

What Employers Want

Employability worksheets for students

trotman



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Use the following activities to help you plan for your future!

For further activities and advice on all employability skills, see *What Employers Want: The employability skills handbook*, available to order at www.trotman.co.uk.

Where are you now?

Who are you and what can you do?

Answer the following questions to help you establish where you are in your life at this moment in time. Use your responses to give you a starting point for planning future actions and applying for jobs.

You – now!

Your name		Your age	
Where do you live and with whom?			
Describe your education to date: where you went to school/college, and what qualifications you gained.			
Which of your school/college subjects have you found most interesting?			

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<p>Which of your school/college subjects have you found least interesting?</p>	
<p>What else do you do at school/college (i.e. extra-curricular activities)?</p>	
<p>What positions of responsibility have you held (e.g. on school council, sports teams, clubs, etc.)?</p>	
<p>What do you do in your spare time (e.g. activities that are not related to school/college)?</p>	
<p>What do you most enjoy doing (be honest – if your favourite pastime is sleeping, admit it!)?</p>	

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Your strengths and weaknesses

Identify activities that you're good at and the things that you need to improve on.

All about you!

If your friends were describing you, what would they say were your three most likeable personal qualities (e.g. sense of humour, good listener, reliable, etc.)?	
If your teachers were describing you, what would they say were your three best personal qualities (e.g. conscientious student, helps other students, finishes work on time, etc.)?	
If your friends were describing you, what would they say were your three most annoying personal qualities (e.g. talks too much, always late, loud laugh, etc.)?	
If your teachers were describing you, what would they say were your three most annoying personal qualities (e.g. doesn't listen, daydreams in class, etc.)?	

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Next, look at the following statements and tick the box that most closely reflects your current ability:

	I'm confident I can do this well	I can do this with help	I'm nervous about doing this	I avoid doing this if I can
Working together and communicating				
Working with other people				
Taking a 'back seat' when required				
Approaching people I don't know and speaking to them				
Listening and accepting other people's opinions				
Letting other people take the lead				
Discussing options and possible solutions to problems				
Speaking on the telephone				
Giving instructions to other people				
Receiving and acting on spoken instructions				
Giving a presentation/speech				
Reading and writing				

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Problem-solving and decision-making skills				
Analysing problems				
Collecting and evaluating evidence				
Identifying possible solutions to problems				
Deciding on the most appropriate solution to a problem				
Numbers and ICT				
Simple calculations without using a calculator				
Interpreting data and statistics				
Using a computer for day-to-day tasks				
Using other digital technology (e.g. smart phones)				

What are your plans?

Answer the following questions in as much detail as you can to help you consider what you'd like to do in the future.

Your plans

What do you plan to do during the next 12 months?	
Do you plan to continue your education? If so, doing what?	
What sort of job/career are you hoping for when you finish your education?	
What would you like to be doing in 10 years' time?	

Understanding the business

Do your research

Complete the following formation for a company you're interested in working for. Use the internet, talk to people, Google the company and see what others say about it.

Company's name and core business	
What the company says it wants to achieve (mission statement)	
Job/department I'm applying for	

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What work does this involve?	
Who will I report to?	
Who will my external customers be?	
Who will my internal customers be?	

Write your own profile

Skills review

Review the skills that you currently have and those that you need to improve by completing your strengths and weaknesses boxes on the next few pages.

For your strengths, in the first column select specific skills in which you feel that you are already competent. In the second column, make a note of something that you've done that proves you have this skills.

For your weaknesses, list skills that you feel less confident about in the left-hand column. In the second column make a note of why you think you're weak in this area.

We've included some examples to get you started.

Communication skills

(e.g. written communications, listening, speaking on the telephone, speaking to groups of people, contributing to meetings, giving instructions, etc.)

Strengths

Areas that I excel in	This is evidenced by
Communicate well on the telephone.	Persuaded local businesses to advertise in our school yearbook.

Weaknesses

Areas that I need to improve	This is evidenced by
Speaking in public.	I've only done this once and was too nervous to get my message across clearly.

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Teamworking skills

(e.g. collaborating with others, organising a team, learning new skills from other team members, chairing a meeting, etc.)

Strengths

Areas that I excel in	This is evidenced by
Getting people to work together as a team.	I got 20 people to work together to raise funds for charity by producing a Comic Relief joke book.

Weaknesses

Areas that I need to improve	This is evidenced by
I tend to boss other people about.	Complaints from my friends when they've worked with me!

Problem-solving skills

(e.g. collecting and analysing data, consulting other people, analysing problems, using problem-solving tools, etc.)

Strengths

Areas that I excel in	This is evidenced by
Research – finding things out in libraries and on the internet.	The history of art project that I completed as part of my A level course. This involved original research about local artists.

Weaknesses

Areas that I need to improve	This is evidenced by
Understanding numerical data.	I avoid using this type of information even when I know it would be relevant.

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Using numbers

(e.g. calculations using electronic equipment, mental arithmetic, calculating weights, measures and space, percentages and fractions, etc.)

Strengths

Areas that I excel in	This is evidenced by
Estimating amounts of material needed to complete projects.	I helped my parents to calculate what materials they would need to redesign and landscape their garden. There was no significant over-purchase of materials.

Weaknesses

Areas that I need to improve	This is evidenced by
Preparing simple accounts.	My poor performance in preparing the final profit and loss account for the Comic Relief joke book.

ICT

(e.g. using word-processing packages, spreadsheets, email, presentation software, etc.)

Strengths

Areas that I excel in	This is evidenced by
Word processing.	The way that I present my coursework.

Weaknesses

Areas that I need to improve	This is evidenced by
Using a database.	I've never done this though I know it would be useful for storing information about friends and family.

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SMART objectives

Complete this action template to show how you will address the different skills areas that you want to improve.

My objective	
How I'll do this	
Help/resources needed	
How I'll know I've achieved it	
Completed by	

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How I'll do this	
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How I'll do this	
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Completed by	

See Karen Holmes's book *What Employers Want: The employability skills handbook*, second edition (9781911067528) for advice, guidance and further activities on all the employability skills required for the workplace. Available to order at www.trotman.co.uk.