

SOFT SKILLS

Lesson Length: 1.5 hours + Extension Activity

Vocabulary & Expressions: Common soft skills (see list of top soft skills), Common in-terview questions: “What are your best strengths and skills?” Or, “Tell me about your strengths and skills.”


Language/Culture Point: Sharing specific examples of how learners use their soft skills on the job

Objective: Students will be able to talk about and reflect on their own soft skills

Materials: Job Picture Cards, List of Top Soft Skills, ball, *job ads in newspapers or print outs from job websites*



STEP 1: ACTIVATE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Job Picture Cards 	- Using Pictures - Brainstorming - Graphic Organizers

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Show pictures of different jobs and have students name them (teacher, professor, nurse/doctor, engineer, scientist, housekeeper, construction, factory, childcare provider, cook, stay-at-home parent).
2. Ask students: Have you had any of these jobs? What skills did you use at these jobs? Make a grid on the board with the picture cards left to right, and write students' answers about skills from top to bottom. Write a check under each picture that the skill could relate to. Brainstorm with students on what the differences are between the skills that they listed for multiple jobs, and skills that only applied to specific jobs. Emphasize that skills that are useful in many jobs are called “soft skills.”
3. Hand out list of top soft skills that employers want. Read through the list with students and brainstorm to define them together. Act out each soft skill as possible.

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STEP 2: MINI-PRESENTATION WITH PROMPT

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
15 minutes	- List of Top Soft Skills 	

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Share a brief story with students: “I am looking for a new job, maybe in teaching or customer service. I researched skills that employers want the most, so I can know how to emphasize my skills in an interview. I found this list.”
2. Continue story (act out soft skills when possible): “When I applied recently for a customer service job, the interviewer asked me, ‘What are your top skills?’ I told her that I am a great team member because I listen carefully to others and I’m always looking for ways to help. I can learn new tasks and information quickly, so I am adaptable to change. I gave her an example from my last job—I learned our company’s record system on the computer in 1 week! The interviewer said my skills are useful at her business.”
3. Give one more example of how you apply a soft skill you mentioned (such as listening carefully).
4. Repeat the story at least once.

STEP 3: DISCUSSION AND COMPREHENSION CHECK



Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- List of Top Soft Skills 	- Mind Mapping

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Ask learners, “What skills did I talk about at my customer service job interview?” Instructor draws a picture of him/herself on the board, and writes students’ answers around the picture. Students can refer to list of top soft skills.
2. For lower level learners, ask about specific skills, “Did I say I’m good at ____?” Act out soft skills for reference. For higher level learners, ask follow up question, “What other skills are important for a customer service job?” and continue writing their answers on the board.

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STEP 4: HIGHLIGHT LESSON FOCUS AND MODEL TASK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job Picture Cards  - List of Top Soft Skills  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using Pictures - Think Aloud - Brainstorming

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Tell students, “Today, we’re going to practice talking about our skills that help us do well at work. On a job application, or during a job interview employers often ask questions such as: “What are your top skills?” Or, “Tell me about your skills.” Write these 2 questions on the board.
2. Tell students: “We can answer these questions by talking about our soft skills. Soft skills are skills that can help us at any job, they are not related to just one job (refer students back to the grid from step 1 and point out how many skills re-late to multiple jobs).
3. Point out that at a job interview, it’s helpful to talk about which of their own soft skills are best for that specific job. Emphasize again that it’s important to give examples of how they use soft skills.
4. Conduct a Think Aloud with students. Show a job picture card and ask, “What are my top skills that I could use at this job? Hmm, I’m good at (insert skill), which is important for this job. For example, I ____”
5. Next, name a skill that you have, and brainstorm with students about which jobs would require that skill. For example, “I am patient and friendly. What jobs could I do? As a waitress (show job picture card and/or act out the job), patience is important. In customer service, friendliness is also very important. For example, I ____.”

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STEP 5: GUIDED PRACTICE

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Job Picture Cards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using Pictures - Brainstorming - Mind Mapping

TEACHING ACTIVITY


1. Show another job picture card. Brainstorm with students: “What are important skills for this job?” Add their answers to the mind map from step 1.
2. Choose 1 student to do mock interview question with:

Interviewer: Show job picture card and ask, “What are your skills?”

Interviewee: Shares a skill and example. For lower level learners, instructor can write prompts on the board for lower level learners, such as “I can ____, I’m good at _____. My top skills are _____”

3. Choose 2 students to ask and answer the interview question, “Tell me about your skills.”

STEP 6: PAIR OR SMALL GROUP WORK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
30 minutes	- Job Picture Cards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using Pictures - Role Play - Line Dialogue

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Have students get into pairs. One student will be the interviewer, the other will be the applicant. The interviewer chooses a job picture card and asks, “What are your top skills,” or “Tell me about your skills,” then interviewee answers with a soft skill and an example of how they’ve used this skill based on the job pictured on the card. Refer lower level learners to the language prompts from step 5 (“I can ____. I’m good at ____.”) Students should switch once they have finished to get practice in both roles. Higher level students can list several skills, and examples.
2. Divide students into two lines, facing each other. Give each student a job card. Students in line one will be the interviewer, and will ask, “What are your skills?” or “Tell



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me about your skills.” Each student in line 2 will answer with a soft skill and example, according to their job card.

3. Students switch roles and practice again.
4. Every 3-4 minutes, students in line 2 move one space to the right, so everyone has a new partner.

STEP 7: HIGHLIGHT HOW ENGLISH WORKS

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Brainstorming- Graphic Organizers- Think-Pair-Share

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Explain that when interviewing for a job or participating in a job review, it’s important not to just list your skills, but to give examples of how you have or will use that skill. Explain that employers and supervisors want to hear specific details, and that being able to talk about them can help students get a job or a raise.
2. Refer to the grid of job picture cards and soft skills from step 1. Ask learners to think about a time they had success using a soft skill at a job. Give them a few minutes to think of some answers.
3. In pairs, students share examples of their use of soft skills.
4. Bring the class together and ask some students to share a soft skill and an example of how they used it at a job.

STEP 8: QUICK CHECK AND REVIEW

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ball	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ball Toss

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Toss the ball to a student and ask them, “What’s one of your top skills, and tell me about a time you used that skill?”
2. Student answers and tosses ball to another student, and so on.



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EXTENSION ACTIVITY: JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
Varies	- Job ads in newspapers or print outs from job websites	- Authentic Materials - Think-Pair-Share

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Have students bring in a job ad section of the newspaper, or a job ad list from a website. If students don't have access to newspapers or computers, instructor can supply these.
2. Give students 5 minutes to read and circle jobs they're interested in (reading silently on their own). Ask them, "What are your top soft skills you can use in these jobs?"
3. In pairs, students share the skills they can use in the jobs they've chosen.
4. As a class, have a few students share 1 job (or more, if there is time) that they circled and the soft skills they could use there.