

Hard Skills vs. Soft Skills



Grade Level: 6-12

Time: 35 Minute Focus (HS); Two 20 minute TA's (MS)

Materials Needed: Computer, Projector, and [Slideshow](#)

When: First Monday of the Month

Lesson Objective

Students will be able to understand, differentiate, and reflect on the soft skills and hard skills employers look for and evaluate these skills to their own life

Hook

Use the opening think-pair-share of “What are the main things employers look for in applicants?” to get students’ thoughts going. If worried crunched on time and don’t want students to write their answer first, this can go straight into having students talk with partners/groups and sharing out. Have a quick class discussion and see if there is any consensus or trends in answers. Try to not give away too much with what employers are actually looking for, since that will be discussed later in the lesson.

Agenda

1. [Hard Skills vs. Soft Skills Infographic](#)
 - a. You can use the infographic included in the slideshow to give a quick explanation of hard skills vs. soft skills. The screen shots in slideshow can help students read the infographic if you want to avoid printing copies. Still try to avoid putting the preference on soft skills. This is still more just educating them about the difference
2. What are Employers Looking For?
 - a. According to DPI, these are the ten things employers look for most in applicants. However, they are not in the correct order. Have students either on their own or in pairs or groups try to write the ten in their notebook in the correct order.
3. Class Share Out
 - a. Have students share out which traits they think are the most important and which ones would be less important. See if there is any consensus or trends in answers.
4. Discuss Actual Results
 - a. Now you can finally show the importance of soft skills! Be sure to emphasize that while hard skills are important, six of the top ten were soft skills and all of the top five were soft skills.
5. Why Soft Skills?
 - a. If any kids doubt the importance of soft skills, then the final slides can help show specific evidence of how soft skills are put at a high importance in the workplace.
 - b. Retail and restaurants are highlighted on this section due to it being such a common job for high schoolers
 - c. The sports logo and classroom show that it is just as important to have soft skills in sports, activities, at school. The last person to make varsity tennis may not have the highest hard skills. From a coaching perspective, I would much rather have a captain with high soft skills and mediocre hard skills than someone who has mediocre soft skills and high hard skills.

Conclusion

To end the lesson have students answer “What soft skill do you believe is your biggest strength and what soft skill is your biggest weakness? Explain why.” This will help the students evaluate the soft skills they need to work on and help lead into future lessons where we dig into specific soft skills and how they impact their everyday and work life.