SOFT SKILLS AT WORK

Getting to Work on Time

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What are Soft Skills?

Research shows that soft skills are often better predictors of success in the workplace than technical skills. Soft skills are also called interpersonal or people skills. These skills help people to work effectively with others. Soft skills also ensure a collaborative, productive and healthy work environment. Employers look for these soft skills:

teamwork	problem solving
motivation	communication
flexibility	punctuality

The discussion and activities that follow help students understand a specific soft skill and its importance in the workplace. As well, students consider the soft skill in their daily lives and how to apply it.

Contents

(A) Discussion

1.   Cora gets to work on time.

      What helps her get to work on time?

      How does getting to work on time affect Leo?

      Do you think Cora will always get to work on time?

2.   Read about Bill and Kate.

    Discuss the questions.

      Bill drives cars for a car dealer.

      He drives sold cars to customers in other cities.

      Today, Bill has a 10-hour round trip.

      He is waiting for paperwork from his boss.

      But his boss is late. The morning is slipping by.

      Kate is on a date.

      She is going to be late for her shift.

      No problem. Her friend, Denny, will cover for her.

      The boss asks Denny, "Where is Kate?"

      Denny says, "Her bus broke down."

    (a) Bill's boss is late. How will that affect Bill?

    (b) Denny lies to cover for Kate. Would you? Why or why not?

    (c) How else does being late affect co-workers?

3.   Describe a time you were late.

       Why were you late?

       How did you feel about being late?

       How did being late affect others?

4.   Do you know someone who is always late?

       How do you feel when they are late?

       How do you think they feel when they are late? Why?

       What can you do to make things better?

5.   What words describe a person who is always on time?

(B) Application

1.   Make a Plan

(a)   Think of a time when you are sometimes late.

Getting to work or appointments? Catching buses? Meeting friends?

I am usually late _____because

_____ .

(b)   What is one thing you can change to help you be on time?

I can _____ .

(c)   How will you make this change?

I will _____ .

(d)   What do you need to do before you make the change?

I need to _____ .

(e)   Who can help you make the change? How?

_____can help me make this change by

_____ .

2.   Reflection

Why do you want to be on time?

How will things be better if you are on time?

Sometimes things do not go as we planned.

      Think about all the ways your plan might affect you and others.

      Do you need to make changes to your plan?

(C) Reading & Writing

1.   Read the story below
      Find three words that do not make sense.
      Cross each out. Write a word that makes sense.
      The first one is an example.

> Leo and Cora are *friends* ~~sisters~~.
>
> They work at a diner.
>
> Leo is always on time.
>
> Cora is always late.
>
> Leo is happy.
>
> So Leo talks to Cora.
>
> He says, "I need you to be late.
>
> The dishes pile up fast.
>
> I can't keep up."
>
> That night, Cora makes her lunch.
>
> She puts her keys on the table.
>
> She lays out her clothes.
>
> She goes to bed very late.
>
> The next day, Cora is on time.
>
> The next week, Cora's mom is very sick.
>
> Cora phones Leo.
>
> Cora says, "I will be late."
>
> Cora finally gets to work.
>
> Leo gives her a hug.
>
> Cora and Leo start to work.

2. **Complete the sentences.**

(a)   Cora gets to work on time.

Leo feels *relaxed*.

Leo feels _____ .

Leo feels _____ .

Leo feels _____ .

(b)   Being late affects others.

It affects your *co-workers*.

It affects your _____ .

It affects your _____ .

It affects your _____ .

(c)   We are all late sometimes.

We might be late for *class*.

We might be late for _____ .

We might be late for _____ .

We might be late for _____ .

Read your sentences again.

Which words do you want to remember?

Add these words to your word bank.

LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

Step 1: Start a Discussion

Possible prompt: What did you learn about being on time?

Step 2: Record the Students' Words

Print the students' responses on the board, using their exact words. Print clearly. Say each word as you print it.

Step 3: Read the Text

Read the student-generated text out loud to the students, pointing to each word as you read. Then read each sentence, inviting the class to read along with you. Finally, read each sentence out loud, inviting the student who contributed the sentence to read along with you. Always point to each word as you read.

The purpose of using the **Language Experience Approach** is to help students establish the link between spoken and written words and to develop reading skills through using their own words.

Note: Educators and ESL students may not be comfortable working with text that contains non-standard English forms. A flexible approach is recommended. The extent to which you choose to make corrections unobtrusively while recording should reflect the needs and concerns of the students.

Step 4: Use the Student-generated Text

(a) Sight Words

Have students choose three words they would like to remember. Have them add the words to their personal dictionary or word bank.

(b) Cloze

Cover highly predictable words (one per response) with paper and tape. Read the text back to the students. Stop when you reach a covered word and ask students to predict a word that makes sense and sounds right. Check their predictions by uncovering the word.

(c) Review Phonics and Word Families

Have students find, circle, and copy words that start with a specific letter or word family.

(d) Copying

Have students copy the language experience text. Copying the text provides practice in both printing and in learning the letter-sound relationships.

(e) Frame Sentences

Choose one sentence from the language experience text. Print the sentence on the board. Underline one word and ask the students to substitute the word with their own words. Print the sentence frame again to record each student's response.

Example:

Soft skills are <u>*important*</u>.

Soft skills are _____.

Soft skills are _____.

Soft skills are _____.