



The **SCALES** Essential Skills Checklist Tool

The CONNECT SCALES Project:
Supporting the Canadian Advancement of
Literacy and Essential Skills

How to use the Essential Skills Checklist

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Complete the nine Essential Skills checklists

Go through the Essential Skills Checklist on the following pages and rate your skills based on your abilities and experience. Add up your “Always” and “Usually” skills for each Essential Skill worksheet. Add these numbers to reach your “Total”. Bring your results forward to the tally sheet under step 2. See the example below.

<i>I am confident I can...</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Usually</i>
Scan a short document, such as an email, memo or bulletin and understand its meaning	X	
Read a paragraph to find a key piece of information		X
Read and correctly follow written instructions, such as a recipe or job assignment	X	
TOTAL:	2	1

$2 + 1 = 3$

Reading



DEFINITION:

Reading refers to understanding material written in sentences or paragraphs (e.g. letters, manuals, reports, newsletters)

Some occupations that consider this as a “Most Important Essential Skill” include: court clerks, powerline technicians, sheriffs and bailiffs, legal secretaries, secondary school teachers, electronic service technicians, and librarians.

I am confident I can...

Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

I am confident I can...	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Scan a short document, such as an email, memo or bulletin and understand its meaning					
Read a paragraph to find a key piece of information					
Read and correctly follow written instructions, such as a recipe or job assignment					
Read a newspaper article and understand the issues					
Refer to appropriate resources, such as policy or procedure manuals when dealing with unfamiliar or unusual problems at work					
Refer to many documents to compare information (for example, product specs, features and costs of different models of digital cameras)					
Read information to determine whether it is accurate, well worded and comprehensive					
Skim through files to determine if they have been classified under proper headings					
Read manuals and guides to learn about methods and procedures for work					
Read contracts and statistical reports to obtain information					

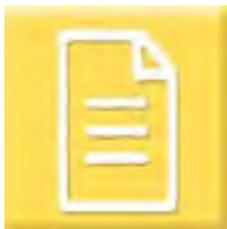
TOTAL: _____ + _____ = _____

Examples from my work/life experience:

Easiest Reading activity:

Most difficult Reading activity:

Document Use



DEFINITION:

Document Use refers to using and understanding labels, graphs, signs and other similar materials.

Some occupations that consider this as a “Most Important Essential Skill” include: automotive painters, bookkeepers, carpenters, dieticians and nutritionists, real estate agents, shippers and receivers, truck drivers, and registered nurses.

I am confident I can...

Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Find specific information in a simple document					
Recognize common workplace symbols, icons and/or signs					
Enter information into simple forms, charts, or tables					
Understand product or packaging labels					
Use headings and sub-headings to find information in a document					
Interpret detailed maps to find or give directions					
Enter several pieces of information into various forms, charts, or tables					
Locate multiple pieces of information in a complex document					
Understand and use information from several documents to solve a problem					
Create documents such as tables, charts, graphs, or scale drawings					

TOTAL: _____ + _____ = _____

Examples from my work/life experience:

Easiest Document Use activity:

Most difficult Document Use activity:

Numeracy



DEFINITION:

Numeracy refers to using and understanding numbers.

Some occupations that consider this as a “Most Important Essential Skill” include: aircraft mechanics, bricklayers, collectors, heavy equipment operators, medical laboratory technicians, payroll clerks, flight attendants, welders

I am confident I can...

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Receive cash payments and make change					
Take simple measurements (e.g. length, weight, temperature)					
Estimate quantities and/or measurements					
Perform calculations that require multiplication and/or division					
Create and balance budgets					
Estimate the time required to complete specific tasks					
Perform calculations that require multiple steps or operations					
Take precise measurements using specialized equipment					
Analyze and compare statistical data					
Compare similar products with differing cost structures (i.e. sales, taxes, discounts etc) to determine the best value					

TOTAL: + =

Examples from my work/life experience:

Easiest Numeracy activity:

Most difficult Numeracy activity:

Writing



DEFINITION:

Writing refers to writing text or typing on a computer.

Some occupations that consider this as a “Most Important Essential Skill” include: college instructors, journalists, signmakers, small business counselors, executive assistants, industrial engineering technicians, guest services attendants

I am confident I can...

Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

I am confident I can...	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Write short reminder notes to myself and others					
Write notes in point form					
Write entries in appointment calendars					
Write down telephone messages					
Write text that is a paragraph or longer such as memos or letters					
Prepare written materials using templates (e.g. resumes)					
Use correct grammar and spelling					
Write detailed emails or letters to request information					
Write long pieces of text using formatting features such as headings, table of contents, footnotes, etc.					
Rewrite text to improve clarity and flow					

TOTAL: ____ + ____ = ____

Examples from my work/life experience:

Easiest Writing activity:

Most difficult Writing activity:

Oral Communication



DEFINITION:

Oral Communication refers to using speech to share thoughts and information.

Some occupations that consider this as a “Most Important Essential Skill” include: administrative clerks, bus drivers, bartenders, daycare workers, cashiers, cooks, police officers, paramedics, trappers and hunters, and taxi drivers

I am confident I can...

Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

I am confident I can...	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Listen to others without interrupting					
Give simple instructions to others on a familiar topic					
Communicate with others to resolve minor issues, such as customer complaints					
Communicate with others to co-ordinate work or resolve problems					
Discuss work-related problems or issues in detail					
Express my opinions and ideas clearly and concisely					
Confidently deliver a presentation and respond to questions					
Persuade my peers to follow directions					
Provide explanation to strangers in a work setting					
Interact with people to obtain information					

TOTAL: _____ + _____ = _____

Examples from my work/life experience:

Easiest Oral Communication activity:

Most difficult Oral Communication activity:

Working With Others



DEFINITION:

Working with Others refers to interacting with others to complete tasks.

Some occupations that consider this as a “Most Important Essential Skill” include: automotive painters, bookkeepers, carpenters, dieticians and nutritionists, real estate agents, shippers and receivers, truck drivers, and registered nurses

I am confident I can...	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Work independently to complete my tasks					
Budget my time to ensure I complete the tasks on time					
Provide constructive feedback to help others improve their work					
Take initiative by doing what needs to be done before being asked					
Work co-operatively with a partner or team to complete tasks					
Give directions to my partner or team members as required					
Help build an open and trustworthy workplace by encouraging others to participate in team building activities					
Improve my work based on suggestions and advice I receive from my partner or other team members					
Schedule and coordinate my work with the work of others					
Support coworkers by taking the time to help them with their work					
TOTAL: ___ + ___ = ___					

Examples from my work/life experience:

Easiest Working with Others activity:

Most difficult Working with Others activity:

Thinking



DEFINITION:

Thinking refers to reviewing information to make decisions.

Some occupations that consider this as a “Most Important Essential Skill” include: accounting clerks, cleaners, community & social service workers, computer programmer, cooks, dental assistants, forestry professionals, nurse, property administrator, roofers, small business owners, and urban land use planners

I am confident I can...

Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

I am confident I can...	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Recognize and identify problems					
Identify several reasonable options to address a problem					
Evaluate options and choose the best course of action when confronted with a problem or a decision					
Assess the effectiveness of a solution and make adjustments if needed					
Find and apply relevant information required to complete a work task					
Make reasonable assumptions when information is unavailable					
Memorize information required for different job tasks					
Use previous experiences to help solve new problems or make decisions					
Analyze and compare statistical data					
Plan and organize workload, some of which may require co-ordination with other workers					

TOTAL: ___ + ___ = ___

Examples from my work/life experience:

Easiest Thinking activity:

Most difficult Thinking activity:

Computer Use



DEFINITION:

Computer Use refers to using computers and other technical tools such as fax machines.

Some occupations that consider this as a “Most Important Essential Skill” include: computer programmers, data entry clerks, hotel front desk clerks, medical secretaries, machining tool operators, industrial electricians

I am confident I can...

Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

I am confident I can...	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Use a variety of electronic devices such as calculators, fax machines, photocopiers, and telephones					
Use a mouse to open and navigate programs by clicking buttons, menus, etc.					
Fix basic technical difficulties (e.g. computer reboot, paper jam, ink cartridge replacement)					
Use Internet search engines to find specific information by choosing the right search terms or adding operators (e.g. OR, “ ”, define:) to my search terms					
Use spreadsheet software to prepare, edit, manipulate and analyze tables (e.g. create and modify budget reports, create various types of charts or graphs)					
Recognize different file formats (e.g. rtf, pdf, html, exe, jpg, mpeg)					
Give detailed computer-related explanations or training to co-workers (e.g. demonstrating features of commonly used or customized programs)					
Identify and correct hardware or software problems by using manuals, online resources, etc					
Use communications software such as Outlook to exchange e-mail and attachments					
Use word processing software to carry out writing, editing and text formatting tasks					

TOTAL: ____ + ____ = ____

Examples from my work/life experience:

Easiest Computer Use activity:

Most difficult Computer Use activity:

Continuous Learning



DEFINITION:

Continuous Learning refers to participating in an ongoing process of gaining skills and knowledge such as workplace training.

Some occupations that consider this as a “Most Important Essential Skill” include: automotive service technicians, computer programmers, hairstylists, human resource professionals, retail sales associates

I am confident I can...

Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

I am confident I can...	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Ask questions when I do not understand something					
Ask for feedback and/or advice from more experienced co-workers					
Learn by watching more experienced co-workers					
Try new ways of doing things					
Recognize my preferred learning style (e.g. hands on, visual, etc)					
Be responsible for my own learning					
Maintain my skill levels by practicing what I have learned					
Learn through reading or other forms of self-study by using materials					
Learn about new equipment, procedures, products and services					
Learn through off-site training during working hours at no cost to the worker					

TOTAL: ____ + ____ = ____

Examples from my work/life experience:

Easiest Continuous Learning activity:

Most difficult Continuous Learning activity:

2

Write your scores beside each Essential Skills symbol below:

Reading



Writing



Thinking



Document Use



Oral Communication



Computer Use



Numeracy



Working with Others



Continuous Learning



My three strongest Essential Skills are:

The three Essential Skills I may need to work on are:



What type of work/job would I like to be doing? List here:



Let's look at the skills that match the work/job that you would like to do by going to the Essential Skills Profiles

Review the skills required for this work/job to discover the skills you have and the skills you may need to improve.

My three strongest Skills are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The most important skills in my Occupational Profile are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



If the skills you need for your job do not match your strongest skills, speak to your career practitioner about improving those skills

This completed Essential Skills Checklist will help you use the results in a variety of ways.

It may help you:

- Celebrate your Essential Skills strengths!
- Understand where your skill gaps are.
- Target your training and education to focus on the gaps you have uncovered.
- Use the skill statements to better describe your skills to employers.