple activities such as keeping your bedroom clean and doing your homework well.

### **Goal Setting - The 3 Foundation Skills**

Developing the foundation skills takes time and practice. You need to:

- Learn how certain skills can help you in today’s workplace.
- Determine what skills you have now by examining your strengths and weaknesses.
- Take action to improve your workplace skills.

Developing these workplace basics is worth the time and effort. Strong workplace skills can boost your productivity and your chances for advancement.

#### **Assess your Basic Skills:**

1. Do you remember what you read? Can you summarize the main ideas of an article or a book? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you know rules for grammar and punctuation? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
3. Can you perform basic math functions such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division with ease? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you know how to type and use a computer? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Ways you can develop these skills:

- Use dictionaries and other reference books to help you read and write better.
- Read newspapers, magazines, and books in your free time.
- Try a new dinner recipe each week to practice following written instructions.
- Keep a journal. Look at older entries to see how your writing has improved.
- Practice math skills using calculators and computers.

**Assess your Thinking Skills:**

1. When you face a problem, do you try to think of more than 1 possible solution? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are you open to new ideas? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you weigh the consequences of your actions? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
4. Can you separate fact from opinion? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
5. In a discussion, can you present facts and ideas in an organized, convincing way? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Ways you can develop these skills:

- Brainstorm with others to find as many possible solutions to reach difficult decisions.
- Read mystery novels - try to figure it out before the solution is given.
- Play board games that require creativity, planning, and logic.

**Assess your Personal Qualities:**

1. Can you accept compliment and criticisms? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you arrive on time for scheduled events, school, work, etc.? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you accept responsibility for mistakes you make? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you comfortable speaking in front of a group? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are you aware of nonverbal communication cues, such as facial expressions, tone of voice, etc.? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you respect and value the opinions of others? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you ask others for help or advice? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
8. Do you make suggestions for improvements? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Ways you can develop these skills:

- Read books on self-esteem, stress or time management.
- Spend time with positive, motivated people.
- Make to-do lists or daily schedules to stay organized and reduce stress.
- Role-play workplace situations with a family member or friend.
- Watch your body language by talking in front of a mirror.
- Volunteer for community projects.
- Show initiative at work by asking for more responsibilities.

**There are many other ways to develop your Foundation Skills:**

1. On-the-job training
2. A mentor
3. Apprenticeship
4. Workshops
5. Adult education courses
6. Career Centers

Workplace skills help you achieve and succeed. Learning is a lifelong process.

**MODULE 7B: STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

*TO THE STUDENT:* After studying the information sheet above, complete the following activities.

**Activity 1: What Are Your Workplace Skills?**

Review the SCANS Competencies and Foundation Skills and rate your workplace know-how by checking the appropriate boxes. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Workplace Skills & Competencies**      Very Good      Good      Fair      Poor      Do Not Possess

<b>Workplace Skills &amp; Competencies</b>	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Do Not Possess
<b>Basic Skills:</b>					
Read written material, charts, and graphs.					
Write an effective letter.					
Calculate a percentage discount on a product.					
Speak to a group.					
Listen to instructions to complete a new task.					
<b>Thinking Skills:</b>					
Learn new job responsibilities.					
Use reasoning skills to choose from alternatives.					
Use creative thinking to develop a new idea.					
Make decisions about work priorities.					
Apply established procedures to new projects.					
<b>Resource Skills:</b>					
Manage time well.					
Organize work and storage areas.					

Use a budget for money management.					
Use supplies and tools wisely.					
Divide work according to group members' skills.					
<b>Interpersonal Skills:</b>					
Contribute to group efforts.					
Teach others new skills.					
Lead others in a project.					
Negotiate with others to gain an agreement.					
Work well with others from different cultures.					
<b>Information Skills:</b>					
Research and collect data from reliable sources.					
Organize and maintain a file system.					
Give a speech using various media.					
Interpret instructions on a work procedure.					
Use a computer to create work documents.					
<b>System Skills:</b>					
Explain and draw an organizational chart.					
Diagram the steps of a problem's possible solutions.					
Propose a plan for a situation needing change.					
Monitor, correct, and improve your work performance.					
Break down a complex task into component parts.					
<b>Technology Skills:</b>					
Judge the best procedures, tools, or machines to use.					

Assemble equipment from instructions.					
Operate equipment according to guidelines.					
Identify reasons for wrong results from tools or machines.					
Follow maintenance procedures to prevent failures.					

1. Circle your 5 STRONGEST skills from the choices given. How did you acquire these skills?

2. List several ways to improve FAIR or POOR skills.

3. How can you acquire the skills you DO NOT POSSESS?

4. How will your skills influence your career choice?

**Activity 2: Developing Workplace Know-How**

Listed below are the 5 SCANS Competencies and the 3 Foundation Skills that workers need to be effective in the workplace. These skills and qualities develop gradually and are strengthened through everything you do. For each item listed below, report at least 1 example of a related activity or accomplishment of yours.

**Activities Report**

<b>Workplace Abilities</b>	<b>Recent Examples</b>
Competence with resources – allocating time, money, materials, space, and help from others.	
Competence with interpersonal skills – working on teams, teaching others, serving customers, leading, negotiating, and working well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds.	
Competence with information – acquiring and evaluating data, organizing and maintaining files, interpreting and communicating, and using computers to process information.	
Competence with systems – understanding social, organizational, and technological systems, monitoring and correcting performance, and designing or improving systems.	
Competence with technology – selecting equipment and tools, applying technology to specific tasks, maintaining equipment, and troubleshooting equipment problems.	

Workplace Skills and Qualities	Recent Examples
Basic skills – reading, writing, math, speaking, and listening.	
Thinking skills – learning, reasoning, thinking creatively, making decisions, and solving problems.	
Personal qualities – displaying individual responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity.	

### Activity 3: Math Practice

Practice using your math skills by solving the following problems. Do not use a calculator.

1. 
$$\begin{array}{r} 25 \\ 73 \\ 12 \\ + \underline{6} \end{array}$$

2. 
$$\begin{array}{r} 39.5 \\ + \underline{6.2} \end{array}$$

3.  $943 - 21 =$

4.  $10\% \text{ of } \$7.50 =$

5.  $20\% \text{ of } \$15.00 =$

6.  $5 \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{4} =$

7. 
$$\begin{array}{r} 886 \\ \times \underline{62} \end{array}$$

8. 
$$\begin{array}{r} 7.2 \\ \times \underline{5.9} \end{array}$$

9.  $1144 - 52 =$

10. An item sells for 3 for \$1.00. How much does 1 cost? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Write 0.66 as a percentage \_\_\_\_\_

12. Write 91% as a decimal \_\_\_\_\_

13. A customer gives you \$20.00 for a \$13.84 purchase. How much change does the customer get back? \_\_\_\_\_

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14. A customer gives you \$5.25 for a \$3.19 purchase. How much change does the customer get back? \_\_\_\_\_
15. An item sells for 4 for \$1.00. How much do 5 cost? \_\_\_\_\_
16. How many items are in 2 ½ dozen? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Using numbers, write “one hundred seventeen dollars and twenty-three cents” correctly. \_\_\_\_\_

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**MODULE 7B: STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS MODULE**

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**Pennsylvania’s Academic Standards for Career Education and Work**

**13.2.11. Career Acquisition (Getting a Job)**

- E. Demonstrate, in the career acquisition process, the application of essential workplace skills/knowledge, such as, but not limited to:
- Commitment
  - Communication
  - Dependability
  - Health/safety
  - Laws and regulations (i.e. Child Labor Law, Fair Labor Standards Act, OSHA, Material Safety Data Sheets)
  - Personal initiative
  - Scheduling/time management
  - Team building
  - Technical literacy
  - Technology

**13.3.11. Career Retention and Advancement**

- A. Evaluate personal attitudes and work habits that support career retention and advancement.

**Pennsylvania’s Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (RWSL)**

**1.1.11. Learning to Read Independently**

- E. Establish a reading vocabulary by identifying and correctly using new words acquired through the study of their relationships to other words. Use a dictionary or related reference.

**Pennsylvania’s Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening**

**2.2.11 Computation and Estimation**

- A. Develop and use computation concepts, operations and procedures with real numbers in problem-solving situations.