



Soft Skills at Work

Working as a Team

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.

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(A) Discussion

1. Barb and Sam start to work as a team.

What makes it difficult for Sam and Barb to work as a team?

How does teamwork make things better for Sam and Barb?

Who else might their teamwork help? How?

2. Read about Lisa and Tony.

Discuss the questions.

Lisa plays soccer.

Her job is to make goals.

But Lisa runs all over the field.

She does the job of other players.

The other players are not happy.

Tony and Roy take care of lawns.

Today a customer calls. She is angry.

Her lawn is not cut yet.

Tony says, "I thought you cut her lawn."

Roy says the same thing back to Tony.

- (a) Why do you think Lisa does the job of other players?
- (b) How can Tony and Roy work better as a team?
- (c) What other factors help people work as a team?

3. Describe a time you worked with a team.

What was the main goal of the team?

What was your job in the team?

What did you like about working as a team?

What was hard about working as a team?

How good was the team at planning? Communicating?
Getting along?

4. Compare a sports team to a work team.

How are they similar? How are they different?

5. What words describe a person who can work well in a team?

(B) Application

1. Make a Plan

(a) Where can you work as a team?

At home? At work? With a friend? In your community?

I can work as a team _____ .

(b) What will be the main goal?

The main goal will be to _____
_____ .

(c) How will the team make decisions?

The team will make decisions by _____ .
_____ .

(d) How will you help the team?

I will help the team by _____
_____ .

(e) How will working on this team help you?

Working on this team will help me _____
_____ .

2. Reflection

Why do you want to work as a team?

How will working as a team make things better?

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.

work

Barb and Sam ~~live~~ at a gas station.

They work at the front counter.

They fill the candy shelf.

They drink the coffee.

And they clean.

Barb and Sam don't like to clean.

And they don't like each other.

So, the gas station is always a mess.

One day, the boss gets mad.

She says, "Clean up this place or else!"

Barb and Sam clean up the parking lot.

Barb worries. The boss is so mad!

Sam worries. The boss is so mad!

Barb and Sam talk.

They make a list of cleaning jobs.

They make a cleaning plan.

They write the plan on the wall.

Barb and Sam are happy with the plan.

Now, Barb and Sam work as a team.

And the boss? She is very happy.

2. Complete the sentences.

(a) Barb is bossy.

So Sam feels *upset*.

Sam feels _____ .

Sam feels _____ .

Sam feels _____ .

(b) Now Barb and Sam are a team.

They *plan* as a team.

They _____ as a team.

They _____ as a team.

They _____ as a team.

(c) I like to work as a team.

I feel *motivated*.

I feel _____ .

I feel _____ .

I feel _____ .

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 working as a team?

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 important.

Soft skills are _____.

Soft skills are _____.

Soft skills are _____.