

# Why Go To School?



While walking down the halls of a school, you may hear students say: “Why do I have to go to school? My classes don’t teach me anything! Why do I need to pass English, history, and math? What good are they?” One reason that success in school is important is that employers think that success in school is directly related to success on the job. Employers prefer to hire students who have proven themselves by succeeding in school. In a survey, employers were asked what things students should learn in school to help them succeed on the job. In answer to this survey, employers said students should learn the following:

## IN SCHOOL — LEARN RESPONSIBILITY

**What is responsibility?** Responsibility includes *dependability*, *reliability*, and *trustworthiness*. On the job, dependability means reporting to work on time every day scheduled to work, calling in as soon as possible when sick, and asking one or two weeks in advance when time off is needed. Workers show reliability by doing each task correctly and completely. They also show trustworthiness by handling the company’s merchandise or equipment with care and not taking home anything that belongs to the employer.

**How do I learn responsibility?** In your school’s classes, you learn *dependability* by turning in each homework assignment when it is due, taking the quizzes and tests on the correct days, and being in your seat when the tardy bell rings. You learn *reliability* by answering every question on homework assignments and bringing extra pens, pencils, and paper to class each day. You learn *trustworthiness* by doing your own classwork and homework, writing your own term papers, and handling the textbook with care.

## IN SCHOOL — LEARN TO COMMUNICATE

**What are communication skills?** The employers surveyed felt that the communication skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking were important for job success.

**How do I learn these skills?** Although communication skills are used in all classes, English classes are responsible for teaching and giving you practice in communication skills. You learn to listen (and remember what was said) by not talking, writing notes to friends, or daydreaming while the teacher is lecturing. You learn to read (and remember what you have read) by taking notes to help you to understand the novel or essay as you are reading. You learn to write by studying English grammar, reading literature, and completing the writing assignments that the teacher gives. You learn speaking skills needed for the business world by studying and practicing the rules involved in giving a good speech.

## IN SCHOOL — LEARN MATH SKILLS

**What math skills are needed?** The employers surveyed indicated that it was important that students learn to compute (do math) and solve problems. One employer mentioned that it is important to learn how to solve a problem when “some pieces of the puzzles are missing.” This means that students need to learn how to think to fill in information that may be missing to solve a problem.

**Where do I learn to compute and solve problems?** In all your math classes! In fact, math classes have an added benefit of teaching you the skill of thinking logically (in a sequenced order using the principles of correct reasoning) so that you can succeed at solving many types of problems.

## IN SCHOOL — LEARN PUBLIC RELATION SKILLS

**What are public relation (or PR) skills?** The way you treat people and the attitude you show to the world are considered PR skills. Since employers like their business to appear organized, cheerful, and helpful to the public (or customers), they need workers with good PR skills so that there is good will and harmony among supervisors and workers which then helps everyone show a good “face” to the public. PR skills include tact (saying or doing the right thing in difficult situations), empathy (understanding how another person feels), respect (having consideration or concern for another), and a positive attitude (thinking the best about a person or situation).

**Where do I learn PR skills?** Do leaders play sports — or do sports build leadership qualities that are used later in life? The discipline, effort, and attitude learned in sports programs are exactly the same qualities needed for success in the work world. In addition, PR skills are an important part of the sports program. When playing sports, you are part of a bigger picture — the team (or later, the company). You and the team must present a united and positive “face” to the other team no matter how you really feel inside. You must learn to “read” the other team so that you understand how they are thinking so that you can win. You must have respect for the official (or supervisor) so that you don't get too many fouls or thrown out of the game. In short, team sports provide excellent opportunities for learning the good PR skills which will make you valuable to employers.

## IN SCHOOL — LEARN INITIATIVE AND PRIDE

**What are initiative and pride?** Initiative is an ability to start a task without being told, and to continue working at that task until it has been completed. Pride is the feeling of self-respect a person gets when something has been done well. These traits often lead to raises and promotions.

**Where do I learn initiative and pride?** Initiative and pride can be learned throughout your schooling years in all classes. This is why employers like to hire successful students. Employers know that students have to learn initiative and pride to succeed. For example, having an organized study time each night so that you are ready for the test (instead of cramming at the last minute) builds the initiative habit by seeing what needs to be done and doing it without being told. The pride (or self-respect) habit is built by doing your best on assignments and quizzes, not cheating, and trying to get the best grades you can — instead of the minimum required for passing.

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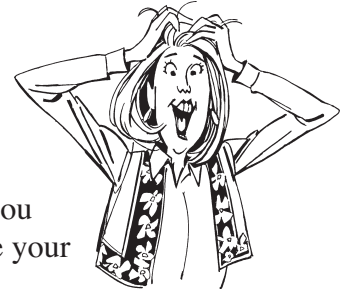
### QUICK CHECK:

1. Whom do employers prefer to hire?
2. a) How is dependability shown on the job?  
b) Reliability? c) Trustworthiness?
3. a) In your school's classes, what is one way to learn dependability? b) Reliability? c) Trustworthiness?
4. a) How do you learn to listen? b) How do you learn to write?
5. What does it mean to solve a problem when “some pieces of the puzzle are missing”?
6. Besides learning math, what added benefit do you obtain from your math classes?
7. What are PR skills?
8. Define the following: a) tact, b) empathy, c) respect, d) a positive attitude.
9. In your opinion, do leaders play sports — or do sports build leadership qualities?
10. Give one example of an experience in sports that helps you learn good PR skills.
11. a) What is initiative? b) What is pride?
12. a) Give one example of how you can build the initiative habit. b) The pride habit.
13. List one class that you have taken that has taught you responsibility (dependability, reliability, and trustworthiness). In an essay of at least 25 words, describe what things the teacher did that helped you learn responsibility.



# You Have Skills Now

When you are able to describe skills in ways that show an employer that you can do the job, your skills can get you hired. Most people have more skills than they think. The things that you do well and the things you do all the time can be the basis of great job skills. In order to convince an employer that you have the skills to do the job, you need to define your skills and build on them. Having the right words to describe your marketable skills is necessary when you write a resume or talk to an employer during an interview. How do you define your



## If this is you . . .

You keep your promises and do what you say you will do.

You can think of ten different ways to do something.

You have good study habits.

You are a video game expert and know all the right moves.

You practice every day at your favorite sport and make the school team.

You care about people, speak the truth with kindness, and are patient.

You are organized. Recently, you arranged your 350 CDs alphabetically.

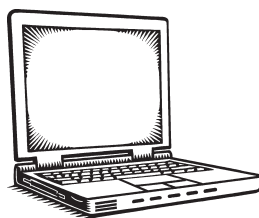
You like playing team sports and planning events or get-togethers.

You can handle chaos — your DVDs are a mess, but you find what you want.

You are cool — you're a trendsetter and everyone copies your haircut.

You are good at talking on the phone.

You like trying new things.



## This is what you say to an employer . . .

I am reliable and take commitment seriously.

I am creative and have the ability to solve problems.

I have good concentration and am always prepared.

I anticipate problems and deal quickly and accurately with them.

I am motivated, persistent, and always get the job done.

I am tactful and skilled in human relations.

I am orderly and neat. I have strong organizational skills.

I work well as a team member and can take a leadership role when appropriate.

I am flexible and effective. I work well under pressure.

I am creative and a self-starter.

I communicate well and enjoy working with people.

I enjoy learning and adapt easily to new situations.



**If this is you . . .**

You enjoy listening and talking to students from the many different groups at your school.

You have a great love for animals and enjoy caring for them.

You like people, are quick-witted and a natural at telling jokes

You get to class on time and have good attendance at school.

You pull “all nighters” to get assignments done on time.

You are up on music and know every song on the charts.

You always keep your room neat and never lose anything.

You don't panic in crisis situations when others around you do.

Even though you may not realize it, you are now developing skills that will be transferred to the work world in a future career. Having the right words to describe your skills will come in handy when you are writing a resume, preparing a letter of introduction, or talking to an employer during an interview.

**This is what you say to an employer . . .**

I am skilled in human relations and able to successfully work with all types of people.

I am responsible and complete tasks on time.

I am a quick thinker with good communication skills.

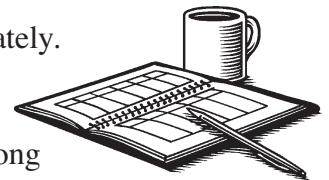
I am dependable in following directions and schedules.

I work well under pressure and always get the job done.

I learn quickly and accurately.

I plan ahead and have strong organizational skills.

I am able to think clearly and solve problems in stressful situations.



**QUICK CHECK:**

1. What can happen if you are able to describe your skills in ways that show an employer that you can do the job?
2. What 2 things are the basis of great job skills?
3. What do you need to do to convince an employer that you have the skills to do the job?
4. If a person can think of ten different ways to do something, what can the person say to an employer?
5. If a person cares about people, speaks the truth with kindness, and is patient what can the person say to an employer?
6. If a person's DVDs are a mess, but always finds what is wanted, what can the person say to an employer?
7. If a person is good talking on the phone, what can the person say to an employer?
8. If a person enjoys talking to students from different groups at school, what can the person say to an employer?
9. If a person loves animals and enjoys caring for them, what can the person say to an employer?
10. If a person is up on music and knows every song on the charts, what can the person say to an employer?
11. If a person doesn't panic in crisis situations when others around do, what can the person say to an employer?
12. What 3 times will having the right words to describe your marketable skills come in handy?
13. Look at the list of things to say to an employer. Select 3 statements that fit you best to describe your marketable skills to an employer.