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Essential Skills and Apprenticeship

# What are Essential Skills for the Trades?



Essential Skills are skills used in all trades, in different ways and at different levels of complexity. Definitions, common tasks and examples of how each skill is used in various trades are outlined below.

Essential Skills	Typical Applications	Trade Examples
 <p><b>Reading</b> Understanding materials written in sentences or paragraphs (e.g. reports, memos, manuals).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scan for information or overall meaning.</li> <li>• Read to understand and learn.</li> <li>• Compare information from several sources or from complex and lengthy texts.</li> </ul>	<p>Construction electricians read engineering specifications that detail the requirements for how power will be delivered.</p>
 <p><b>Document Use</b> Finding, understanding or entering information (e.g. text, symbols, numbers) in various types of documents, such as tables or forms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read signs, labels or lists.</li> <li>• Understand information on graphs or charts.</li> <li>• Enter information in forms.</li> <li>• Create or read schematic drawings.</li> </ul>	<p>Carpenters interpret blueprints to verify measurements and to assess mistakes or omissions.</p>
 <p><b>Numeracy (math)</b> Using numbers to solve problems and complete tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make calculations.</li> <li>• Take measurements.</li> <li>• Perform scheduling, budgeting or accounting.</li> <li>• Interpret data.</li> <li>• Make estimations.</li> </ul>	<p>Welders use trigonometry to calculate the diagonal distance of a piece of pipe.</p>
 <p><b>Writing</b> Communicating by arranging words, numbers and symbols on paper or a computer screen.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write to organize or record information.</li> <li>• Write to inform or persuade.</li> <li>• Write to request information or justify a request.</li> <li>• Write to summarize or compare information.</li> </ul>	<p>Cooks prepare documentation following a catering event to record what was served, quantities, prices, range of services provided and dates.</p>
 <p><b>Oral Communication</b> Using speech to exchange thoughts and information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide or obtain information.</li> <li>• Greet, reassure or persuade people.</li> <li>• Resolve conflicts.</li> <li>• Lead discussions.</li> </ul>	<p>Automotive service technicians give expert opinions to police and insurance representatives regarding the mechanical causes and consequences of vehicle accidents.</p>

Essential Skills	Typical Applications	Trade Examples
 <p><b>Working with Others</b> Interacting with others to complete tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work jointly with a partner or helper.</li><li>• Work as a member of a team.</li><li>• Work independently.</li><li>• Participate in supervisory or leadership activities.</li></ul>	<p>Industrial mechanics (millwrights) form teams with co-workers to install large pieces of equipment.</p>
 <p><b>Thinking</b> Finding and evaluating information to make informed decisions or to organize work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify and resolve problems.</li><li>• Make decisions.</li><li>• Find information.</li><li>• Plan and organize job tasks.</li><li>• Use critical thinking.</li><li>• Use memory.</li></ul>	<p>Plumbers diagnose and solve plumbing problems caused by do-it-yourself homeowners who have performed work without understanding basic plumbing principles.</p>
 <p><b>Computer Use</b> Using computers and other forms of technology.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use computer controlled equipment.</li><li>• Use word processing software.</li><li>• Send and receive emails.</li><li>• Use spreadsheets and databases.</li><li>• Navigate the Internet.</li><li>• Use company- or trade-specific software.</li></ul>	<p>Machinists use computer-assisted design, manufacturing and machining software to create three-dimensional models and drawings of parts and fixtures.</p>
 <p><b>Continuous Learning</b> Participating in an ongoing process of improving skills and knowledge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn on the job.</li><li>• Learn through formal training.</li><li>• Learn through self-study.</li><li>• Understand one's own learning style.</li><li>• Find relevant learning resources.</li></ul>	<p>Hairstylists learn by talking with co-workers and colleagues, and by participating in scheduled in-house training or training offered by major product suppliers.</p>

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[hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills](http://hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills)

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