

Highlighting your skills and experience

Employers will ask for transferable skills or competencies – the skills, knowledge and behaviour they consider necessary for a particular job. Reviewing your previous experience will help you to identify your transferable skills and recognise jobs that you are qualified for.

5 a In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 What general skills and knowledge do most employers look for in job applicants?
- 2 Apart from specific qualifications and technical expertise, what skills and knowledge have you got that make you employable?

b Match the transferable skills (1–8) to the examples of professional behaviour (a–h).

1 analytical skills	a I have a justified belief in my ability to do the job. I am able to express my opinion or provide advice when necessary. I am good at making decisions.
2 creativity	b I actively seek feedback on my performance and carefully consider feedback. I demonstrate an interest in and understanding of my own and other cultures. I understand my own strengths and limitations.
3 self-confidence	c I am good at getting a good deal. I am good at developing and managing relationships with others. I am able to persuade, convince and gain support from others.
4 communication skills	d I am able to formulate new ideas to solve problems. I am able to think ahead to spot or create opportunities. I set aside thinking time to come up with alternative ways of getting things done more efficiently.
5 independence	e I can work with sustained energy and determination on my own. I can find ways to overcome obstacles to set myself achievable goals. I strive towards my own targets and refuse to settle for second best.
6 interpersonal skills	f I am good at data analysis. I am excellent at interpreting data to see cause and effect and am able to use this information to make effective decisions.
7 negotiation skills	g I am able to express myself effectively. I am able to make my opinions totally clear and am rarely misunderstood. I produce clear, well-written reports that can be easily understood.
8 self-awareness	h I am good at working cooperatively. I am good at working and communicating within a team to achieve shared goals. I am a good listener.

c Write your own examples of behaviour for the following transferable skills. Compare your answers with the suggestions in the answer key.

- 1 flexibility I am not rigid in my approach to work.
- 2 leadership skills _____
- 3 organisational skills _____
- 4 teamworking skills _____

d Identify three key transferable skills of your own, which you have used at work or university. In pairs, tell each other about your skills, giving examples of your behaviour.



- e** ▶ 1.3 After creating her mind map, Silvia talks to Sophie about her university and work experience. Listen to the conversation and answer the following questions.

- 1 When did Silvia apply for her MA course?
- 2 What was Silvia doing in Africa?
- 3 What job did Silvia have at university?

- f** ▶ 1.3 Complete the extracts from the conversation using the correct form of the verbs in the box. Listen again and check your answers.

apply convince deal give plan talk understand work

- 1 'I applied for my MA course while I was working in Africa, and even managed to start doing some research for the course before I came back to England.'
'So you're clearly quite good at _____.'
- 2 I _____ for an NGO as part of a large team with people from all over the world. We all lived together and shared a bathroom. The work was quite varied and I was _____ different tasks to complete each week.
- 3 ... our main aim was to educate local people about the need for reforestation. We tried putting up posters, but this didn't have much of an effect. We needed to find a better way to communicate this message. Later on I _____ to respected members of the community, and _____ them to talk to other people in the village. This approach was far more effective.
- 4 When I was at university I was the communications officer of the student union and I was responsible for _____ with suppliers. I had to order food and drink for university concerts and so on. It was always possible to get a better deal if you were good on the phone. It wasn't just a question of being persuasive though, it was really a case of being clear and expressing yourself well, making sure that everybody _____ what I was saying.

- g** In pairs, discuss which transferable skills in **Units 1-4** are demonstrated in each extract (1-4).

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h Complete the phrases for demonstrating transferable skills using the correct verbs in brackets.

- 1 analytical skills (*analyse / conduct / identify*)
a identify a mistake b _____ data c _____ a survey
- 2 creativity (*invent / solve / suggest*)
a _____ a machine b _____ an alternative c _____ a problem
- 3 communication skills (*explain / give / write*)
a _____ a report b _____ an idea c _____ a presentation
- 4 interpersonal skills (*listen / resolve / work*)
a _____ a dispute b _____ to a point of view c _____ with 'difficult' people
- 5 leadership skills (*chair / delegate / motivate*)
a _____ a meeting b _____ a team c _____ tasks
- 6 organisational skills (*decide / implement / meet*)
a _____ deadlines b _____ on priorities c _____ a plan
- 7 teamworking skills (*contribute / discuss / support*)
a _____ an issue b _____ to a meeting c _____ a colleague
- 8 negotiation skills (*change / convince / negotiate*)
a _____ someone's mind b _____ with someone c _____ someone to do something

i In pairs, think of some more specific actions or tasks which demonstrate transferable skills.

j Identify three of your transferable skills. Make notes about the things you have done in the past that demonstrate these skills. Use the phrases in Exercises 5h and 5i.

k In pairs, take turns to tell each other short stories about the things you have done that demonstrate your transferable skills, using your notes from Exercise 5j. Try to guess which transferable skills your partner's stories demonstrate.

l Think of three different jobs and list two transferable skills that are essential to each job.

Job 1 _____
Skill 1 _____
Skill 2 _____

Job 2 _____
Skill 1 _____
Skill 2 _____

Job 3 _____
Skill 1 _____
Skill 2 _____



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